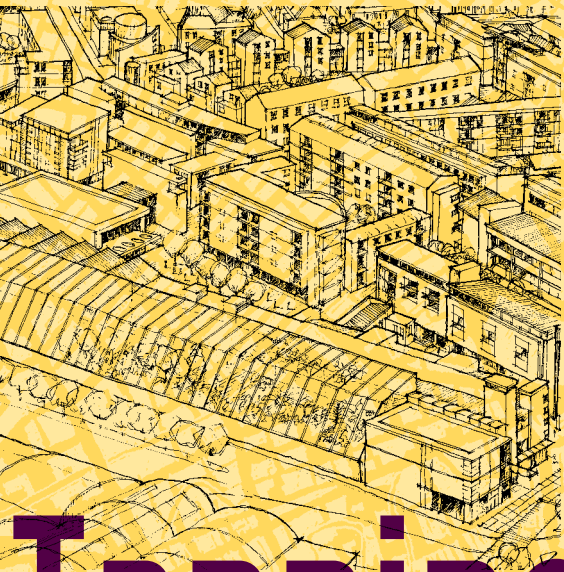


Manchester 1774

This map from the 18th century shows a compact market town surrounded by market gardens that had changed little over the previous hundred years. It is one of a series of images of the four ages of Manchester prepared for an exhibition at CUBE (Centre for the Understanding of the Built Environment) in Manchester. The circle which is common to all of the maps represents a mile from Piccadilly Gardens.

18th century

Tapping the potential

Planning policy for housing now requires local authorities to undertake urban capacity assessments. URBED were commissioned last year to produce a good practice guide on this issue – due out this summer. **David Rudlin** describes the thinking and research behind the guidance.

Compact sustainable cities or town cramming? – the accommodation of more homes in urban areas has dominated the recent planning debate. Most people now accept the benefits of urban housing – saving the countryside, promoting sustainable settlement patterns, reducing car-use and regenerating urban areas. Concerns remain however about the capacity of many urban areas to accommodate more housing and the resultant risk of ‘town cramming’.

New Planning Policy Guidance on housing (PPG3)¹ includes a presumption that new housing should be built in urban areas. It does this by introducing a sequential test allowing greenfield sites to be built upon only once urban housing sites have been exhausted. To inform this judgement PPG3 requires local authorities to undertake urban capacity assessments to measure the amount of housing that can be accommodated in urban areas (and therefore the

numbers of homes that will require greenfield sites).

This all sounds logical but it begs the question what is an urban capacity assessment and is it really possible to measure the housing capacity of an urban area? To answer these questions URBED were commissioned to produce a good practice guide on urban capacity to be published Summer 2000. This is based on a local authority survey and 15 case studies of recent capacity studies.

A huge number of urban capacity studies have taken place in recent years. There is probably nowhere in England that has not been studied at a regional, county or district level. These studies vary enormously however they all follow 4 basic stages as described below:-

Sources of Capacity:

At the outset of a study it is important to establish the capacity sources to be addressed. Some studies look at specific issues – such as living over the shop – however where the aim is to measure total capacity it is important to consider all potential capacity sources. Data from our previous work for Friends of the Earth² is used in the DETR work to explore the relative importance of different capacity sources. This illustrates that the brownfields that dominate the debate make up as little as a third of total capacity. By cross referencing the case studies against these previous findings we concluded that some studies are ignoring more than half of the housing capacity potential.

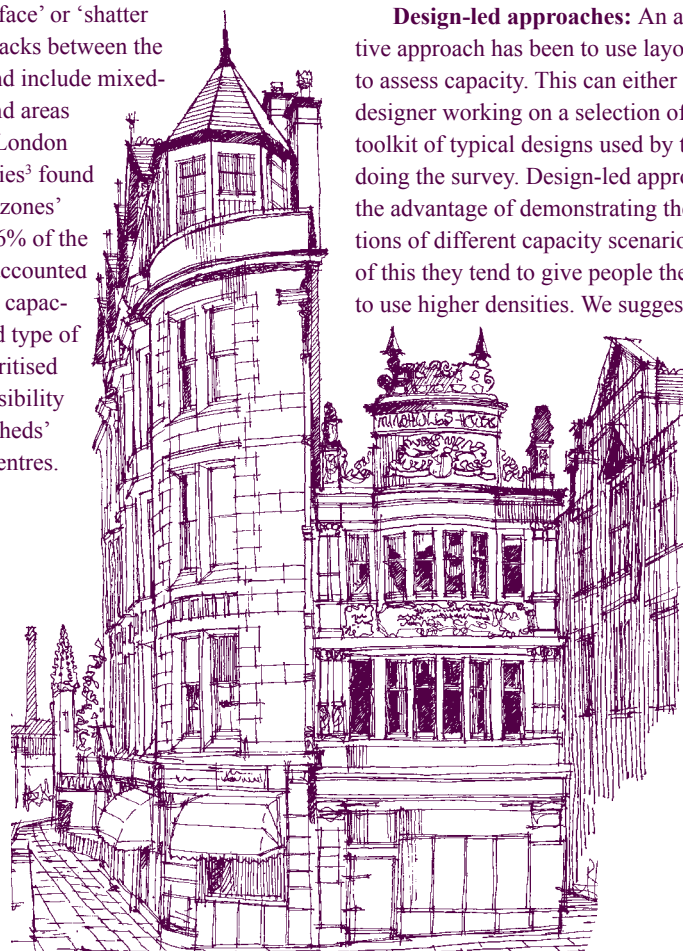
2. Identifying the Opportunity:

The next stage is to identify the sites and buildings where potential capacity exists, be they brownfield sites, opportunities for intensification or buildings for conversion. This involves trudging the streets and pouring over maps and aerial photographs. Some studies survey the

whole of their area but where this is not possible one of two techniques is used:-

Typical urban areas: This involves dividing the urban area into typical types. A series of case studies are selected for each typical area and surveyed in detail. Assessments of capacity can then be grossed-up to give an estimate for the whole study area. This technique was used by 5 of our 15 case studies. We were however concerned that it had weaknesses. Indeed it was a bit like searching for the weeds on a path by looking only at the flagstones and ignoring the cracks.

Priority areas: An alternative approach used by 4 case studies overcame this problem by focusing the search on 1) areas likely to yield significant capacity and 2) areas where housing should be encouraged. The former includes ‘interface’ or ‘shatter zones’ – the cracks between the flagstones – and include mixed-use districts and areas of decline. In London Llewelyn-Davies³ found that ‘interface zones’ covered just 16% of the land area but accounted for 60% of the capacity. The second type of area to be prioritised are high-accessibility areas or ‘ped sheds’ around local centres.



Urban capacity is an elastic concept. If there is pressure to build and a shortage of sites developers will find a way. Indeed it is this pressure that has created many of the urban environments that we value today.

the Sustainable URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD

Welcome to the eleventh issue of SUN Dial, the journal of the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood Initiative. In this issue we develop two themes.

The first is the relationship between where we live and work. In our lead article David Rudlin discusses the findings of research on measuring urban capacity, followed by articles exploring mixed-use urban design concepts for the UK and Netherlands, Location Efficient Mortgages, and the potential of workstations to reduce commuting.

The second theme is regeneration and the role of the social economy. O-Regen describe their long-view of regeneration in Waltham Forest, while the Aston Re-investment Trust report on the financing of new enterprises in Birmingham. We also look at how a communities in Manchester and Liverpool have been developing their own computer networks and community garden projects.

urbed



Initiative

INSIDE

Page 2: S333 Showcase

Chris Moller from Dutch Architects S333 describe innovative city blocks that create a fusion between suburban and city living

Page 3: The Location Efficient Mortgage

James Hoeveler describes an innovative US mortgage designed to make urban living more attractive to homebuyers

Page 4: Community Workstations

Duncan Baker-Brown explores how the Community Workstation could provide an alternative to the long commute into the city.

Page 5: Making an exit

If regeneration is a time-limited process – what happens when the time is up asks **Marilyn Taylor** of O-Regen Development Trust

Page 6: Growing a Sustainable Community

Francesca King records how one group of high-rise tenants in Liverpool improved their environment

Page 7: Organic cities

David Rudlin describes how the maps of Manchester in this issue tell a story of growth, decline and of the damage done by urban professionals

Page 7: Aston Reinvestment Trust

Martin Allcott describes an investment fund up and running in Birmingham

Page 8: Redbricks Online

The Internet could widen divisions in society - **Rob Squires** describes how a community is harnessing the technology.



3. Measuring the capacity:

Having identified the sites and buildings where there is potential capacity, stage three involves estimating the amount of housing that can be accommodated on each opportunity. We identified three main techniques for doing this:

Density guidelines: The easiest technique is to apply a density guideline. Most of the case studies used 25-35 houses/hectare for suburban development, 50-60h/ha for urban development and some also had a city centre guideline of up to 120 h/ha. In the light of PPG 3 it is likely that these density guidelines will need to be increased. These are net densities so that it is important to convert the guidelines to gross densities for larger sites and the guidance suggests a series of gross to net ratios to do this.

Design-led approaches: An alternative approach has been to use layout designs to assess capacity. This can either involve a designer working on a selection of sites or a toolkit of typical designs used by the people doing the survey. Design-led approaches have the advantage of demonstrating the implications of different capacity scenarios. Because of this they tend to give people the confidence to use higher densities. We suggest that studies

should make use of some design exercises even if density guidelines are used for most sites.

Yardsticks: Many capacity sources are not so easily measured. These include living-over-the-shop, the conversion of commercial buildings, the subdivision of larger homes and the intensification of existing residential areas. In all of these cases we recommend that the use of simple yardsticks applied to existing data sources will produce an order-of-magnitude answer that is as good as can be achieved through extensive survey work.

4. Discounting procedures

Most capacity studies make a distinction between unconstrained and constrained capacity. The former is the maximum amount of housing that could possibly be developed. The latter is the capacity that is likely to come forward under different scenarios as a result of judgements about the suitability and availability of different sites, planning policies, public attitudes and market viability. The adjustment

between unconstrained and constrained capacity is made by applying discounting assumptions which in most studies are around 60%. However we found no study that had developed a credible justification for the discounting

No study had developed a credible system to discount capacity - it almost seems that studies were starting with an answer in mind and constructing a set of assumptions to produce that answer

system. Indeed it almost seemed that studies were starting with an answer in mind and constructing a set of discounting assumptions to produce this answer. The danger of this is that the study ends up projecting existing market rates – in which case one might question why go to all the effort of undertaking the study in the first place.

Conclusions

We conclude that many of the capacity studies undertaken in recent years are flawed. They have failed to consider all forms of capacity and many have actually identified less capacity than has historically been taken up by the market. It is important to understand that capacity is not a finite quantity that can be measured objectively. London, for example, has less capacity than most other areas and yet also has the highest proportion of housing built within the urban area. The reason for this is the intense demand to build and live in London, which means that developers are more active in seeking out capacity. The willingness of developers to seek out capacity is therefore dependent on the amount of easily-developed greenfield land available for development. If a pessimistic urban capacity assessment leads to a large number of greenfield allocations there is a danger that it will become self-fulfilling by removing the incentive for developers to seek out urban capacity. Urban capacity studies

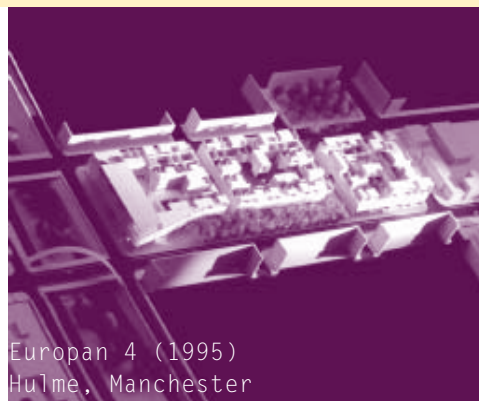
therefore have an important role to play as part of policies to ensure that more homes are built in urban areas. They are however a creative tool not an objective system. At the end of the day judgements about how much housing can be accommodated in urban areas are political decisions. Capacity studies should inform but cannot replace these difficult decisions.

1. Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing - DETR March 2000
2. Rudlin D. - Tomorrow a peaceful path to urban reform: The feasibility of accommodating 75% of new homes in urban areas – Friends of the Earth – 1998 (see also SUN Dial 7)
3. Llewellyn-Davies – Sustainable Residential Quality - LPAC 1998

S333 Showcase

Architects S333 design innovative city blocks which explore a fusion between the

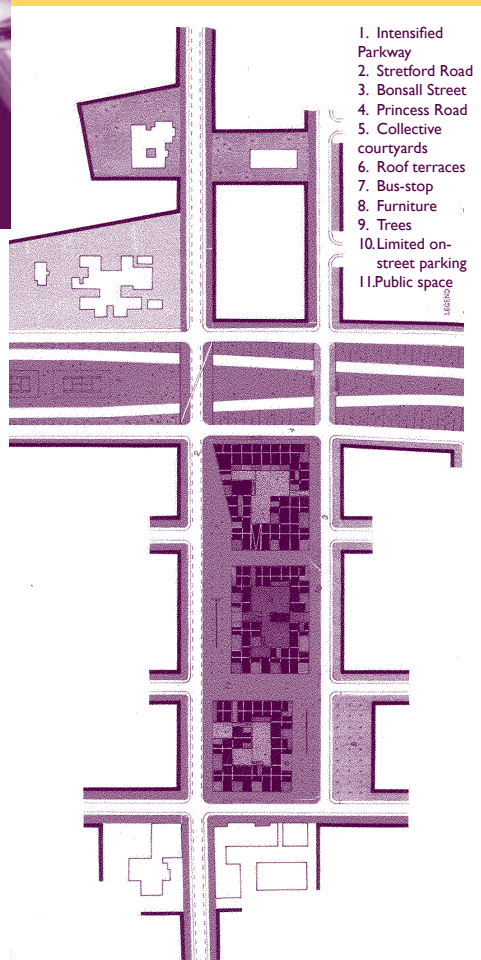
comfort of suburban living and the qualities of city living. A few years ago the practice won the European Ideas Competition for a site next to the SUN Offices in Hulme. In this article **Chris Moller** describes this scheme along with another currently on site in Groningen.



European 4 (1995)
Hulme, Manchester

The proposal attempts to create a conceptual framework that accepts the historical discontinuities of the twentieth century landscape while at the same time imagining a critical density for Hulme. This is ensured through the sequential scaling of public to private spaces from the level of the city's public infrastructure to the proportional intimacy of one's own patio. 120 'private plots' were distributed on the site through an organisational system, a kind of 'tartan matrix', providing every dwelling with ground access and private gardens or roof terraces. The system was allowed to self-organise, create coupling, form groupings and to optimise the conditions of the site.

The project developed to form three compact urban blocks of mixed programme that allowed permeability through the site while maintaining ground level access to all the dwellings. A fusion of the comforts of suburban living with the sometimes contradictory qualities of city living is achieved through the creation of a new courtyard/patio house hybrid that maximises intimacy without disassociating itself from its context.



Above and top: The plan and model of the scheme.
Below: The hierarchy of spaces, diagrammatically and in section



European 3 (1994)
Groningen (Schots 1 & 2),
Netherlands (currently under construction)

The theme for the competition 'At home in the city - Urbanising Residential Neighbourhoods' sought proposals that rethought the relationship between the city's public and private spaces, and the spatial scaling from domestic intimacy to urban collectivity.

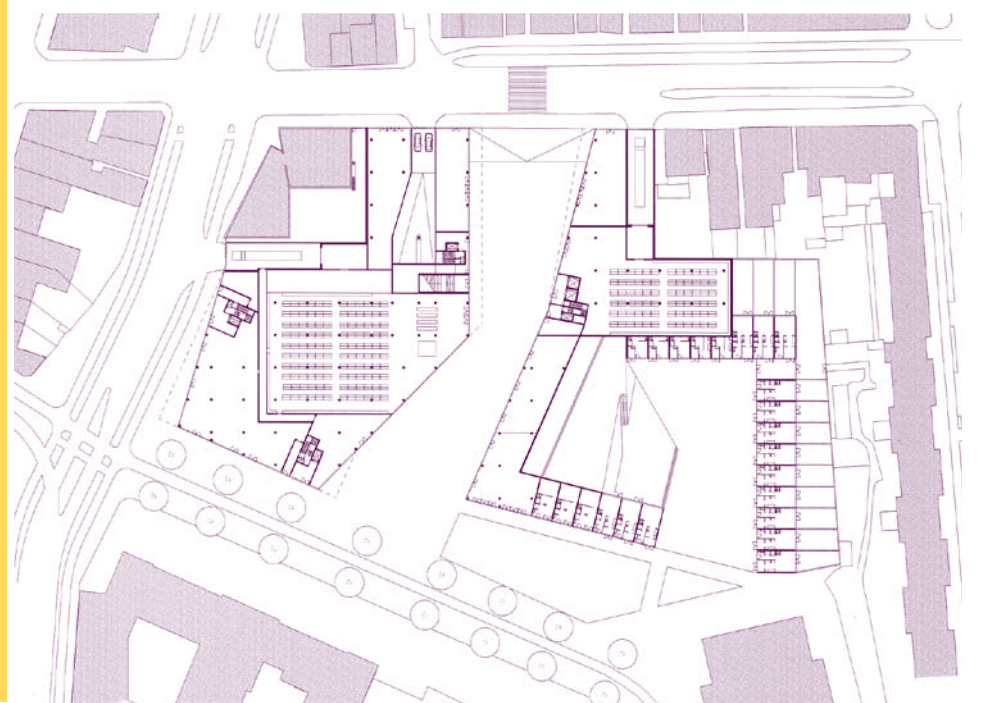
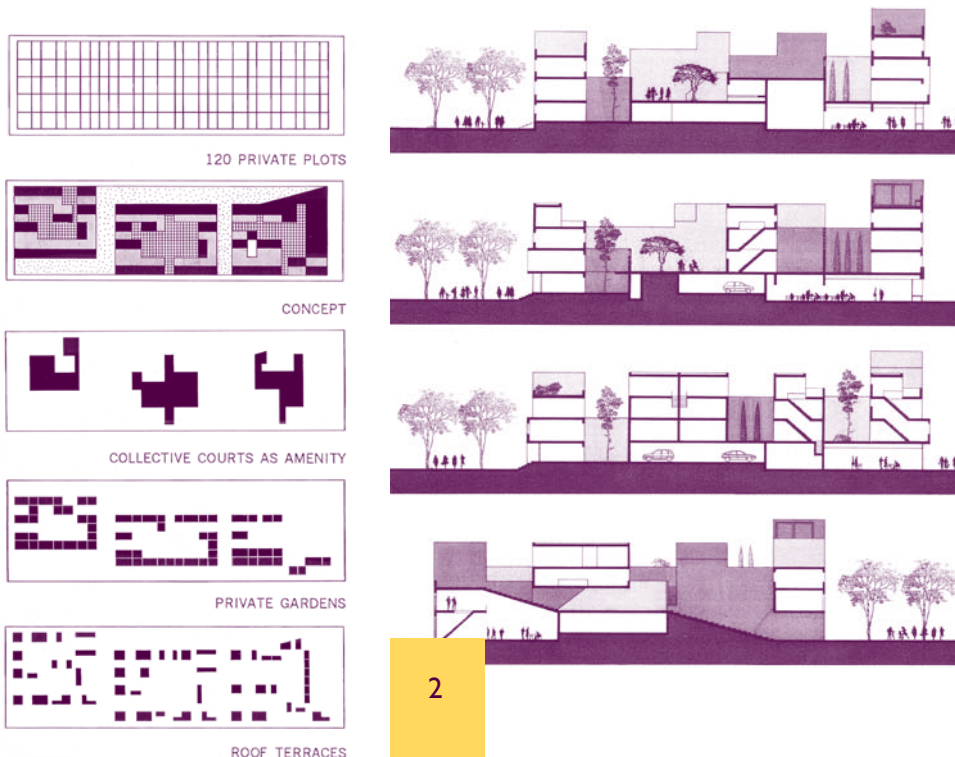
Schots 1 & 2 are conceived as large urban forms sculpted by the existing movement flows and sight lines working in and around the site. Housing, shopping, day care, recreation, and parking occupy vertically organised plateaus whilst movement between them is mostly horizontal. This is complimented by a rich network of roof gardens, winter gardens and courtyards. Although Schots 1 & 2 are connected by an underground parking lot, and at street level with supermarkets and smaller shops, they evolve quite separately. Schots 1 & 2 offer space to new domestic cultures and

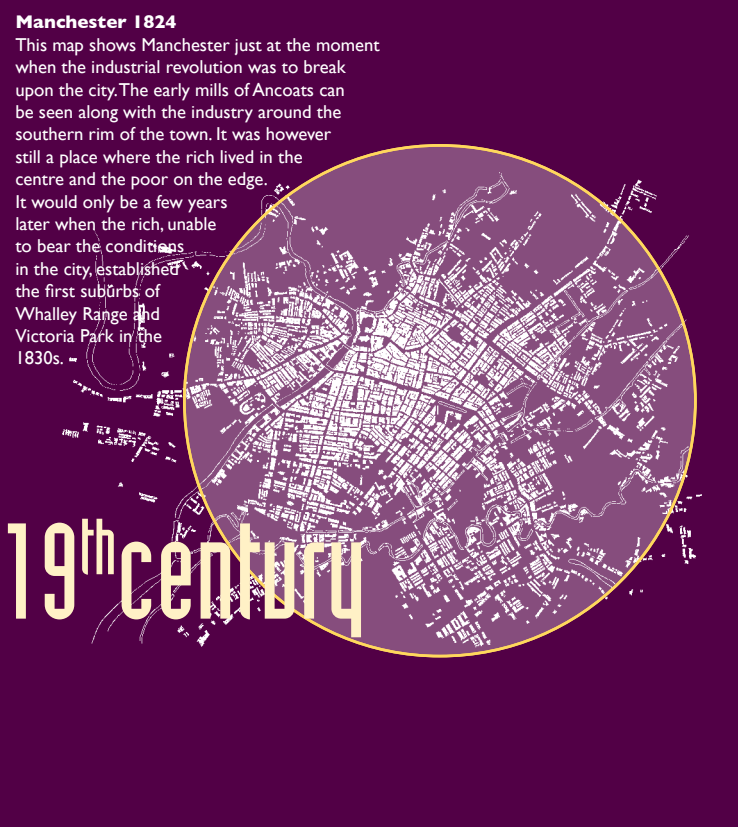


concentrate activities in order to reinforce the city. This creates in effect a continuation of the urban landscape: something to look at as well as be in.

The new programme was introduced as 'events', to set in motion and link into larger existing processes. These elements were defined as attractors (supermarkets, cinema, theatre, health centre, hot plate), condensers (cafes, bars, social services, interactive techno devises, creche, play areas), and mediators (landscaping, interspatial domestic zones, street furniture, screens).

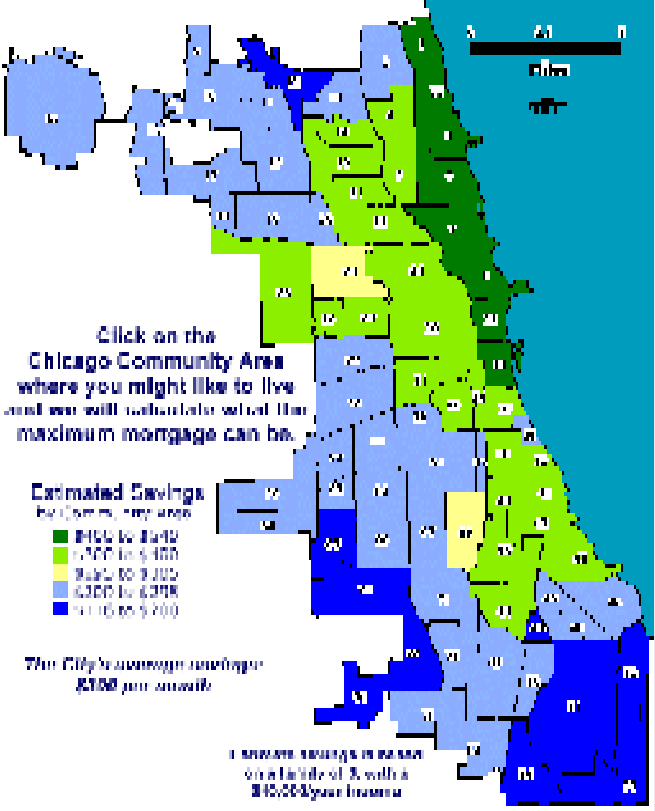
Schots 1 & 2 form an alternative to having





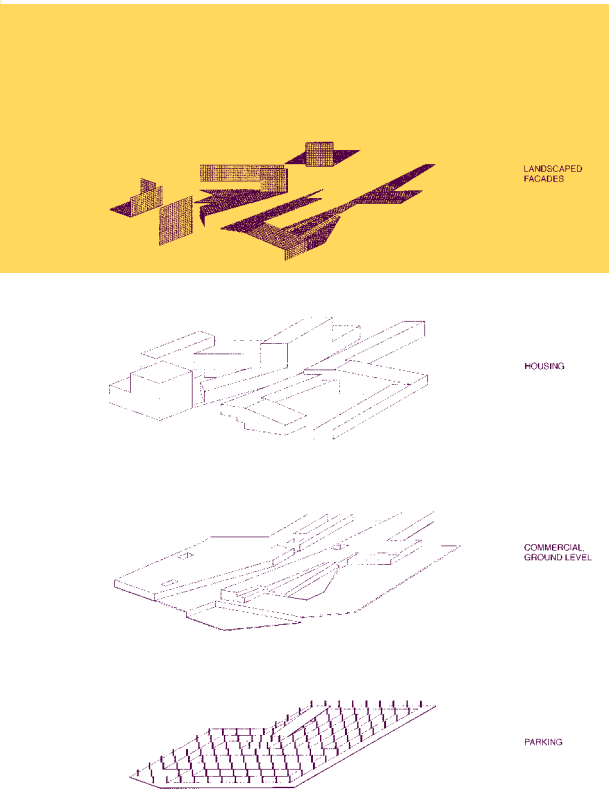
The system can be viewed on the LEM website by selecting a geographical area and then clicking on 'proceed' at which point you will be asked to register to use the service.

The Location Efficient Mortgage (LEM) is an innovative new mortgage product being market tested in the USA. **James Hoeveler** describes how it is designed to make urban living financially attractive to homebuyers. As such it may be of great relevance to UK attempts to promote urban living.



The Location Efficient Mortgage

Making Urban Living Affordable



to choose either the terrace house, the courtyard block or the apartment tower by creating a true mix of all of these. As your aspirations change one can remain in the neighbourhood. This new hybrid structure is worked out to give a high degree of combinations for mixed-use, different materials, and landscapes (110 winter gardens, 105 apartments, 44 houses, 14 patios, 7 community roof gardens, 4 vertical gardens, 2 courtyards, 2 supermarkets, 1 police station, a playground and a glazed arbour). The blocks also explore a three dimensional interpretation of Groningen's ecological corridor (a linked series of green spaces that facilitates the flow of wildlife and planting) and new forms of semi-public space. This diversity delivers 45 different dwelling types ranging from live/work apartments to a five storey townhouse

Biography
S333, studio for architecture and urbanism based in Amsterdam, is composed of a multi-national team of architects and urban designers led by four partners: Burton Hamfelt, Chris Moller, Dominic Papa, and Jonathan Woodroffe.

They won the International Competition for the Revitalisation of Samarkand, CIS in 1991 and two European competitions: European 3 in Groningen, The Netherlands in 1994 (currently under construction), and European 4 for Manchester, England in 1996. They were recently commended for the '1999 Young Architects of the Year' award. This summer will see their project in Vijfhuizen exhibited at Expo 2000 in Hannover. For the year 2001 the office has exhibitions planned for both Rotterdam and Paris.

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The mortgage is designed to promote 'location efficiency' by helping people buy homes in urban neighbourhoods where they can live more locally, use their car less and make use of public transportation to travel to work, shops, neighbours' homes, and other destinations. Location efficiency, which can be measured, converts into financial savings compared with living in a less efficient suburban areas. People living in a location efficient community can do without a car, or if they own one, they will tend to drive it less than 750 miles per month. The resulting savings can then be used toward a mortgage. The LEM enables participating mortgage lenders to recognise the savings and then 'stretch' their standard debt-to-income ratios.

Accessibility v. Mobility
The difference in the cost of transportation between neighbourhoods which promote car based mobility, and those where car use is reduced through greater accessibility, can be significant. Researchers have found that households in mobility-based neighbourhoods in Chicago pay on average \$662 per month for transportation, not including the capital cost of their motor vehicles. Households in a typical Chicago neighbourhood that stresses accessibility will spend about \$380 per month on transportation. If one 'lived locally' and relied entirely on public transportation, almost all of that \$662 per month could be saved. That could be a savings of as much as \$7,000 per year, and for the purposes of assessing a Location Efficient Mortgage it is called the *Location Efficiency Value* or *LEV*.

In the spring of 1996, a research team of 3 non-profit organisations began work on the Location Efficient Mortgage® (LEM). The LEM would enable home buyers to shift a portion of these savings to housing. In 1998, the Federal National Mortgage Association (known as 'Fannie Mae'), America's largest source of financing for home mortgages, agreed to a \$100 million demonstration of the LEM in Chicago and Los Angeles. They later expanded the test to include Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area. Likely LEM borrowers are low - and moderate - income people, especially first-time home buyers, who are interested in living in more densely populated urban areas served by public transportation.

In the qualification ratios and standards adopted by Fannie Mae, the LEV is added to household income so location efficiency has a real and a significant impact on homeowner-

ship. The combination of higher qualifying ratios and LEV dollars added to income for the purposes of ratio calculations enables the LEM borrower to qualify for mortgage or to get a larger mortgage than is possible with any other product now on the market. Depending upon the location, the household size, and the number of vehicles owned, a LEM borrower could reasonably be expected to manage a mortgage that is \$15,000 to \$50,000 more than other mortgage products.

For years the housing market has been stacked in favor of suburban housing. Urban

housing has been seen as a poorer, more risky investment by housebuyers and indeed mortgage companies. Location Efficient Mortgages turn these assumptions on their head and could play an important role in convincing people of the economic sense of more sustainable urban lifestyles.

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An Example of How the Location Efficient Mortgage Would Work

Two brief examples of a hypothetical buyer in Chicago will help to illustrate how the LEM works. In the first scenario, we have assumed that a buyer is interested in purchasing a home in Chicago's Rogers Park. The household has a joint income of \$50,000/year. The borrower is looking at a home priced at \$169,900, is seeking a 30-year mortgage with an interest rate of 8.5%, and has a \$5,000 down payment available. The borrower currently has a monthly debt of \$200, owns one car, and will use one monthly transit pass (currently costing \$75/month) to meet her/his travel needs.

Based on the personal financial information and mortgage values provided by the borrower, the LEM Worksheet calculates borrower-specific cases (described below). The LEM worksheet merges all this information, calculates a Location Efficiency Value (LEV), and enters a prede-

termined portion of the LEV into the mortgage formula calculation.

(1) the **Base Case** for Metropolitan Chicago, which represents a hypothetical "least efficient location" within the metropolitan area;

For the "Base Case" the average household would own 2 cars and drive around 20,000 miles a year. This activity would cost \$662 per month or \$7,944 per year. According to an LEM analysis, if the borrower conformed to the transportation habits of average households in the Base Case, the LEV would be very low or near to zero, they would have very high transportation costs, their maximum debt ratio would be 36% and the maximum they would be qualified to borrow with a standard mortgage would be \$121,250.

(2) the **Zone Case**, which reflects the Applicant's preferred location within the metropol-



Chicago

Within the Zone Case the household would own one car and would drive less than 5,000 miles per year, and will spend \$88 per month on one transit pass. The average monthly cost of this activity would be \$358 or \$4,296 per year. Under these conditions, the borrower would achieve LEV savings of \$510.23 per month, would have an adjusted total debt ratio of 37.32%, and by using an LEM would qualify to borrow \$164,803, which is enough to purchase the home. If the same borrower owned no car, he/she would have no auto costs and would be likely to achieve a further corresponding increase in the mortgage facility available.



Community Workstations

As patterns of work change so should our work environments.

Duncan Baker-Brown explores one option that is being developed in Woolwich and Greenwich - The Community Workstation. Could this provide an alternative to the long commute into the city and could Workstations become a feature of railway stations?

Below: Conceptual design for Finsbury Park COMStation

Bottom: Greenwich Millennium Village tele-services facility

All images copyright Baker-Brown McKay

As journalist John May stated in his article 'The Shape of Things to Come' in the Sunday Telegraph Magazine from November 1995 - the average worker in Britain spends 480 hours a year commuting, the equivalent of 60 work-ing days. But, as the government is finding reducing car journeys is not easy or indeed popular. The key to a change in work patterns os to move information rather than people.

With this in mind, we embarked on our 'Cityvision' research programme. We found that Information Technology (I.T.) was perpetuating the exodus from our cities. By the mid 1990s, the technology to work from home or 'tele-work' was allowing people to live in the countryside, perhaps in a new 'tele-village'. Nowadays this has spread with many people spending their day on a telephone in front of a VDU in a sub-urban or rural 'teleshed'. This perpetuates suburban sprawl and creates a deeper culture of 'haves and have nots'.

We wanted to find ways in which I.T. could create quality employment environments in urban areas. Surely, by enabling the individual to work or tele-work away from the main office, IT could facilitate working near, or in, the urban home as easily as moving to new facilities on former green belt land.

We took London, as a model - initially taking a section from the City through Kings Cross and out to Enfield in the extreme North East. We looked at how locations differed, and how they might change if working and living patterns altered. The City, for example, is

dominated by highly lettable commercial space, which might be less desirable if employees spent more of their time working near home to reduce their commuting journeys by say 25%. The City would remain the public face of the company but the workforce would be distributed around the city freeing up roads and railways.

With this in mind we proposed a working facility that could serve a local working/learning population - A Community Workstation. We all do very different jobs, but more and more of us (up to 70% of the population of Greenwich for example) work in service industries and, more particularly, with computers. If we created a centre that had the best IT and communications facilities, with teaching and technical back-up, a whole cross-section of the community could use it, whether it was for an hour a week or every day. By taking on the ethos of the Internet as a forum for free exchange, people who have previously found problems fitting into conventional types of working environments would be happier to work via the ever expanding communication networks - \$60bn worth of work was undertaken over the internet in the US alone last year.

The emphasise of our studies altered when a number of local authorities expressed an interest in building Community Work Stations. The London Borough of Greenwich seemed the most committed to our ideals. Over the course of a year we developed an idea for a generic Community Work Station to attract funding. It brought in other partners - Cable & Wireless, SOLOTEC, GEMS and Woolwich Technical College. Our idea was for a building that could fit into a typical high street. It would need to have a friendly and accessible ground floor environment which would provide cafe, exhibition and meeting facilities together with Internet access. To be a success it needed to appeal to a cross-section of the community, not just teenagers, so we had to make sure that it was not seen as a 'cyber' cafe.

The generic centre worked as a vertical hierarchy of spaces with hot-desking and tele-conferencing facilities on the first floor and more dedicated work stations on the second and third floors with technical and training facilities provided by Woolwich Technical College (as an outreach programme to their core curriculum). Isolation is one of the chief concerns of home-working or working from call centres. By paying special attention not only to the workstation facilities but to the social facilities beyond our Community Work

Station, we provide a backdrop for informal social networking.

The end of a job for life may mean we will all be surfing the net looking for work. The idea of short-term contracts for a portfolio of clients - in effect being self-employed - is unsettling for many people. This is creating a need for 'hot-desking', flexibility and shared facilities. For many people these ideas are already a reality, for others they soon will be. The nature of workspace needs to respond to these new IT-orientated working patterns.

Each Community Work Station facility would be tailored to the needs of its community. It must also adapt to changing needs requiring ongoing monitoring, research and development. Woolwich was initially expected to be primarily a training centre and, once trained, its users were expected to use it as a place to work. But Woolwich Technical College uncovered a greater need for existing SMEs to have a resource centre. The tele-services centre will therefore initially cater for existing small companies who are finding it difficult to keep abreast of the perpetual changes and updates

in hardware and software required to remain competitive.

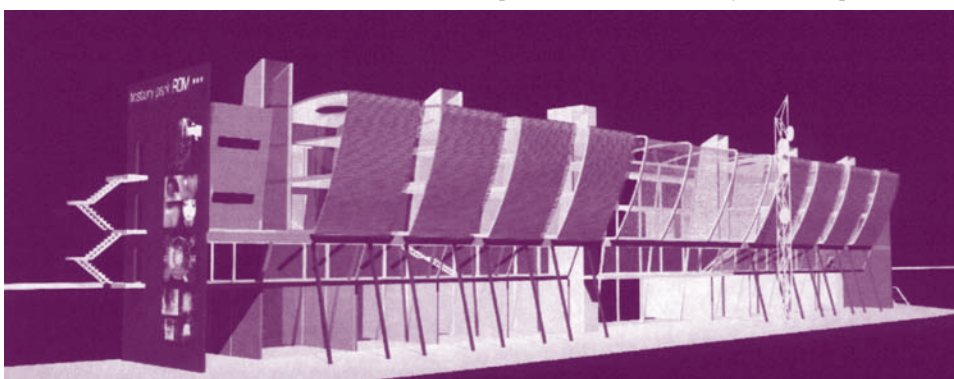
The project has inspired other projects - another tel-eservices facility for the Greenwich Millennium Village and a Community Resource Centre for Norfolk Park in Sheffield.

The most recent development is Baker-Brown McKay's COMStation, networked I.T. facilities adjacent to urban or suburban railway stations giving huge numbers of commuters the choice not to commute. COMStations are conceived as prefabricated buildings allowing components to fit on railway tracks thus avoiding road congestion.

It seems to us strange that so much effort is being put into housing design to reflect different patterns of living while so little attention is being paid to workspace. The growth of information technology and tele-working is radically changing patterns of work and the work environment needs to respond. The Community Workstation provides a mid point between the corporate office and the spare bedroom. It allows footloose workers to reap the benefits of tele-working, gain access to state of the art I.T. without losing the benefits of a workspace community.

Contact

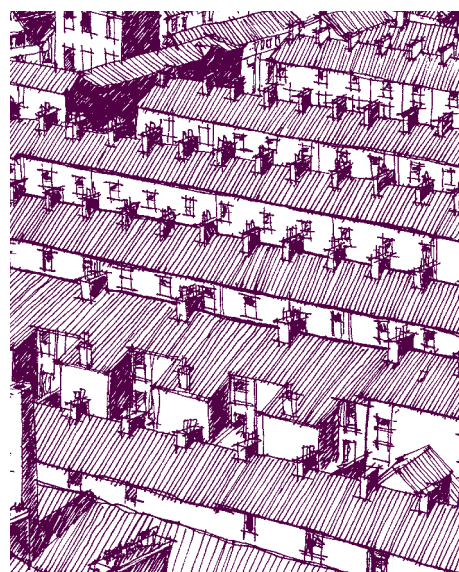
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Manchester 1924

This map shows Manchester in the 1920s although much of the growth took place in the 50 years following the previous map when the city's population doubled every ten years. Today it is hard to imagine the power of the city at this time – what H.G.Wells described as a 'great swirling mass of humanity'. It was at once the city described by Disraeli as 'the most wonderful city of modern times' and at the same a place of deprivation and squalor as described by Gaskell and Engels.



Making an Exit

Regeneration is a time-limited process – be it SRB, New Deal for Communities or the earlier City Challenge and Housing Action Trust Initiatives. What happens when the time is up? **Marilyn Taylor**, director of O-Regen in Waltham Forest explains their approach.

O-Regen is a new charity established as a Community Development Trust in Waltham Forest in East London. It has been set-up as one of the successor bodies to the Waltham Forest Housing Action Trust which is now nearing the completion of its task to redevelop four large social housing estates.

The Housing Action Trust's regeneration approach was characterised by broader concerns than just the physical transformation of the estates. Working to the vision of the tenant communities, major emphasis has been placed on quality client-centred housing management services, and on interventionist projects promoting community economic development.

In developing its exit strategy, the Housing Action Trust has put in place two new successor organisations to carry on this work. One is a tenant-led housing association, with a culture of responsive and accountable service-delivery. The other (O-Regen) is an organisation formed on the model of a Community Development Trust committed to the provision of integrated community economic development programmes. O-Regen will also take ownership of the community centres constructed as part of the redevelopment. These are quality buildings that require considerable revenue input to

sustain their management and effective operation into the future.

Whilst closely linked, the roles of these two agencies reflect the issues residents identified as critical to improving and sustaining their quality of life. These views emerged from the imaginative four-day Citizens Jury that the Housing Action Trust ran in 1999. The question posed was *'What needs to be done by 2010 to achieve and maintain a good quality of life for residents in and around your neighbourhood?'*

Firstly, and most fundamentally, residents stressed the importance of integrating the former high-rise estates into their surrounding neighbourhoods. In establishing the Development Trust care has been to ensure that this

Our residents have definite views on how they want their neighbourhoods to be. They are very clear that this requires a 'neighbourhood' approach, not an estate one

agency takes a neighbourhood approach to delivery of all its programmes. The new community buildings that O-Regen will own and manage provide critical bridges between the new streets and the surrounding housing. New local shops similarly attract people into the area creating valuable footfall in what were previously no-go areas.

Secondly, they also wanted to see increased community accountability by the major statutory service providers.

Thirdly, residents have been unequivocal in their view that the new neighbourhoods need continuing employment and training support. There is a particular need to work with young people to move them on from actual or potential exclusion to aspiration and achievement. These programmes need to be available for at least 15-20 years to make a difference to areas which have historically been disadvantaged and failed to meet their economic potential.

The establishment of O-Regen has been an important part of the exit plan. But creating sustainable exit vehicles is not easy. O-Regen was set up some five years ahead of the HAT's exit. Although this has created additional complexity in terms of organisational relationships, it has given us time to establish our programmes and prepare credible business and funding strategies based on reality rather than wish lists. Most critical to this has been the strategy relating to endowment and asset transfer, as the overall aim is to create a body capable of some independence of action beyond shortlife funding streams and the requirements of annualised funding.

Our business plan demonstrates the leverage potential of the public injection of funds we are asking for by making explicit the link to the new programmes we have been able to pull into our portfolio, such as New Deal, Healthy Living Centres, SRB etc. In this way everyone can have certainty that the neighbourhoods will have 15 to 20 years of sustained community and economic development programmes and a strategic approach to the implementation of the raft of new initiatives coming on stream during the period.

Current local facilities managed or co-managed by O-Regen include:

- Click - new Information and Communication Technology learning centre.
- Epicentre - community facility and conference venue
- Paradox - community and fitness Centre in South Chingford
- Bell Centre - community crèche pre-school

Waltham Forest - How to make an exit...

The key lessons to draw from our experiences in bringing to a close a short-life regeneration initiative are as follows:

1. That long-term sustainability should be a key objective from the start, and programmes and structures established accordingly. There should be a clear strategy for the future ownership and management of community buildings, which should be designed with income-generation in mind, and planned in partnership with other key local agencies.
2. That programmed interventions within socially excluded neighbourhoods need to be sustained for minimum of 15-20 years and structures put in place to enable this.
3. That it takes at least 3 years to establish any new successor body formed as part of an exit strategy, and therefore such bodies need to be established well ahead of the closure of the programme that sponsors them.
4. That local residents need time to work through what is appropriate for them to do directly, and what is appropriate for them to monitor the performance of others in doing. Just handing a building over to community management is not necessarily a sensible long term action. Business planning is key.
5. That development trusts need the powerful partners on their boards to assist residents in 'keeping the spotlight' on their neighbourhoods at the end of a shortlife programme. Otherwise the show just moves on to the latest initiative, and much of the residents' effort is lost.
6. That succession bodies have to be appropriate for the 'future', not designed around programmes delivered in the past.
7. That there must be a clear business case developed for any endowment strategy, ie that endowment is a form of 'social payment' for which a clear value is to be gained. Articulating this value is critical – and being accountable for the delivery of the value equally so.

However, the needs of different neighbourhoods vary and each strategy needs to be carefully designed for each local circumstance. What was appropriate for us will not necessarily work for anyone else, particularly in areas where there is already a thriving and substantial voluntary sector. Our residents have a very definite view of how they want to their neighbourhoods to be, and they are very clear that this requires a 'neighbourhood' approach, not an estate one. At the end of the day, it is their vision which has guided our approach. They are also clear that other areas of the borough, which have not had the benefit of a Housing Action Trust, should benefit from theirs – and our – expertise.

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Growing a SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Urban regeneration cannot be achieved by physical means alone; it is necessary to engage people in the process, and to provide the skills and knowledge for them to participate. In a case study written for the Liverpool Housing Action Trust (LHAT). **Francesca King** of URBED records how one group of high-rise tenants improved their environment while helping young offenders and extending their links with the wider community

THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD



A strong community development ethos has driven the work of the Liverpool Housing Action Trust (LHAT), which took over the management of 67 tower blocks across Liverpool in 1993. The Trust's objective is to improve the physical condition of the housing stock and its management, and to improve the social and living conditions of tenants.

Three of these blocks in Wavertree, Olive Mount Heights, are within the Olive Mount estate built in the early '70s. Tenant involvement has increased with the refurbishment of a stand alone community centre, and there are now 6 High Rise Tenant Group (HRTG) representatives from the site on the formally recognised tenant consultation body within the HAT.

Tenant participation has been fostered, and the community garden initiative provides just one successful example of this approach. For many years there had been low expectations about an area of waste land next to the community centre on the Olive Mount Estate with comments such as 'The kids will wreck it', 'Nobody's bothered for 15 years', 'It was a tip – rubbish everywhere – an old shack on the site'. However, following the refurbish-

ment and re-opening of the community centre (which had also been in a state of disrepair and unused for 2 years), and in which the tenants played a major role, expectations of the potential to achieve were raised.

Making the links...

In March 1998 a meeting between the LHAT and the Probation Service, who were looking for appropriate community work opportunities for those on Community Service Orders, led to the community garden becoming a pilot project. Despite some misgivings, members from the Olive Mount Heights Tenant Association decided to take up the offer.

Tenants were initially fearful of the idea of having offenders working near their homes. However the safeguards that were put in place overcame these fears with positive results. Dave Mathison, a Community Service Officer explained how 'the Probation Service

begins the process with a risk assessment of the offenders, which is based on the type of conviction, existing skills, temperament and behaviour'. 'Choosing the right people for a job is important'.

Eight lads were involved in the project, and many put in additional 'voluntary days' in order to complete the task. They were given time to put forward their ideas and views, and also to make decisions; they felt their contributions mattered. 'They took pride in what they were

doing, and their enthusiasm encouraged the manager of a quarry near Shrewsbury to donate £350 worth of rocks.' Motivation was high 'when it rained they put on waterproofs and carried on working'. There were a high number of successful completions

The garden project helped to consolidate the tenant group and also '...provided an opportunity to encourage the HAT tenants to look outward and overcome their mistrust in interacting with the wider community'

of Community Service Orders. Skills were learned – brickwork, gardening, planning and communications.

Their hard work earned the respect of the community, and this enabled their attitude to change - 'nice to have a bit of respect' – and as Dave Mathison noted 'the main thing was losing the chip on the shoulder, and starting to communicate with people'. Barriers came down. Further, the task was considered by everyone to be worthwhile and productive; it was not work for work's sake.

Involving Everyone

The community garden attracted tenants who were specifically interested in the environment, and who had not previously been involved in other activities. An 'adopt a planter' scheme encouraged tenant involvement and showed the importance of diversity of opportunities for involvement. Tenants and offenders worked side by side on 'planting day'. The staff of Liverpool HAT also took an active role with Pauline Vass, a temporary Community Development

Making the Garden Sustainable

What principles of community development can be drawn from this case study?

- **The value of building confidence and a can-do approach through skills training:** Many of the residents involved in developing the community garden had taken part in an Entrepreneurial Management Skills (EMS) programme commissioned by LHAT. On that occasion residents had used the refurbishment of their community centre as their 'live' project to work on during the course. These management skills were transferred to developing and managing the community garden.

- **The need for on-going development and stimulus:** A gardening club has grown up which has attracted residents other than those normally involved in tenant activity; 'The tenants have taken complete ownership and are now looking to improve the garden, and in doing so are involving others – the Hope University is helping to plan further stages, and improvements; they are not frightened about looking at costings and finance, and are looking to raise funds.'

- **The importance of building on relationships which have been**

established: The success of the Olive Mount Heights project has led to LHAT exploring the possibility of transferring the concept to other sites, with the continued involvement of the Probation Service. A wider group has been included in meeting the orders for picnic tables, benches, plates, planters and bird tables, where such skills as carpentry and sign writing have been developed.

In particular the achievement of the garden project has shown

Entrepreneurial Management Skills

URBED's research in the late 1980s for the Department of the Environment into the needs of those working in the voluntary sector resulted in the report Managing Urban Change (HMSO 1988), which led to the development of the Entrepreneurial Management Skills (EMS) programme. The programme was rolled out as a three year national project with more than 1000 managers participating in over 80 courses. It enables participants to develop skills essential for good performance by working on current projects. Self confidence is built, and a 'can-do' approach fostered. The emphasis on social inclusion and tenant management has led to the need for cost effective training, and we have adapted the EMS programme to meet the needs of tenant and resident groups.

Pride of place

Pride of Place is a response to the Government's emphasis on involving local communities in the regeneration of their own areas, and on tackling social exclusion. URBED have designed a programme of community development that fosters local identity and civic pride, and is designed to make the most of people as well as places. Using oral history techniques and the specially designed EMS training programme, Pride of Place engages communities in their histories and the history of their area to identify the 'magic ingredient' of a place that will spark off new projects reflecting the community's own needs and their vision for the future.

Officer, providing fresh stimulus about six months after completion, by bringing together Hope University with the gardening club to plan a second stage of the garden and by making links with other HAT gardening projects.

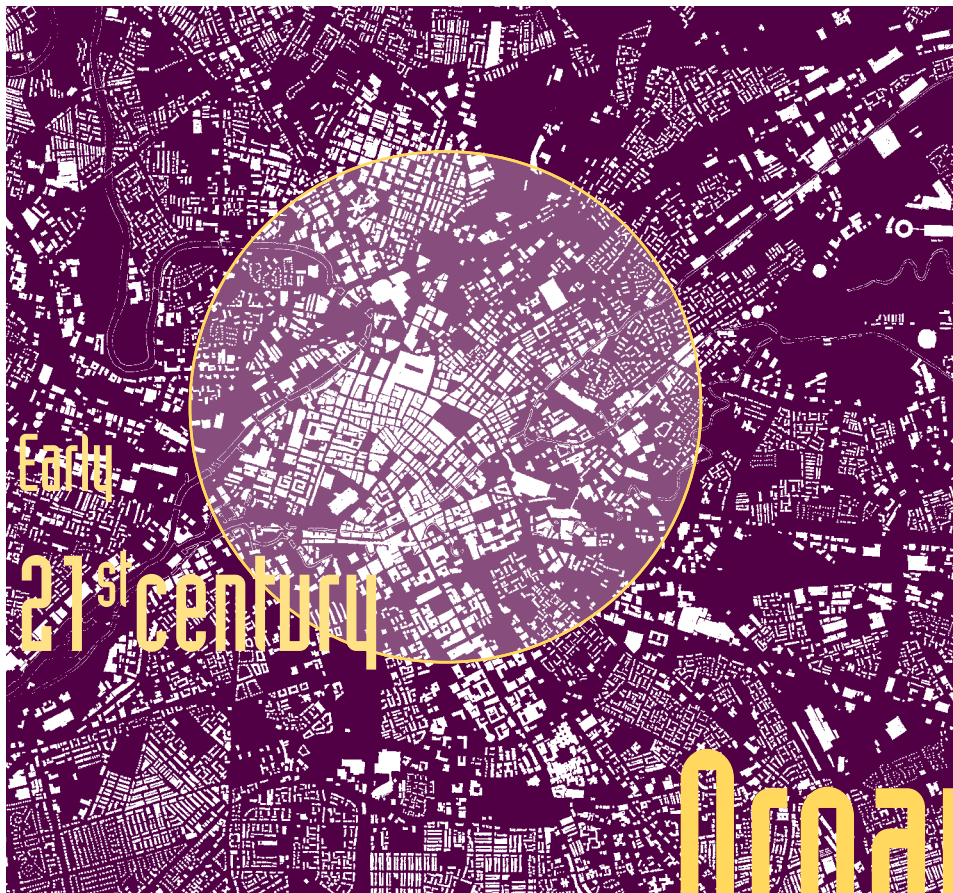
Not only did the garden project help to consolidate the tenant group, but it also '... provided an opportunity to encourage the HAT tenants to look outward and overcome their mistrust in interacting with the wider community'. In particular barriers to other people using the Community Centre's facilities came down – they had been very protective of the centre. It is an excellent example of overcoming social exclusion.

The project provided an opportunity to improve the local environment which in turn generated community spirit and a sense of ownership. An unexpected consequence has been improvement in estate security: 'there are now too many watchers - when people are out cleaning their cars they also keep an eye on the garden'. There has been no vandalism in the garden and nothing has been stolen, neither plants nor furniture.

Contact

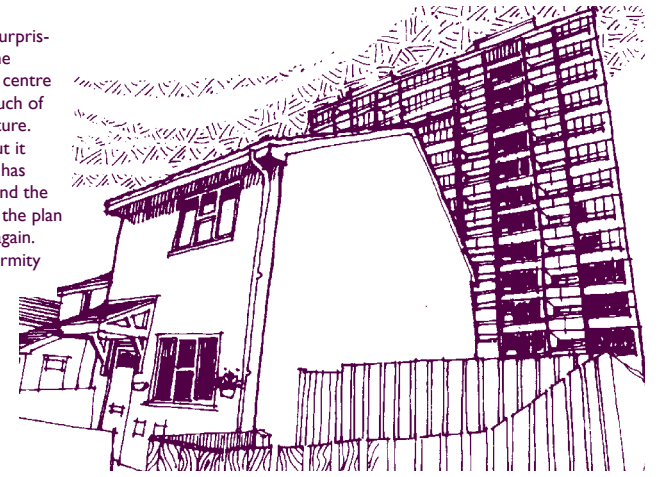
Francesca King is the URBED Director responsible for capacity building and sustainable communities, and is based in URBED's London Office

Based on interviews and discussion with members of the Olive Mount Heights Gardening Club, LHAT warden Pam Armstrong and Pauline Vass, a temporary LHAT Community Development Officer, probation office staff - Dave Mathison (Community Service Officer) and Dave Cuddy (Community Service Supervisor), and an interview with Paul Kelly, Community Development Manager.



Manchester 2000

This map shows Manchester today. It is surprising how little of 1924 city remains and the extent of redevelopment. While the city centre retains its character and compactness much of the inner city has lost its form and structure. This is in part due to the city's decline but it is also the result of the way that the city has been planned. This is starting to change and the emerging form of Hulme can be seen on the plan starting to stitch the city back together again. The plan however demonstrates the enormity of this task.



At the one level these plans tell a story about the growth of the city and how a small market town was engulfed by the explosive, almost cancerous growth of the industrial revolution. The map to the left of today's Manchester tells another story. It shows a city that has lost almost half of its population and

by anyone. They were the collective creation of their people who, over hundreds of years, created places of enduring beauty. In Manchester this character has been largely lost by the third map due to the rapid, rough-grained growth of the industrial revolution. However it is gone completely from much of the final map for a very different reason. What this shows is not the result of natural organic growth but the influence of the dead hand of planning. In an attempt to reform the worst excesses of the industrial city planners have sought to smooth the rough edges from the city. In doing so they have destroyed the very thing that they were trying to protect - Manchester like most other cities has been harmed as much by the reforming zeal of its city fathers as it has by the ravages of industrial growth and decline.

The challenge now is to rebuild and repopulate the city - as can be seen happening around the city centre and in districts like Hulme. However an even greater challenge is to rediscover the natural process of city growth that can recreate urban areas where we might all want to live in the future.

Organic Cities

Each of the four maps shown on this and the previous pages show the city of Manchester. They are drawn to the same scale and the circle is drawn at a one mile radius from Piccadilly. As **David Rudlin** explains they tell a story of growth and decline but also of the damage done to the city by urban professionals

which, despite the prosperity of the city centre and the suburbs, is dominated by a depopulated disintegrating inner city.

The maps show not only the growth and decline of Manchester but also the structure of the city. The city that appears on the first two maps has many of the characteristics of places like Chester, York or even Italian hill towns. These places hold an enduring appeal and, while they have influenced architects and urban designers, they were not themselves designed

Aston Reinvestment Trust



As banks become global, access to finance can be a major bar to innovation in the voluntary and private sectors. The government is promoting the Phoenix Fund to address social exclusion. **Martin Allcott** describes a fund already up and running in Birmingham

Aston Reinvestment Trust (ART) is a Community Finance Initiative working throughout Birmingham to provide opportunity, and contribute to regeneration in the most needy parts of the city. It does this through delivering loans, not grants, to projects that would otherwise fail to get off the ground or disappear - which can happen in both private enterprise and voluntary organisations.

ART is a mutual society that is owned by its members, both investors and borrowers. The fund was created initially by personal investors with an ethical outlook who committed anything between £250 and £20,000 essentially to back the local community, but with no immediate financial return. Banks, Housing Associations and Corporates followed, all in the spirit of promoting social outcomes. Operational help came with revenue support, particularly from Barclays and NatWest, and included staff secondments through Business in the Community.

After earlier involvement during the developmental and feasibility stages, ART attracted more attention from the public sector. It gained momentum with support from Birmingham City Council, local Area Regeneration Initiatives, and the Energy Saving Trust. Most

recently, it has successfully accessed European funding for a pilot Key Loan Fund dedicated to social enterprises. Thus, the total of funds now raised has reached £1.3m.

ART lends to activities with a social and economic purpose, and focuses on job creation and preservation. For introductions, it relies largely on referrals from a wide network of private and public sector agencies. When considering a loan enquiry, ART has to be satisfied at an early stage about its social characteristics. It will examine constitution, purpose, markets, customers and employees (pay scales, where do they live etc.) in a social filtering process. There has to be some flexibility in ART's outlook, but equally, it must achieve the best social outcomes as a duty to its investors. The more detailed analysis of viability within a full business plan will only take place once the 'social filter' has been passed.

ART charges commercial rates of interest and fees. Some readers might say 'Hang on, that doesn't sound too social, we need soft rates'. Well, step back and look at it this way. ART believes that the cases it supports should be robust enough to withstand commercial terms at the outset because projects supported by subsidised terms may never be able to be

sustainable in the longer run. So, ART is addressing access to finance ahead of cost. That is felt to be the more crucial aspect.

ART's current loan portfolio relates predominantly to small existing businesses that need support to survive or grow. This theme is more a response to opportunities brought rather than the intention to create more balance across not-for-profit organisations, small businesses, energy saving and home improvements. It has now lent almost £700,000 in loans ranging from £2,000 to £40,000, whilst containing the default rate within 8%.

In its experience to date, ART has inevitably learned some key lessons. Firstly, fundraising is a big challenge. Secondly, demand for loans is much more apparent in enterprise, rather than the voluntary sector where a grants culture is imbued. ART is keen to promote sensible lending, and encourage the development of social enterprises to provide independent income streams that help cover repayments. When ART shows the borrower can repay, there is a 'track record' for a bank, and it can graduate to bank borrowing as a result.

Thirdly, there is a gap in support networks to assist businesses transforming from difficult situations, and more specifically community enterprises that are seeking to establish sust-

ainable businesses with local job opportunities. Beyond the setting-up stage, most projects need ongoing help and advice, but all too frequently, it is scarce or of poor quality. ART cannot realistically do this itself, because as a loan provider, it would be a conflict to both help produce plans and then appraise them.

To conclude - ART has made a good start with its particular role in Birmingham. It is planning to build a fund of initially £2-3m, and now looks well positioned to benefit from the Government's recently announced Phoenix Fund.

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RESOURCES

Industrial Common Ownership Finance - finance for co-operatives and businesses operating in the social economy. Loans £5,000 to £50,000. Publisher of 'Setting up a Local Social Investment Fund'. Tel: 0121 523 6886

Investors in Society - a special trust, managed by Charities Aid Foundation offering affordable loans up to £100,000 for charitable projects which the banks cannot consider. Tel: 01732 520029.

Local Investment Fund - providing loans from £25,000 to £250,000 to support social enterprises where conventional market sources are unable. tel.0171 224 1600

UK Social Investment Forum - tel.020 7749 4880
New Economics Foundation - tel.0171 407 7447

Examples of projects backed by ART...

Betel of Britain - A charity that was unable to borrow from the bank. ART's original loan to purchase a vehicle for their used-furniture business has now been repaid, and two further loans have financed vehicles that will support other activities.

GME Castings - A small non-ferrous mouldings business run by Geoff Dale, who says: 'I had the opportunity to take over another business from two people who were retiring, and merge it with my own. ART and Barclays helped me to achieve this and relocate to the Jewellery Quarter'.

Energy Saving - With backing from the Energy Saving Trust, ART has been running an innovative Energy Saving Incentive package which comprised: a free initial survey, recommendations on capital expenditure, a loan geared so that repayments match the cost of fuel savings and the incentive of a rebate

on interest for achieving targeted savings on fuel consumption.

A supplementary initiative is the piloting of a guarantee facility with a local Credit Union, whereby its members will access twice the normal eligible credit for home improvements on the basis of a guarantee from ART.

Home Improvements - With support from the Housing Corporation, NatWest, and Nationwide, ART has been looking at the feasibility of creating a fund to make secured loans to homeowners for improvements and repairs. Research work has been undertaken in the Sparkhill, Tyseley and Kings Heath areas to examine likely demand for loans of between £500 and £5,000. The result has shown sufficient interest to proceed and arrangements are now underway to pilot later this year.

Redbricks Online

The Internet could widen divisions in society as those without access to the technology are excluded from its benefits. Rob Squires describes how his community in Hulme is harnessing the technology as a driver for community and economic development.

Redbricks Online is a community owned computer network developed on the Bentley House Estate (aka the Redbricks), in Hulme Manchester. The network, technically speaking a Local Area Network, or LAN, has evolved since 1998, and currently connects over 70 of the 248 flats on the estate. Resident's computers are connected by some 3,500 metres of CAT 5 cable, running through loft spaces, down walls, and over fences and streets.

For £12/month (1.6 pence/hour), residents benefit from 24 hour a day Internet Access. The secret to this extraordinarily cheap service is a 64Kbps leased line. This is a cable rented for £1,200/year, which provides the estate with a direct connection to an Internet Service Provider in Manchester City Centre. An additional £2,400/year is paid for 'porting' services, which are required in order for the LAN to interface with the Internet - essentially the bulk purchase of Internet connectivity.

This is a true community project. All the ideas, ingenuity and resource have come from the estate. We have received no financial support, although we have accepted help in kind from commercial organisations who respect the pioneering nature of the project. Similarly we have benefited from programmers who have developed specific applications for the network, such as online directories of local goods and services, and electronic community currencies.

Our message to other communities is that a decade ago this technology may have been inaccessible but today it is established, and within reach. The hardware is affordable and obtainable on the high street, whilst the physical activity of wiring flats is considered 'blue collar' work and the skills are easily transferable. The greatest technical challenge is in the configuration, development and maintenance of the network servers, although training in these skills is readily available.

Most 'community' internet projects are corporate experiments, or the brain child of paid consultants. Redbricks Online exists because the community wanted it and had the skills and creativity to develop the network. Various local authorities have approached us, with the idea of transferring the model to their areas, as a tool for social inclusion. Given the social context of Redbricks, we are unsure as yet, whether the model can be transferred wholesale. One thing we are sure of however, is that if any aspect of the project is to be transferred elsewhere, then the focus must be on developing the capacity of the local community to empower them to do it for themselves.

Benefits

As a model for social inclusion, Redbricks offers genuine potential for communities. Its real potential lies not in sending emails to one-another, but through participation in the development, and maintenance of the service. It is human contact that counts. We are gradually getting more of the community involved in the Redbricks process, by devolving the work. Local people are involved in wiring flats, collecting money, technical support, backup services for recycled computers (see box 1), maintaining the servers, and in-house training. As the network grows, it is feasible that all of these tasks may result in jobs for people, bringing genuine economic benefits to the area.

In addition to its job potential from the network provides a platform for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) enterprise developing Internet applications, including software, online gaming, Web page authoring, financial and marketing tools, music downloads, and training. In essence, Redbricks has the potential to organise as a non-profit, community owned ICT organisation, with the competitive advantage of low overheads, since

there are no premises or wage costs. On-line training and educational packages could also be provided, including discussion and mentoring facilities such as 'Learning Circles', which can help people acquire new knowledge or skills.

Most 'community' internet projects are corporate experiments, or the brain child of paid consultants. Redbricks Online exists because the community wanted it and had the skills and creativity to develop the network

Strategic Development

Redbricks Online is more than just a community internet project, since ICT is an essential element of a broader framework for Community Economic Development (CED) based on common aims, co-operative working practices, and good communication. Whereas Redbricks Online is an example of community infrastructure, MANTAR, and Connected Communities (see box 2) are examples of community development strategies for ICT at the district and/or regional scale.

To date Redbricks Online has been developed with fierce independence, although it has always been clear that if the project is to be developed beyond the Estate, and is to be transferable to other communities, then co-operative partnerships must be formed with local authorities and development agencies. There are still technical issues to resolve such as planning permission and health and safety issues in relation to spanning CAT 5 cables over

initial experiment, there has been a steady turnover. The project has been so successful that there are now plans to establish a similar service to that provided by Recycle IT, for communities in the Manchester area.

Community development strategies for ICT at the district and/or regional scale

MANTAR (Manchester Tenants and Residents)

This proposed strategy is designed to develop community owned ICT infrastructure across the City. With such economies of scale, the organisation would act as an agent, ensuring that communities got the best deal from ISPs (Internet Service Providers). The financial capacity of this organisation would enable it to invest in new technology, such as high bandwidth radio transmitters to replace the existing leased line technology, and the costs associated with renting these lines. On the back of this infrastructure can be built all the personal

and social (including economic) benefits that are anticipated for Redbricks Online.

Connected Communities:

This project is based in Silicon Valley in California, and aims to help communities take advantage of the Internet. The company works with a wide range of communities to assess their connectivity, and develop action initiatives, which improve quality of life, and enhance local economic competitiveness. All sectors participate in the process, including schools, libraries, local businesses, Chambers of Commerce and non-profits.

They work with established, local organisations to implement projects, and collaborate with telecommunications service providers to help them understand the potential of the local market for high-speed services. Connected Communities utilises the Computer Systems Policy Project (CSPP) Guide to Electronic Commerce Readiness, which is designed to help communities determine their level of readiness to 'engage fully in global electronic commerce'.

Contact

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streets², and the development of open-source software applications to reduce overheads. Of equal significance is the work that needs to be undertaken in building relations between local authorities, and communities, so that each sector may better understand the needs, and working methodologies of the other.

Contact

Rob Squires is a resident of the Redbricks, an inner-city council estate, and is a co-ordinator for Manchester Permaculture Group, which aims to develop models for sustainable urban living in the area. t: 0161 227 8750 - email. rob@redbricks.org.uk http://www.redbricks.org.uk

Notes

1. At the time of writing (April 2000)
2. Redchip technology provides a potential technical solution here. These are cards with built-in low power radio transmitters, which slot into computers, and can transmit data to other computers over short distances such as over a street.

IN BRIEF

London Sustainability Exchange

Last year the Corporation of London's Bridge House Estates Trust Fund commissioned URBED to explore and consult on the potential role of a Sustainability Centre for London. The steering group, chaired by Jonathan Porritt, included representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The results are now being published in a report which brings together the findings from over 450 responses to a survey, interviews, a series of workshops, and 20 case studies of relevant initiatives.

After careful consideration the Bridge House Estates Grants Committee, and on the basis of URBED's report, they have decided to make available a substantial grant to help launch and run what will be known as the London Sustainability Exchange.

Copies available from URBED London (£12 inc. postage)



Bradford Cathedral

URBED and the SUN Initiative have recently completed a draft masterplan and regeneration strategy for the area around Bradford Cathedral. As a boom town of the industrial revolution Bradford did not merit a Cathedral until late in



the 19th century. Because of this Bradford Cathedral is surrounded by a run-down area right next to the magnificent Little Germany quarter. The strategy proposes the development of the area as Cathedral Precinct including new-build housing, a rebuilt primary school and development by a range of faith-based organisations.

The real problem in Bradford is however demand. Masterplanning is all well and good but the real issue is to generate interest from developers in an area where there has been no demand for development for years. The strategy is currently being considered by the key stakeholders in the area before being launched in the Autumn.

Cliveden

On a very different site URBED has been commissioned by the National Trust to develop a masterplan for a model village on a derelict hospital site in Buckinghamshire. The site is part in the grounds of Cliveden House, the former Astor residence and plans will be available for consultation in the Autumn.

Recycled Computers

Soon after implementation, we realised that a major obstacle to residents participating, was access to affordable computers. High specification machines are not required for basic applications, and so a hand-full of recycled low specification Pentiums were obtained from Luton based Re-

cycle IT, a not-for-profit company which obtains and refurbishes obsolescent computers from the business sector. With an additional mark-up the computers were offered to residents. A second project to provide residents with recycled computers was thus born, and since this

Building the 21st century home: The sustainable urban neighbourhood
David Rudlin & Nicholas Falk
Published by: The Architectural Press 1999
Price: £19.99
ISBN: 0 7506 25287



The Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood Initiative was set up by URBED and is funded by a range of sponsors. The Autonomous Urban Development project is funded by BRE-CSU administered by the Building Research Establishment and the European Union's ALTENER Fund.

The SUN Project is managed from URBED's Manchester office by David Rudlin, Nick Dodd and Hélène Rudlin.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the project's sponsors



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This edition of SUN Dial has been sponsored by English Partnerships



Why NOT get involved?

The SUN Initiative is a broadly based network. We do not have a membership but if you do not normally receive this newsletter please contact us and we will get you up to date.