garden city settlements and their future:

project log

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PREFACE

Interest in this project dates back several years, following recognition by English Heritage that some of our most popular examples of built environment were not faring well in the face of a variety of modern pressures. The source of concern was the form of development that was inspired, originally, by Ebenezer Howard, who sought to promote the idea of the garden city. Initially, our attention was focused on the few examples in this country of the garden city itself but it was very soon realised that this is simply the truest expression of an extended family of related settlements.

The aim of the project was, quite simply, to identify the 'garden city settlements', to demonstrate the pressures which are threatening to erode their essential qualities, to see what is currently being done to mitigate these pressures and, generalising from our findings, to make various recommendations that might assist in securing their viable future.

Our journey has taken us across the realms of both theory and practice. Such settlements cannot be considered apart from an understanding of the ideas and historical conditions that supported them. Nor would we have got very far without looking in some detail at actual examples. So we decided at the outset that a selection of case studies would form an essential core of the project.

Choosing these case studies proved to be relatively straightforward. First, there were those places that were specifically designed as garden cities. Letchworth and Welwyn are the two classic examples although a later attempt to create a third garden city, at Wythenshawe, was also included. Attention was then turned to a related form of settlement: the renowned garden villages of Bournville and Port Sunlight, and the lesser known Silver End; and the exemplary garden suburbs of Hampstead and Brentham. Even these only represent a much wider network of comparable developments, but it was decided to restrict our case studies to this sample of eight.

This report provides an account of the various stages of the project; it is very much a statement of record. It is available through the Web, in the hope that it might inform those who participated in the surveys and research process, as well as offering a resource for others with an interest in garden city settlements. All of this is, in any case, a background to the main published outcome to the project, a policy advice note to be published by the TCPA.

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Rachel Walmsley was the first project officer and, when she moved to a post in a different organisation, David Waterhouse took over and steered it to fruition. Both project officers were assisted by a Steering Panel, comprising (in addition to TCPA officers) Colum Giles (English Heritage), Mervyn Miller (Architect and Garden City Consultant) and Dennis Hardy (Writer and Consultant).

CHAPTER 1
GARDEN CITIES IN HISTORY

Garden cities have been written and talked about since Ebenezer Howard presented the concept in his acclaimed book, *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, in 1898. As a result, there is a long and ever-growing list of references to one aspect or another of the subject. This first chapter is based on a literature search undertaken at the start of the project to set the current issues in context.

1 Town and Country

During the 1880s, land was the subject of intense debate; it was a time when agriculture was in a poor state, with poor harvests and declining farm rents. People were consequently moving from the country to the city. The cities, in turn, experienced rapid growth and the working population invariably suffered the experience of a cramped living and working environment. Commuting was not a cheap option and, to add to that problem, travel by steam railways and trams was slow. In the face of an increasing population, the supply of housing was inadequate and many were forced to live in crowded and insanitary conditions. Apart from the social costs of these conditions there was also an economic price for businesses to bear; productivity, for instance, was bound to suffer as a result of employing unhealthy labour. It became evident that something had to be done before the situation worsened further, with the attendant risk of and social unrest.

In response to the situation, local authorities were given new powers to enforce building bye-laws, which in turn helped to restrain overcrowding, improve living conditions and consequently social welfare. Such powers, though, were never going to be enough to deal with the scale of the problem; moreover, the new laws themselves led to a dull uniformity in the urban scene. In the words of the architect, Raymond Unwin, 'there are growing up around our towns vast districts, under these very bye-laws, which for dreariness and sheer ugliness it is difficult to match anywhere…'[1]

Faced with the limitations of urban reform, some people looked, instead, to the idea of village-type schemes on rural and semi-rural sites. Henrietta Barnett was one such pioneer. Part of her schooling in social reform was an introduction to housing and the environment by Octavia Hill, a doughty reformer and pioneer of many aspects of social work. Aware of the impact the environment had on personal well-being, Barnett set about trying to find ways to accelerate social reform. She was herself committed with her husband to an earlier social experiment, Toynbee Hall, established in London in 1884. The aim was to create a residential community in one of the poorest parts of

[1] Raymond Unwin R.,1909, in Cullingworth, B. and Nadin, V. (1997) *Town and Country Planning in the UK*, Routledge

London to bring about social change, based on an elitist belief that bringing Oxford intellectuals to live in such areas would be of benefit to the whole community. Henrietta believed that whilst politicians and leaders could advocate the 'ideal society,' communities would not bind together without theory being put into practice.

Some experiments dated from earlier in the century and were already bearing fruit. Titus Salt, for instance, constructed a model town in Saltaire in 1853 that was centred around a large a wool mill, processing alpaca from South America. In addition to the mill, he built model housing, a drainage system, wide streets, gardens, squares, schools and a church. Later examples of industrial villages were to be found in the two settlements of Port Sunlight in 1888 and Bournville in 1895. In Port Sunlight, William Hesketh Lever built a soap factory with housing for the workers and their families; the long terraces of houses had allotments between. George Cadbury, the cocoa and chocolate manufacturer, was responsible for Bournville, creating a successful combination of public health and architecture together with regular employment in the adjoining factory. Every house enjoyed a rear garden and in the front they looked onto trees planted along the roads, wide pavements and grass verges. Port Sunlight and Bournville both paid much attention to the spatial layout of the settlements. The original design of the bye-law housing of straight streets and terraced housing was abandoned for cottages and semi-detached houses, interspersed with trees and gardens.

These settlements, however, were nowhere near enough to solve urban problems at large, and were at best seen as exemplars. Furthermore, because the bye-law system stipulated wide and expensive roads, estate development was expensive and few of the houses were let at rents affordable for the poorer class of worker.

2 Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City

In spite of early experiments and the spread of bye-law housing, there was a need to find a way to make available, for more people, good quality housing in a humane environment. It was Ebenezer Howard, a shorthand writer who worked in London for the later years of his life, who introduced some fresh ideas.

Working for a time in the farmlands of the mid-west of the United States, and then living in Chicago, Howard had a valuable insight into ideas in the New World. He also read widely, including the works of a variety of scientific writers, such as Benjamin Ward Richardson (who wrote 'Hygeia, a City of Health'). Howard's belief was that a way must be found not only to solve the problem of congested cities but also to make the countryside more attractive to reduce outward migration. He therefore devised a strategic concept to overcome these problems that 'was about how we live as a society; it was humanitarian, egalitarian and communitarian.'[2] The 'strategic' concept was

[2] Hall, P. and Ward, C. (1998) *Sociable Cities: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, Wiley

about marrying town and country in a 'garden city', so that people could live close to work in an environment that brought the country into the city.

The attractions of the garden city idea are represented in a famous diagram, the three magnets, which, unbeknown to Howard, would become one the best known planning documents in the world. One magnet represents the town, another, the country, and the third the garden city. For each magnet, Howard highlighted the advantages and disadvantages. The town was associated with social opportunity and well-lit streets but unemployment and high rents. Those living in the country benefited from bright sunshine and the beauty of nature but suffered from a lack of society and deserted villages. The third magnet represents 'town-country', which depicts the best elements of both. Howard wrote that a place that combined the best elements of town and country would have 'plenty to do, pure air and water, social opportunity, low rents, high wages' and so forth.

Howard did not claim that the idea was purely his own; he acknowledged that the garden city drew on key components of earlier schemes, in particular, James Silk Buckingham's model city, depicted in *National Evils and Practical Remedies, with the Plans of a Model Town (1849).* Silk was a compulsive inventor who adopted quite a mechanical approach to finding answers to problems. His publication, *National Evils and Practical Remedies*, proposed a number of economic and political reforms and included a description and plan of a model town. The model town was proposed to be exactly a mile square. In the centre there were major public buildings e.g. a church, art gallery, post office, library, etc. and space for walking and recreation. From this square radiated diagonal avenues. The closer one got to the centre, the larger and grander the houses became. Between these properties would be open spaces, to include public buildings such as dining halls and swimming baths; close by would be shops and workshops, and other places of public recreation. There were no pubs, pawnbrokers, gambling houses or other such establishments. Buckingham explained that 'the arrangement of the buildings, in concentric squares, places the residencies of the working classes nearest the green fields, on the immediate edge of the town, which is favourable to the economy of their time and labour.' It was 'the limited size, the central place, the radial avenues, the peripheral industries, the surrounding green belt and the notion of starting a settlement once the first was full'[3] of Buckingham's model that gave Howard the key features for his own garden city idea.

Howard proposed clusters of self-contained, smaller cities around London, within the matrix of a green belt, yet connected inside and out with adequate transport networks. The concept, often referred to as a 'Group of Slumless, Smokeless Cities,' was aimed at relieving the overcrowding of economic activities and people in the big cities. The movement of people to garden cities would relieve tension in the urban areas. The green belt would help to prevent urban sprawl as the suburbs grew as well as helping to decentralise the population from the city into the self-contained settlements.

[3] Hall, P. and Ward, C., *op.cit.*

The cities would be human in scale with easy access to employment areas (such as light industry e.g. jam making and clothing factories), the town centre and the countryside. Furthermore, the quality of residential living was maximised by separating residential from non-residential uses and therefore promoting a cleaner environment.

At the core of the city, Howard proposed a spacious ornamental garden, overlooked by ornate buildings. This was surrounded by a public park and facilities to include a concert hall and library. Beyond this was the Crystal Palace, a shopping arcade and exhibitions, all within easy reach of each other. Radiating out from here were tree-lined boulevards interspersed by housing. In the outer ring of the city were non-residential uses served by a railway, beyond which lay agricultural land and allotments. Each garden city was surrounded by a green belt, designed to prevent urban sprawl and contain the garden city to its recommended size of 32,000 people (30,000 in the garden city and 2,000 in the agricultural belt). Howard was keen to give adequate space to families and provide them with a garden, and relatively low densities were envisaged. The architecture varied between different parts of the garden city, with a view to always being individual to its locality. Once a garden city reached its population capacity threshold, Howard recommended that another garden city should be developed nearby, so that eventually there would be a cluster of garden cites comprising a 'social city'. Howard thought that the construction of social cities would cause ground rents in London to fall because of out-migration. This would enable slum property to be torn down and replaced by parks, gardens and allotments.

As well as 'urban greening' in the garden city, Howard proposed that an agricultural estate would be integral to the proposed land use. The agricultural estate would be an accessible belt of farmland around the town; farmers would be close to local markets, thereby helping to meet the local demand for food and also create a rational scheme of production. Howard hoped that the larger fields would be farmed by capitalist farmers growing wheat, and the smaller fields by various individuals to grow fruit and vegetables. Furthermore, in the outer ring of the garden city, Howard proposed factories, warehouses, timber and coal yards. These would provide building materials for the garden city. These would have easy access to the railways which meant that goods could be easily loaded and taken to market.

Probably the most important feature of the garden city concept was Howard's idea of retaining land betterment for the benefit of the residents. This idea essentially came from the late eighteenth-century land campaigner, Thomas Spence, and Howard reproduced in his own book Spence's claim that "every individual parish should become a corporation and seize its rights to its land, which had been usurped by landlords; rents would henceforth be paid to them, to be used for public purposes like building and repairing houses and roads. These rents would produce a surplus for distribution to the needy and for social expenditure." Howard proposed that the land of a garden city would be owned by one company ('four responsible gentlemen') who would lease the land having acquired it at agricultural value. The rents would be charged

once the development was complete, at a higher rate than originally (the development would naturally raise the value of the land). The income would go to the company to pay off the interest (on the mortgage) and be put back into the community. This system of land management would be overseen by the Trustees of a limited-dividend company, responsible for the commercial business of borrowing money and building the Garden City. A Board of Management would spend the proceeds from the rate-rents, consisting of the 'Central Council' to manage the funds and 'The Departments' to delegate the funds with specific functions e.g. engineering, education etc.

Howard's proposals to fund social welfare were also supported by his idea to locate a range of philanthropic institutions such as agricultural colleges, industrial schools and children's cottage homes within the city. These institutions were expected to become functions of what amounted to a local welfare state.

3 Garden City Settlements

Howard's ideas were presented at a time when politicians, philanthropists and social reformers were actively seeking a solution to the twin problems of town and country. London itself, the source of much of Howard's concern, was something of a hotbed for radical ideas. Reformers met regularly to discuss possible ways forward, while the labour movement was flexing its muscles to press for change. When Howard's book was published, in 1898, it attracted a mixed response. Political critics, in particular, felt that the ideas were too utopian and Howard was criticised for an idea that occupied a nebulous 'middle ground'. In contrast, there were others who thought his non-confrontational approach – steering a path between capitalism and socialism – was just what was wanted. It was from the latter body of support that the Garden City Association was formed in 1899; its purpose was to promote the ideas in Howard's book and, in practical terms, to work towards the formation of the world's first garden city. By the time that a revised edition of Howard's book was published, towards the end of 1902, the Association had gathered a membership of over 1300,[4] to include artists, politicians, financiers and manufacturers. This following paved the way for injecting a stronger business presence into the movement. 'Howard was able to persuade eminent businessmen such as George Cadbury and W.H. Lever, founders of the industrial villages of Bournville and Port Sunlight, to support the formation of the Garden City Pioneer Company Limited in July 1902 to investigate sites and take the preliminary steps towards establishing Letchworth as the First Garden City.'[5]

Letchworth, being 34 miles from London and in an area of low land values (as a result of depressed agriculture) met the company's criteria for a site of between 4000-6000 acres, and with good rail connections, satisfactory water supply and good drainage. The architects, Raymond Unwin and Barry

[4] Onslow *et al* (1989) *Garden Cities and New Towns,* Hertfordshire Publications
[5] Purdom, C.B. (1963) *The Letchworth Achievement*, Dent

Parker, were appointed to prepare a layout for the town and to design some of the houses. Their plans immediately attracted acclaim internationally. The perimeter of Letchworth was well-defined with generous areas of parkland within as well as around the settlement. The town centre was separated from the housing, some of the latter being located close to the industrial area to provide local employment. Green spaces helped to articulate the plan and layout of the garden city; housing was informally grouped and benefited from a neighbourly design with cul-de-sacs, village greens and buildings that were human in scale.

Letchworth would not have come to fruition without the practical drive of the Garden City Company. It was ostensibly a private company but with limited dividends for investors; the Memorandum and Articles of Association guaranteed that any additional money made by the company would be ploughed back into the community. Whilst the company, in its early years, found the financial challenge difficult it later became highly profitable, so much so that in the late 1950s it was almost taken over by a private property firm intent on 'asset stripping'. That threat was averted and Letchworth Garden City is now an attractive and prosperous town that still benefits from some of the profits made through rents and sales.

It had always been intended that the example of the first garden city would be used to encourage others to follow suit. Although this did not immediately yield another fully-fledged garden city, the publicity given to Letchworth prompted the reform-minded Henrietta Barnett to announce her intention to found a garden suburb. Instead of a self-standing settlement a garden suburb would be attached to the metropolis. On the proviso that the London Underground line would be extended north to the new station of Golders Green, Henrietta proposed a suburb that would respect, and gain from, the natural beauty of the adjoining heath. The plan for Hampstead Garden Suburb comprised groups of housing to encourage neighbourliness. Cul-de-sacs, a bowling green, a primary school, a club house and footpaths independent of the street network added to this neighbourliness, creating an amenable environment.

In addition to Hampstead, other experiments followed. An important one was not far away, at Ealing in west London, where Henry Vivian was involved in the development of Brentham Garden Suburb. Development had started on conventional suburban lines between 1901 and 1902, but in 1906, with the assistance of Raymond Unwin, the plans were transformed into a model suburb. Brentham was the first suburb to be built on 'co-partnership' principles and its houses were mostly in the Arts and Crafts style.

Although Letchworth remained the only fully-fledged model of a garden city, experiments like Hampstead and Brentham were welcomed by the Association for their various environmental improvements. Other new developments that claimed garden city provenance were sometimes little more than conventional suburbs, but developers were quick to see the added commercial value in associating with the true concept. The irony was that, even a presumed thoroughbred like Letchworth had been forced to jettison

some of the most important garden city principles along the way. Indeed, when the second version of Howard's book was published in 1902, the author was persuaded to change the title to avoid any reference to 'real reform.' Over time, changes were made to Howard's original ideas of administering the garden city, raising capital for use in the community, the size of the estate, design layout and other such features. With the involvement of various businessmen and professionals, the movement became more hard-edged than Howard had anticipated, although it needed this edge to take the project forward.

4 From Garden Cities to New Towns

The Garden City Association retained Howard's ideas at the core of its work but it widened its brief to encompass related experiments as well as campaigning for new legislation. A name change in 1908, to Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, signalled this broader remit, and it was particularly active in pressing for the first town planning Act – brought onto the statute books in 1909.

Although its work was interrupted after 1914, in the course of the war, the need for new housing remained high on the domestic agenda. Whilst the Government at this time was reluctant to commit to new housing, and the Association was powerless to change this, it joined an active debate on what needed to be done once the war ended. An important policy change for the Association was to recognise that voluntary initiatives would not be enough in the future and that a more interventionist State had become inevitable.[6] Frederic Osborn, who started work as a rent collector in Letchworth and was to become its leading campaigner for more than half a century, was responsible for this shift in policy. In a book, *New Towns After The War*, he argued the case for 100 new towns and argued for a central role for the State. With new opportunities opening, Osborn worked tirelessly in the inter-war years to get planning onto the political agenda.[7]

With the ending of the war, an opportunity arose to promote the garden city as an appropriate model for new development. A committee, led by Sir John Tudor Walters and heavily influenced by Unwin, 'fully endorsed the garden city model in terms of housing standards and layouts and proposed a system of State subsidies to local authorities, which would be given statutory responsibility for the supply of working-class rental housing.'[8] At the start of 1919 the garden city movement seized the opportunity to influence housing and industrial developments, campaigning hard across the country for garden city principles to be adopted. 'Intertwined with the postwar housing campaign, the Association sought to ensure that new houses were discussed within a wider context of garden cities and town planning.'[9]

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[6] Hardy, D. (1991) *From Garden Cities to New Towns*, Spon
[7] Hall, P. *et al* (2003), *op cit*
[8] Miller, M (2002) 'Garden Cities and Suburbs: At Home and Abroad' , *Journal of Planning History*, February
[9] Hardy, D. (1991), *op cit*

Despite bold statements by the Government at this time that homes would be built for returning heroes, Howard was keen to lead by example. A second experiment was therefore born to the north of London, not many miles from Letchworth, on land that became Welwyn Garden City. Drawing on lessons learnt from Letchworth (such as difficulties with funding, planning and architectural conformity) Howard was successful in bidding, in May 1919, for agricultural land at an auction sale. Louis de Soissons was appointed to develop the master plan, incorporating the neighbourhood concept into his designs, mixing modern and traditional features. Critics scorned Welwyn for being either a socialist utopia or a company town. Howard and his followers set up Second Garden City Ltd., that later became Welwyn Garden City Ltd., to build and manage the town.

In the early years, against the background of the nation's severe economic difficulties, the town faced massive financial problems. The company, however, never lost faith and by 1939 the town had become well established, with a good sense of community. Welwyn was able to demonstrate many examples of good quality housing and the advantages of properly planned neighbourhoods. Following the Second World War, and the passing in 1946 of the New Towns Act, control of the garden city company was moved to a Government-led Development Corporation. The day of the voluntary sector in town building appeared to be over and future growth was to be guided by a public body.

Meanwhile, in the interwar years, a third attempt to build a garden city, at Wythenshawe to the south of Manchester, had been less successful. Barry Parker was appointed to develop the master plan and he implanted some unmistakeable garden city features: good neighbourhood planning, separation of pedestrians from traffic, and impressive parkways. It was a bold attempt to plan a new community but the governance of the proposed garden city was ceded to the local authority, which saw it more as a means of rapidly meeting its housing targets than of achieving broad-based social and environmental reform.

Meanwhile, the interwar years saw the mass development of low-density suburbanisation, both public and private. Encouraged by government policy, many new municipal garden suburbs were built; environmentally they offered higher standards than residents had experienced before but, being away from the city centres and often without adequate services, they were not always popular. This was also the time of extensive private house-building in the suburbs. Many referred to 'suburban sprawl' occurring as housing appeared to be consuming and threatening the countryside. To add insult to injury, the Association discovered on numerous occasions that unscrupulous developers, while eschewing garden city principles, were widely marketing their developments on 'garden city lines.'[10] Amongst these developments the Association continued to campaign for the garden city ideal, objecting to those developments that were ill-sited.

[10] Hardy, D. (1991), *op. cit.*

By one means and another, the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association maintained the garden city concept in the public eye although it was still not at the centre of successive government agendas. It was not until after the Second World War that the garden city idea really took off in the form of a national new towns programme; by then the Association had changed its name again, this time to the Town and Country Planning Association to mark the part it wanted to play in the future planning of the nation. The new towns programme, emerged as a result of various policy initiatives, related to the geography of economic development, to an attempt to win for the community a share in rising land values, to a fresh look at the importance of agriculture and farmland, and as a result of an urgent need to provide new housing. In direct terms, the report of the Barlow Commission of 1940 recommended that new towns were a means to relieve congestion and overcrowding in the cities. Picking up the baton, in 1944 the Abercrombie Greater London Plan proposed ten new satellite towns to be built outside London. Then, in 1946, the Reith Committee reported not only on the need for new towns but on ways to build them.[11] It was this that led directly to the New Towns Act of 1946, the statutory basis for the post-war new towns programme. The plans was rolled out in phases, the first between 1946 and 1950, beginning with the first new town, Stevenage, in 1946; the second phase in the 1950s; and the third from 1964, when thirteen additional new towns were built.

Whilst this was a landmark achievement in the history of the garden city movement, the new towns were much larger than the ideal size originally favoured by Ebenezer Howard. Furthermore, the towns were controlled by government agencies, their development was based on housing need rather than on who was to live there, and much greater emphasis was put on commercialisation than Howard had first envisaged.

5 Lessons from the Garden City Movement

Garden cities were conceived in a much poorer world than today, when the structure of the community was less dispersed and technology was certainly not so advanced. The garden city movement, however, can still offer many important lessons. At a time when the Government is seeking to promote sustainable communities, the garden city is are every bit as relevant now as it was one hundred years ago. We can learn much that is of value in looking back to past experience.

- o Garden cities offer a demonstration of how long it takes to build true communities:
- the Government is promoting the development of sustainable communities but, as the garden city movement has shown, communities take time to establish;
- a community needs time to grow; it needs to be cultivated;

[11] Hall, D (1989) 'Garden Cities and New Towns', in Onslow *et al*, *op cit*

- a community is dynamic and is therefore continually changing; we must plan to take account of this;
- the time needed for a community to grow highlights the challenge we face of achieving large-scale, sustainable regeneration and redevelopment.

o Garden cities show that it is not unfashionable to start with 'vision':
- we can be encouraged by the garden city movement – that places of quality can be developed if we start with the right level of commitment and intentions – and the appropriate vision;
- the garden city movement shows the importance of working to a framework of social, environmental and economic principles. The central principle should be based around the human being;
- building sustainable communities requires a strategy for social and economic objectives as much as physical/environmental objectives;
- the garden city movement shows how urban revival is a very long-term project: that we need to look long-term, in the interests of generations in these communities, not short-term.

o Garden cities have always shown how important – and difficult – it is for the community to capture rising land values:
- the garden city movement shows how difficult it is to find appropriate and sustainable ways to capture land value in the interests of the community;
- in particular, the movement shows the complexities in capturing land values to fund infrastructure. '*For over half a century, debate has raged in Britain over the right way to recoup the share of the profits from land development that rightly belongs to the community, since public agencies have had to provide much of the physical and social infrastructure, and since the land value arises in large measure through the grant of planning permission. What has eluded us all this time is to find a way of capturing this added value that is effective, efficient in operation and politically acceptable enough to be stable over time.'*[12]
- the movement also illustrates the financial difficulty of drawing a balance between up-front expenditure versus long-term returns. *'We have seen that, ever since Howard's day, this interrelated question has proved one of the most intractable: we have never been able to devise a solution that successfully combined public and private agencies and financing, and we have never…come near Howard's vision of a self-governing, self-financing commonwealth.'*[13]
- the challenge is *'how to marry private finance and enterprise with strategic planning and with development and funding procedures so as to put new homes in the right places, thus to produce a pattern of development that is convenient, efficient, equitable and above all sustainable.'*[14]

o Garden cities illustrate how difficult it is to build new settlements from scratch:

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[12] Hall, P. and Ward, C. (1998), *op. cit.*
[13] *Ibid*
[14] *Ibid*

- a review of garden city settlements today illustrates the problem of developing on a large scale;
- when developments are built at the same time, they mature at a similar rate and often need repairing and regenerating at the same time. This has obvious resource issues as well as social, environmental and economic implications.
- garden city projects demanded a skilled workforce. A rolling programme is needed to make sure that we have the appropriate knowledge and skills to build today's sustainable communities.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES: OVERVIEW

Garden city settlements are neither more nor less immune from contemporary pressures than other forms of development. The difference in the case of these settlements is that their carefully designed environments are sometimes more vulnerable to change and in need of protection. In this chapter, the context of present issues is outlined with illustrations from some of the garden city settlements.

1 Housing

1.1 Meeting the Need for New Housing

As the Government promotes the need for more homes, pressure is being put on existing settlements, including garden city settlements, to accommodate this additional housing. Silver End, for instance, by virtue of being within a designated Village Envelope and surrounded by protected open countryside and agricultural land effectively self-polices itself. Welwyn Garden City, on the other hand, being a new town, has various vacant sites that have become vacant through the re-organisation of secondary schools and from a decreased demand for playing fields. These sites have the potential to be redeveloped.

In Letchworth, there is growing pressure exercised by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) for the land to the north of the city to accommodate some of the additional housing required in the region. EERA wishes to increase the population size by 25%. The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (LGCHF) is against this proposal as it is concerned that the additional, modern housing will detract from the setting of the garden city and harm its historical integrity. As well as pressure from EERA there is also pressure from developers wishing to develop both vacant and backland sites within Letchworth. The vacant sites have come about because of a change in the economic climate, together with a decline in attendance at the schools, which has resulted in brownfield sites becoming available for redevelopment. Whilst settlements like Letchworth can police themselves[15], there is concern that the pressure to develop at higher densities will result in developments that are out-of-keeping with the historical and architectural integrity of the garden city settlements.

With this growing pressure to accommodate additional housing there is the pressure to develop at higher densities from those originally proposed when

[15] The covenants on the properties restrict one house per site.

the garden city settlements were first developed. North Hertfordshire Council and the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation are aware of the growing conflict between the need to develop to higher densities, and therefore in storeys of three or more, but at the same time ensure that new development is in keeping with the smaller-scale properties of the Garden City. Furthermore, the Council is struggling to accommodate the more modern architecture and materials into an environment that is dominated by white or cream roughcast, red stock brick and red plain clay tiles.

In Port Sunlight, there has been a proposed development site to the south of the conservation area, alongside the existing factory that has been the cause of considerable controversy. The site has a history of planning applications for residential development; the same theme running through them all is that the development would be for flats and developed to a higher density than the rest of Port Sunlight. Because the ownership of the site is split between Port Sunlight Village Trust and Miller Homes it has not been possible for a comprehensive proposal to come forward. The approach, therefore, has been somewhat *ad hoc.* To make the site financially viable, together with the guidance offered by Central Government for housing densities of 30-50 dwellings per hectare, there is concern amongst the local residents, the Council and the local MP that a contemporary, high-density development will be out-of-keeping with the character of Port Sunlight.

As well as needing to meet the demand for additional housing, the Government is promoting mixed communities and therefore housing that meets various needs. In Letchworth, Letchworth Cottages and Buildings Ltd (a social housing subsidiary) has undertaken a major housing needs survey which is looking to find ways of filling evident gaps in the garden city's diverse housing mix. In Wythenshawe, there is a growing demand for owner-occupied housing. This is partly because of the success and attractiveness of Manchester itself, which means that people wish to live in a suburb close by. Development pressures have, therefore, increased, particularly in the south on land close to the airport where there is a particular demand for hotels.

1.2 Home Ownership and Affordability

Economic and social change will affect every urban area and is by no means confined to garden city settlements. During the 1970s and 1980s, the 'Right to Buy' schemes meant that many houses within garden city settlements were sold on the open market rather than to existing tenants. This had a knock-on effect. Braintree District Council's Supplementary Planning Guide, 'Silver End Conservation Guide', notes that 'unfortunately the unified planned appearance of Silver End has been eroded over the years. Much of the pressure for change has resulted from the Local Authority's scheme to sell houses individually, in line with national policy.' Because the houses were no longer under the control of the local authority or trust, physical constraints slackened and home-owners made alterations to their properties that were not always in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. Repairs, replacements and the search for individuality have adversely affected the character of these settlements.

Many of the garden city settlements were designed to have a mix of housing types and tenure, and therefore to a certain extent are able to accommodate changes in housing need. The houses are, however, becoming increasingly unaffordable. Brentham Garden Suburb has become very expensive, along with other garden suburb settlements such as Bedford Park in Chiswick. This has as much to do with the fact that Brentham is close to London and has excellent access to the tube, as well as being a place of good quality housing with long-established greens and commons; it is, therefore, becoming an increasingly attractive and popular place to live. There is pressure to subdivide properties into smaller units where the houses are big enough to do so, in order to make housing more affordable.

Subdivision requires structural alterations, in particular, the re-arrangement of internal walls. Properties in the Model Village in Welwyn Garden City have been subdivided into flats. This type of re-arrangement is also causing some concern in Port Sunlight, where internal walls of listed buildings are being removed or altered without listed building consent. Whilst this may not necessarily be evident from the outside of the property, it interferes with the historical integrity of the property and the village as a whole, and it is difficult to monitor and take appropriate action when the works are unauthorised.

1.3 Extensions

The needs of residents change over time. Some of the original houses within garden city settlements are small and residents are demanding larger internal spaces. This is for a variety of reasons. Because of soaring house prices it is cheaper for residents to adapt houses rather than move. Higher house prices have also encouraged builders and small development companies to buy and extend houses, which they can then sell on at a considerable profit. Furthermore, changing employment and social expectations are resulting in residents wanting greater space so that they can work and live at home. The pressure for additions to properties is therefore increasing. Residents are demanding separate bedrooms for each of their children, kitchen-diners, extra bathrooms and shower rooms and in middle-class households there is a wish for large unobstructed areas in which to entertain.

The demand for more space in Brentham Garden Suburb is significant, particularly because of the added pressure from ethnic minority groups who want self-contained accommodation for extended families. These pressures are not unique to Brentham but are representative of such demands elsewhere in the London Borough of Ealing. Properties such as those in Brentham are set within grounds large enough to enable residents to extend their properties to the rear or to the side, and still retain a good sized garden. However, extensions can, if inappropriate in design or scale, harm the character of the property both historically and architecturally. Furthermore, they can have a harmful, cumulative impact on the street scene and on the character of the area as a whole. Brentham suffers from the detrimental, cumulative impact of rear extensions. Whilst one small rear extension to a property can be accommodated relatively easily into the urban fabric, a

number of extensions to the rear of a terrace of houses can substantially change its total character and appearance. Brentham is suffering from a growing trend amongst residents who await a decision on a development proposal in the area before applying for a similar proposal themselves, knowing that the precedent has been set for development of a similar design.

It is not that controls on extending properties are not on the statute books. Controls can be in the form of development policies: the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral Council, for example, has policies that prohibit loft conversions because the large exit windows that are required to meet Building Regulation standards are contrary to the design and character of the properties. Other controls are exercised through planning legislation; planning permission is required for any development that exceeds the Permitted Development limits. In this situation, the local planning authority can exercise control under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and influence the design and scale of a development proposal to make sure that it is in keeping with the area's character. The London Borough of Ealing has strict controls on the size and layout of ground floor extensions; the Council's Policy and Design Guide confines extensions to 'one storey across half the width of the house to a maximum depth of 8 metres.'[16] Sometimes, this strict approach can 'back-fire': thus, in Hampstead Garden Suburb, strict controls on extensions above ground has meant that residents are finding ways to extend properties underground, i.e. to develop basements. Needless to say, the Council has become pre-occupied with enforcement cases concerning unauthorised and inappropriate development.

North Hertfordshire District Council and Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (LGCHF) have taken a more flexible approach, setting out some basic principles in their design guide that residents are encouraged to observe. For example, the guide states that 'the extension should be designed to respect the original character of the house and should reflect and be sympathetic to the character of the neighbourhood.'[17] Unfortunately, there are some extensions that are not reported in sufficient time for enforcement action. Alternatively, proposals are built differently to the planning permission that was granted; one property in Brentham Garden Suburb, for example, was given planning permission for a small extension, but a much larger extension was built, now out of keeping in design and scale with the original dwelling house. There are also some extensions that do not require the Council's consent because they are deemed to be 'permitted development'. Whilst these meet the legal planning requirements they can still have an adverse impact on the character of the garden city settlement. In Letchworth, for example, extensions under permitted development have enclosed important spaces between buildings. Similarly, in Brentham, the layout of the estate means that the rear aspects of the dwellings are frequently exposed, therefore affecting the overall appearance of the estate even more. There are some instances where extensions and alterations under permitted development are

[16] London Borough of Ealing Planning and Economic Development Division (May 1988) *Brentham Garden Estate Conservation Area: Policy and Design Guide*
[17] LGCHF and NHDC (April 2001) *Design Guidance for Residential Areas in Letchworth Garden City*

having such an adverse impact that an Article 4 direction has been introduced to remove permitted development rights.

Many trusts and local planning authorities encourage residents to make appropriate alterations to their properties to help conserve their character and enhance their condition. In these situations, design guides are of particular value. Problems arise when extensions may have escaped the Council's notice in the past, or were permitted before an Article 4 Direction was served, thus setting an unwanted precedent for further development. Equally, in places such as Welwyn Garden City and Brentham Garden Suburb, a large amount of modern infill from the 1970s and inappropriate doors and windows have upset the architectural and historical rhythm and integrity of the area. In Brentham Garden Suburb, many owners have sought to put back original features; encouragingly it is younger people who are interested in restoring these features, perhaps influenced by TV property programmes. Much of the development from the 1970s, however, sets a very different context for deciding planning applications. It is difficult for example, to tell a resident that their modern extension is not acceptable when their neighbour has one that was built in the 1960s.

1.4 Doors and Windows

Many of the houses within garden city settlements are characterised by their attention to detail. The design of smaller features such as doors, windows, porches and chimneys were an essential element in the character of these settlements, integral to the nature of the properties individually but also to the street as a whole. Many of these features, however, require high maintenance; invariably, for example, the original windows were timber framed and need painting regularly. Residents today are keen to replace timber framed windows with Upvc, that is readily available on the market, is much cheaper than the handmade, timber varieties, and is seen as being longer lasting and maintenance free. The cumulative effect, however, is frequently a matter for concern. Off-the-shelf fittings in substitute materials are often unsympathetic and unacceptable in design. Such alterations can affect the character of individual properties, and upset the symmetry and integrity of linked properties, as well as materially altering the character and architectural character of the street.

Doors and porches are equally important to the design of properties. As noted in the design guide for Letchworth Garden City, 'the use of modern materials results in unsympathetic and unacceptable design… modern 'Georgian style' doors and windows are inappropriate for the Garden City which takes more of its features from traditional, rural buildings.' Some properties have had their original doors replaced by modern designs; in Brentham, many of the arches which formed a porch have been enclosed. Elsewhere, Bournville Village Trust and Wirral Council (for Port Sunlight) have been encouraging residents to install timber-framed windows. Some residents, having seen the benefits in converting to the timber windows, have decided to follow suit.

1.5 Other Alterations

Garden city settlements are also at risk from the detrimental impact of a change in building materials, in the course of making alterations. There is evidence in Welwyn Garden City of residents re-roofing their properties in inappropriate materials, artificially cladding house frontages, removing chimneys and changing the colour of 'pebbledash' from the original cream/off-white colourwash. Some properties in Brentham Garden Suburb have had their rendering painted in a different colour from surrounding houses. An introduction of strong colours from the original white has affected the appearance and unity of their street. Even the smallest of changes can have a detrimental impact on the character of the area. In Welwyn Garden City's town centre, pedestrian barriers, signboards, recycling bins, poles, bollards and rubbish skips harm the quality of the environment and therefore the character of the conservation area.

The architectural integrity of garden city settlements can also be affected by technological changes that would have been unimaginable at the time the settlements were originally built. Minor changes such as the addition of satellite dishes, burglar alarms, television aerials on chimneys, central heating boiler flues, air conditioning plants and so forth have a cumulative impact on the character of an area. The roofline in various streets in Welwyn Garden City is marred by the clutter of antennae, receivers and access ladders. At the more extreme end of the spectrum, Barnet Council has had applications for car-lifts in front drives and proposals to install solar panels. Whilst for one house the erection of a satellite dish is considered to be a minor alteration, the combined impact of numerous satellite dishes in the street can alter its whole character.

The characteristics of garden city settlements, particularly those parts designated as conservation areas, can be affected by changes taking place in properties just beyond the boundaries. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order in such areas permits certain development, often minor alterations such as small extensions and dormer and replacement windows, without needing the Council's consent. In Brentham Garden Suburb, properties just beyond the boundary of the conservation area have been altered in this way and have had a detrimental impact on the character of the Garden Suburb itself. This impact has been exacerbated in one instance, where the boundary of the conservation area runs down the middle of the road. This has meant that those properties on one side, exempt from conservation area control, jeopardise the setting for those on the other side. The Council would do well to consider extending the boundary to encompass both sides of the road.

1.6 Boundary Treatments

Many of the boundary treatments within garden city settlements add to the rural character of the area, and therefore it is vital to the Garden City scene that they are retained. Unfortunately, in many settlements indigenous boundary features are being removed. In Letchworth Garden City, front

boundary hedges are being replaced by other forms of enclosure e.g. fences and brick walls. In Brentham Garden Suburb, hedges are being poorly managed which often results in them dying; while traditional wooden gates are replaced by more modern designs that require less maintenance. These alterations can have a significant impact on the street scene, in contrast to the original intentions of the garden city design.

2 Economic

Since the garden city settlements were first built the economic climate has understandably changed, and fundamentally so. Work and live patterns are focused less around the local community. Residents will have a wider network of contacts; they will also be less likely to shop locally but drive to the nearest town for a wider range of goods and services. This has inevitably had an impact on the garden city settlements given that they were developed to be largely self-contained, sustainable communities.

Letchworth Garden City is perhaps an exception to the other case studies on the basis that it is managed by a Trust that is both a charity and a property company. As Ebenezer Howard once argued, the profits from the Garden City Estate should be directed back into the community through the Foundation's charitable objectives. This has meant that, unlike the other settlements, a considerable amount of money has been re-invested locally.[18] Some of the major development projects have been a considerable success, in social as well as economic terms. One example has been the redevelopment of the Spirella Building, which is a high-tech office building. Regrettably, not all trusts have such large sums of money at their disposal and development is determined more directly by market forces.

2.1 Retail

The Nexus building in Letchworth Garden City's town centre, formally a run-down 1960s development, has been successfully restored at a cost of nearly £5 million and has helped to improve the environmental quality of the town centre. Nevertheless, the centre remains vulnerable to competition from nearby towns. Letchworth Garden City is unable to attract larger stores and supermarkets, partly because the floorspace within the centre is restricted. The Trust and the Council have jointly recognised that for Letchworth to survive it must develop a niche market. At the time of writing, consultants were looking at what the centre's future might be for the next 5 –10 years.

Welwyn Garden City, on the other hand, is succeeding on the retail front, partly because it has space within its centre to expand. A retail floorspace assessment has identified that the pressure to expand the centre is increasing. At the time of writing, there were proposals in the pipeline to

[18] For the Foundation's first seven years the Heritage Foundation gave the community over £11.5 million (as reported in its brochure 'Letchworth: The World's First Garden City' (Winter 2002).

extend the Waitrose supermarket as well as to develop a mixed use scheme near to the original Shredded Wheat factory. Welwyn is also seeing a growing pressure to convert existing commercial space into residential accommodation. Situated on the western side of Parkway, buildings originally designed for retail uses have been converted into residential units.

Aesthetically, however, retail development is not always easily matched to the character of a garden city. Commercial signage often jars with the original design of a town centre. 'Shopfronts were originally intended to form a continuity of simple, white painted timber fascia and sub fascia boards, with vertical divisions between shops. Present corporate signage is less likely to respect the recommended dimensions of fascia boards and frequently includes intrusive colouration and inappropriate materials.'[19]

2.2 Commerce

Bournville, Port Sunlight and Silver End were all settlements built to house workers at the dominant local factory. Industry has changed radically since then; manufacturing has declined and many residents commute out of the garden city settlement to work elsewhere. In the case of Bournville, exceptionally, the chocolate factory continues to flourish. Its very success has meant that the company wants to make the factory its headquarters and a centre of excellence and therefore extend the building. Changes to the factory are currently under discussion but this is causing some contention and concern for the Trust, which believes that the design will be out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

2.3 Tourism

Many of the garden city settlements have a following of planners and developers from abroad who want to visit the case studies and learn appropriate lessons from them. Port Sunlight and Bournville also have a following of the general public who, come to learn about the entrepreneurs and visit the museums. Perhaps surprisingly, since the Port Sunlight Village is relatively small in scale and has between 25-28,000 visitors passing through each year, tourism has little impact on the village itself. Coaches can sometimes interfere with daily traffic flows but, on the whole, this does not upset the residents. There are proposals, nevertheless, for the Heritage Centre to move to a different location within the village. The Business Plan predicts that tourism will grow and, therefore, the Centre needs to move to a site where it can expand and accommodate the additional visitors. This move requires careful consideration to ensure that the intensified activity does not have a detrimental impact on the village. In particular, the likely impact from the increased number of vehicles descending on the village will need to be considered.

[19] Built Environment Advisory and Management Service (BEAMS). Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Conservation Area. A Conservation Appraisal and Character Study.

3 Environment

3.1 Trees and Landscaping

Mature trees, hedges, open spaces and other forms of landscaping are an essential part of garden city settlements, adding a rural feel to the area. Unfortunately, landscaping is being lost or poorly managed in many settlements for a variety of reasons. Many of the existing trees were planted as part of a planned scheme, important to the design and character of the settlement. As time has gone by, though, some of these are now out of scale with the character of the surrounding buildings and are considered too large for their situation. It is not uncommon for them to be removed or severely lopped, particularly in places such as Brentham Garden Suburb where the gardens are too small for the trees, causing a loss of light. All of this is detrimental to the character of the street scene. Alternatively, the larger trees are being replaced with smaller varieties which are also altering the sense of scale and unity of such developments.

Landscaping can often inflict pressures on those responsible for maintaining it, mostly the local authority or local trust. Councils are often inundated with complaints from residents about the condition of the trees, or about the fact that the trees are causing damage to their property, either through leaf fall or through the roots causing damage to building foundations. The village of Port Sunlight has a number of dead and dying mature trees. This has considerable maintenance and funding issues, to the extent that the Port Sunlight Village Trust has identified a need for a rejuvenation programme to include the planting of tree species that are more appropriate to the local climate and environment. The Port Sunlight Village Trust has also recently had problems with its landscaping contract to the extent that the Trust has taken on the landscaping responsibilities itself. The Trust, however, is financially stretched to carry out necessary work to the landscaped grounds and street trees, and therefore the village is at risk of a future degradation of the environment. Signs of this are already visible; one of the bowling greens has had to be converted to a landscaped area because the Trust has insufficient funds to maintain it. In Hampstead Garden Suburb, the lack of resources to pay for regular environmental improvements and landscaping has had more of an impact; the Council has replaced many of the grass verges with hard landscaping to cut down on maintenance costs. In Wythenshawe, Willow Park Housing Trust, which is currently refurbishing much of the property it owns, has concreted over existing grass verges to cut back on maintenance fees.

3.2 Other Issues

As well as incremental changes to the landscaping having a detrimental impact on the character of garden city settlements, changes to the surroundings as a whole can also harm the settlement's integrity. In Brentham Garden Suburb, the laying of telecommunications cables in the ground has scarred the pavement; while in Bournville the local garden centre leaves skips and empty pallets lying around, which harms the quality of the

environment. In Port Sunlight and Welwyn Garden City, skateboarders are causing an increased amount of damage to street furniture and the cottage hospital in Port Sunlight, which is derelict, is attracting drug users and associated social problems. In Welwyn Garden City, public seating, particularly in the open spaces of Parkway, Howardsgate and the western end of the Church Street car park, is frequently mismatched and in need of repair.

In Wythenshawe, the local park, which is a large open space with various recreational facilities, (e.g. golf and tennis) is an important feature of the garden city settlement, contributing to its special character. Unfortunately, the park is falling into disrepair; in particular, Wythenshawe Hall, a listed building, is in urgent need of renovation and repair. This is largely because the management of the park is the responsibility of various bodies that do not work in partnership with each other. The Wythenshawe Regeneration Team is aware of this problem. At the time of writing, an audit of open space was being carried out and a Transport and Open Spaces Action Plan was being devised.

Where a pro-active approach is taken, the results can be quite positive. Bournville Village Trust, for instance, has been successful in tackling problems of vandalism in Sycamore Road. Traffic improvements and environmental works to the front of the shops have successfully reduced problems of vandalism. With this has come a tangible pride for the area amongst residents. The Council is considering installing CCTV within the village to overcome further problems of vandalism.

3.3 Allotments

Allotments were a feature of garden city settlements; the very idea of residents growing their own vegetables fitted squarely into the whole ethos of this kind of community. Brentham, as an example, was provided with allotments in 1909 to give residents the option of gardening and growing their own fruit and vegetables. Today, these allotments exist in varying forms: some have disappeared altogether, lost when houses were sold to private owners, while others are still enthusiastically worked. Ownership of these allotments can, however, be hard to identify as some were sold with houses and others remained with Bradford Property Trust (now Granger).

3.4 Parking

When the garden city settlements were built, one could not have anticipated the level of car ownership that exists today. The settlements were designed so that residents could work and live in the same area, without having to travel outside the settlement. Today however we travel greater distances, work far beyond the boundaries of the local community and because of an inadequate public transport network, combined with the convenience of the motor car, many households have more than one car. Because of this, there is a high demand for off-street parking which is having a significant, detrimental impact on the character of the garden city settlements.

Parked cars in Bournville interrupt the views and vistas within the village and, in the majority of settlements surveyed, are damaging grass verges. Students parking in the residential streets to attend the local college block the vistas from neighbouring houses. This problem is being exacerbated with the increase in the number of day release students. In the centre of Welwyn Garden City, grass verges are being damaged with cars parking half on and half off the pavement, while in Letchworth Garden City the open green space in the cul-de-sacs is being lost to parking. To overcome the problem in Welwyn Garden City, the Council has devised an environmental improvement programme so that cars can park off the road without damaging the verges.

3.5 Hard-standing

As well as losing the grass verges to car parking, front gardens are also being lost to hard-standing. Residents want their cars parked safely off the road and, as conveniently as possible, close to their house. Residents have therefore created their own parking space within the boundaries of their dwelling house or, where space permits, have erected garages. Replacing gardens with hard-standing is a common problem in Welwyn Garden City and Bournville. The official response to this has largely been one of compromise. In Bournville, the Village Trust and Birmingham City Council have collaborated to produce a conservation area design guide. This recommends that, if there is nowhere else to park, a driveway may be necessary but that it should be designed in such a way to have a minimal impact on the character of the area. The guide recommends that the driveway be kept as small as possible and appropriate materials and landscaping be used to soften the impact of the hard-standing. A similar guide has been produced in Letchworth Garden City. In Brentham Garden Suburb, the problem is not so acute as front gardens are generally small and therefore with insufficient space to park a vehicle.

4 Social

4.1 Gentrification

Many of the garden city settlements are becoming increasingly popular places to live in. Brentham Garden Suburb, for example, is popular with middle-aged and older people who like the small and cosy size of the houses and wish to downsize their property when their children have moved away from home. It also appeals to families and younger people because of good access to schools, local shops and other services and facilities and with Ealing's transport network. In some settlements, however, this popularity is resulting in a process of gentrification.

Gentrification occurs where a typically working-class area is taken over by higher-income occupants. This is happening in Letchworth Garden City, and while this is not necessarily a bad thing, it can cause a problem if the settlement is being made more fashionable for the wrong reasons. It is in a way a victim of its own success – attracting people because of its status and

character, good homes and a high-quality natural and built environment, a socially mixed community, and effective estate management combined with good services and plentiful open space. People want to move into the garden city because they can live in an environment that is both urban and rural, and at the same time is a commutable distance to London. Furthermore, as the historical and architectural value of the area is being realised, together with the current state of the housing market, the value of the properties is rising. Residents are not, however, necessarily buying into the original ethos of the garden city nor participating fully in the local community; Howard would have had mixed feelings about this process.

In Hampstead Garden Suburb, the growing wealth of the community is in line with similar trends elsewhere in that part of London. Some residents 'buy into' the settlement to invest and reap the benefits the quality environment gives to the value of their property. In the most exclusive parts of Hampstead, and perhaps at the extreme end of this trend, there is a rise in the number of residents wishing to demolish their properties and replace them with much bigger ones. This is not because of a need for extra space but purely for investment purposes, to maximise the value of the land and buildings. In some cases, the sites are worth more than the houses. It has long been the case in the suburb for the original intention of providing opportunities for all social groups to live side by side, to be replaced by a market-driven situation.

4.2 Community Values

Whilst it can be argued that one has to be well-versed in planning and architectural history to understand the full value of heritage within the settlements, it is apparent that not all communities place a high value on their unique environment. There is a growing concern amongst several trusts and local authorities that newcomers into garden city settlements are not aware of or do not respect the historical and architectural importance of these areas. North Hertfordshire District Council, in accordance with the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, encourages mixed communities and there is a growing number of residents from ethnic minorities in the area. The culture of incomers is, understandably, often quite different from that of the indigenous population; for instance, amongst some groups there is a tendency to invest less in the appearance of property and to attach less importance to the quality of the surrounding environment. Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation has been pro-active in advertising the importance of the garden city, in the hope that all residents will take a greater pride in and care more for their surroundings. An increase in unauthorised development and a decline in the quality of the environment in some parts of the garden city is, however, becoming a more significant problem.

The experience of Bournville, in contrast, is very different, with residents generally taking great pride in the local area. Furthermore, some simple environmental improvements have renewed people's interest in their local community. The small shopping parade in Sycamore Road was suffering from local level vandalism, but following a programme of environmental improvements to upgrade its quality the vandalism has decreased and a

tangible pride has developed amongst residents. It may be that, with a little education, combined with the advertising approach taken by Letchworth, a renewed interest in the garden cities can be awakened.

4.3 Community Structure

The structure of our communities today is very different from when the garden city settlements were first built. Younger generations living in garden city settlements generally show less interest in such places than their predecessors, although this may simply be attributable to the social changes in society at large. Communities at large have become increasingly fragmented, and the geographical dimensions of networks have spread as people work longer distances from their home and social and leisure activities require people to travel to bordering towns and cities. But what impact has this had on the garden city settlements? In some, community facilities have dwindled because of a lack of demand and sometimes inadequate funding. For example, the bowling green in Port Sunlight has been replaced with a bed of plants to help cut back on maintenance costs. The local tennis courts in Hampstead Garden Suburb are overgrown and are hidden from view. In contrast, Brentham Garden Suburb supports a variety of community events e.g. strawberry teas and family cycles, that are well attended by a broad range of age groups. Many residents attend local lectures, AGMs and educational events and take an active role in the residents' association meetings (although often these are older people with more spare time to participate).

CHAPTER 3
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES: CASE STUDIES

It is one thing to generalise about contemporary pressures and another to experience these firsthand in the various garden city settlements. In this chapter, an account is given of the current situation in eight representative case studies.

1 Bournville

1.1 History

The story of Bournville starts when the Cadbury Brothers, in 1879, decided to move their cocoa manufacturing business from the centre of Birmingham to a greenfield site on the edge of the city. As the business prospered the demand for workers grew. With the revenue accrued from the business, George Cadbury was able to buy land around the factory and develop this for housing.

The village still has a rural feel to it, with large open spaces and recreational grounds. Many of the houses are built in traditional brick, grouped in informal patterns, each house with its own garden and set behind tree-lined roads. Schools, colleges, shops and places of worship add to the sense of community and support the needs of the local people. The area is designated as a conservation area.

1.2 Key Issues

o Housing
- inappropriate extensions that were developed prior to the Article 4 Direction being enforced
- rising demand from residents for greater internal space
- rise in the number of Upvc windows, replacing original timber windows
- increased demand for satellite dishes that have a cumulative, detrimental impact on the conservation area
- pressure for sub-division of properties

o Economic
- pressure to make the factory the company headquarters and therefore make modern alterations

o Environmental
- Wyevale garden centre is causing some harm to the quality of the environment e.g. from skips and empty pallets that are left lying around some problems of low level vandalism and graffiti
- increased on-street parking is interrupting views and important vistas in the village

- increased demand for hard-standing in front gardens

o Social
  - growing pressure for children's play areas as young families move into the village

2 Brentham Garden Suburb

2.1 History

Well before the publication of *To-Morrow*, Howard had been advocating the potential of co-operative building, in which prospective tenants would take a financial stake in the development. Although he retained his interest in co-operative schemes, the main initiative was to come from others, not least of all the Liberal M.P., Henry Vivian. It was the latter who took a keen interest in the first co-operative housing scheme, in Ealing in 1901, and who became chairman of a newly formed organisation, Co-Partnership Tenants Housing Couincil. As a result of his encouragement, an association was formed, Ealing Tenants Ltd, for the benefit of the pioneer tenants in Ealing. Over the years additional houses were built and by 1905, fifty houses had been constructed and the association held property worth £25,000.

As time went on and additional houses were built it was felt that greater attention needed to be given to the design and layout of the houses. Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker were commissioned to plan the new road layout for the houses in Brentham. The village expanded rapidly and the membership of Ealing Tenants Ltd grew. Social facilities included the Brentham Club, a purpose-built facility that became the centre of social life in the village. Tenants paid rents of from 6 to 21 shillings per week and it was believed that this would give them a sense of civic responsibility. By the beginning of the First Word War there were some 600 houses and Brentham had become the pioneer of the co-partnership housing movement.

2.2 Key Issues

o Housing
  - housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable
  - increased demand for greater internal spaces in the home
  - increased demand to extend properties underground
  - increased demand for modern conveniences eg satellite dishes and burglar alarms

o Environmental
  - permitted development is upsetting the character and setting of the conservation area (e.g. marring views into and out of the suburb)

o Parking
  - excessive on-street parking is becoming a problem

3 Hampstead Garden Suburb

3.1 History

Hampstead Garden Suburb was founded in 1907 by Dame Henrietta Barnett. Like Letchworth, the estate was planned by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker. Dame Barnett set up the Heath Extension Council to save 80 acres of land from characterless development and out of this came the idea of the garden suburb. The development of the suburb was seen from the outset as a social experiment – not simply to provide basic housing but to give people a healthy living and social environment. Henrietta Barnett was keen to keep the overall density of the housing low (eight dwellings per acre), roads would be lined with trees, houses would be planned so as to not have a detrimental impact on each other and ground rents would be lowered to facilitate affordable housing. By 1909, three co-partnership societies were established in the suburb to provide housing alongside social, recreational and educational institutions.

3.2 Key Issues

- Housing
  - prosperity is causing a rise in the demand for bigger housing and therefore there is an increased threat of demolition
  - a decline in the amount of affordable housing within the suburb

- Environmental
  - a lack of resources within the Council to make necessary environmental improvements e.g. lack of funding has meant that grass verges have been replaced with brick paviours
  - increased pressure for hard-standing in front gardens and off-street parking

4 Letchworth Garden City

4.1 History

Letchworth is the world's first garden city. Established in 190, it was based on Ebenezer Howard's theory of creating new by combining town and country. Letchworth set standards for housing and own planning for the twentieth century. The city's architecture (designed by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker) was carefully planned to add visual interest and materials were carefully chosen. Houses were set in spacious surroundings with rear gardens, and tree-lined streets added to the rural feel of the area.

In order to secure the assets against speculators, in 1967 the Letchworth Garden City Corporation was established as the governing body for the garden city. An important role of the Corporation was to make sure that profit from the land was put back into the community e.g. in the form of community facilities. The Corporation was later superceded by the Letchworth Garden

City Heritage Foundation, that exists today and manages an estate of over 5000 acres.

4.2 Key Issues

- Housing
  - garages and extensions are closing important gaps
  - increased demand to extend properties to include loft conversions
  - increased loss of original windows and doors; replaced with unsuitable alternatives
  - increased pressure from residents wishing to put down hard-standing
  - increased pressure to meet the need for housing within Letchworth; concern that new housing will detract from the setting of the garden city
  - increased pressure to develop vacant sites
  - the Council is struggling to accommodate modern architecture and materials within an environment that is dominated by white or cream roughcast, red stock brick and red plain clay tiles

- Economic
  - potential threat to the success of the town centre in the foreseeable future from business in surrounding towns
  - people are investing too heavily in housing

- Social
  - poor communication and a lack of understanding with incomers means an increase in unauthorised work and therefore a detrimental impact on the environment
- poor community spirit

5 Port Sunlight

5.1 History

William Hesketh Lever, a successful soap manufacturer, was looking in 1887 for a site to which he could transfer his soap factory and therefore expand his business. On finding an area of marshland outside Birkenhead, he developed Port Sunlight as a garden village. It dates from 1888.

The village housed the workers for the soap factory. The housing was supported with a range of community facilities, including a church, a technical institute, a cottage hospital and, later, the Lady Lever Art Gallery. These facilities were funded by profits made from the factory. The design of the village combined town and country to give workers high-quality living conditions. Utilitarian terraced houses were surrounded by green open spaces and tree-lined streets.

In 1962 Unilever Merseyside Ltd was formed to run the village and help meet people's expectations of wanting more from their surroundings. Properties

were modernised, often when there was a change in tenancy. In 1980, many of the houses were put on the market for sale and in 1999 the Port Sunlight Village Society was reformed to preserve and enhance the character of the village and retain the essential fabric of the community.

5.2 Key Issues

- Housing
  - increase in Upvc windows replacing original timber ones
  - pressure to knock down internal walls to create bigger internal living spaces
  - some pressure to meet housing need and therefore develop to higher densities
  - potential problem in the future, with buildings needing repairs at the same time
  - increased demand for greater internal spaces in the home and therefore growing pressure to extend roof space
  - change in technology has brought with it increased demand for equipment such as satellite dishes

- Economic
  - some pressure from tourism is possible in the future

- Environmental
  - damage being caused to street furniture by skateboarders
  - increased low level vandalism

- Social
  - drug and vandalism problems at the cottage hospital

6 Silver End

6.1 History

Silver End is a planned community developed in the 1920s. The garden village was built by Crittall's, a rapidly growing firm manufacturing metal windows and requiring local housing for its workers. Land for the village was bought on what was then a remote rural site. The concept owed much to Ebenezer Howard's ideas; housing was built to a low density (six houses to the acre), each with its own rear garden and access to an allotment. Tree-lined avenues radiated from the centre. Many of the houses had flat roofs and Crittal windows and therefore were considered 'modern' in design. In the postwar years, some new housing was added around the edges of the original village. Although this eroded some of its architectural qualities, Silver End remained a fine example of a garden village and was designated as a conservation area in 1983.

The Crittal company was taken over in 1968 by Walker Securities, at which time the houses were acquired by Witham District Council and later bought by

private owners. This fragmented ownership necessarily makes it more difficult to retain the integrity of the village.

6.2 Key Issues

- Social
  - young people move in with less respect for the conservation area
- Environmental
  - increased demand for off-street parking and hard-standing

7 Welwyn Garden City

7.1 History

Welwyn Garden City was the second garden city, following Letchworth. Once again, it was the brainchild of Ebenezer Howard, who envisaged it as a place for healthy living where people could live and work. It was intended that Welwyn would combine all the social, cultural and employment opportunities of urban life with all the environmental benefits and open space of life in the countryside.

Welwyn Garden City was started in 1922, on an area of farmland in Hertfordshire; it was designed and planned by Louis de Soissons and built by Welwyn Garden City Ltd. It grew steadily in the interwar period and after the Second World War, under the New Towns Act, was designated in 1948 as a New Town. A development corporation took over the role of the Welwyn Garden City Company, until in 1966 the Commission for the New Towns took control of the holdings. In the 1970s, Welwyn Hatfield District Council took over some of the assets, with the rest subsequently ceded to English Partnerships.

7.2 Key Issues

- Housing
  - increased density of development (intensification/densification)
  - conversion of single dwellings into flats
  - increased demand for greater internal spaces and therefore pressure to extend
  - some increased pressure for solar panels on properties
  - some inappropriate use of materials e.g. roofing materials

- Economic
  - pressure to increase floorspace within the town centre
  - pressure to extend existing shops and supermarkets
  - some growing pressure to convert commercial space into residential

- Social
  - ageing population, closure of schools, leading to the availability of land or redevelopment

- Environmental
  - increased pressure for hard-standing, replacing well-landscaped residential frontages
  - parking in the town centre is becoming and increasing problem**,** causing damage to grass verges

8 Wythenshawe

8.1 History

In response to severe housing shortages in Manchester, together with the lack of space within the city to accommodate additional housing, the Manchester Corporation decided to build outside the city and negotiated an extensive area of land that is now the Wythenshawe Estate.

Wythenshawe is known as Manchester's garden suburb. Built in 1931 it was designed by Barry Parker and owned by the Manchester Corporation. The design of Wythenshawe followed similar lines to those pioneered by Parker and Unwin in the likes of Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb but in some respects it fell short of earlier ideals; notably, it was to lack a real centre. Rather than a discrete garden city, as Parker had hoped for, it became little more than a municipal satellite estate. It differs from the other case studies in this research, with generally less auspicious housing and deficiencies in the social infrastructure and sense of community.

8.2 Key Issues

- Housing
  - development pressures have increased, particularly to the south near the airport
  - Willow Park Housing Trust: some refurbishment work has not respected the character of the local area e.g. to cut back on maintenance fees the grass verges have been concreted over

- Economic
  - suffers from a low number of people in employment

- Environmental
  - increased pressure to develop hotel close to the airport
  - Wythenshawe Park is falling into disrepair
  - Wythenshawe Hall is in urgent need of renovation and repair
  - open spaces are poorly maintained and poorly used
  - the Parkway divides Wythenshawe in two thereby creating a barrier

- Social
  - disparities between communities e.g. between Benchill and Woodhouse Park
  - some areas have high levels of deprivation and problems of crime

- poor education and high rates of teenage pregnancies
- lack of community facilities

CHAPTER 4
WAYS AND MEANS: OVERVIEW

As garden city settlements have evolved, systems have been put in place to protect and to manage them, on the basis that these places have significant historical and architectural value. Some of the systems have been inherited, others are more recent. They include legislation and policy measures, and may be administered by a variety of local organisations and other agencies that share the aim of conserving the best qualities of such settlements.

1 Trusts and Schemes of Management

Ebenezer Howard originally proposed that any capital that accrued as a result of developing the former agricultural land and building a garden city would be returned to the community. He proposed that the land would be owned by a company and the system of land management would be overseen by the trustees. At Letchworth, the supervisory body was the Garden City Pioneer Company, then Letchworth Garden City Corporation and, from 1995, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. The Foundation is an Industrial and Provident Society with charity status, which continues to reinvest all surpluses in the Garden City.

Some other settlements are overseen by trusts: such as the Bournville Village Trust and the Port Sunlight Village Trust. Such trusts are non-profit making companies limited by guarantee, responsible for maintaining, conserving and managing principal buildings and landscaping within the settlement and improving the quality of life for those living there. Under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967, trusts were empowered to administer a Scheme of Management for the purpose of ensuring the maintenance and preservation of the character and amenities of the settlement concerned. The trusts that still exist have inherited these Schemes of Management and are responsible for their administration.

The various schemes are very similar in their content, primarily setting out details of the management fee charged to residents, the rights and powers of the trust and including a schedule of the works that can be carried out within the settlement (with and without the trust's consent). Hampstead Garden Suburb's Scheme of Management, for example, states that the Management Charge will be 'a sum equal to a proportionate part of the expenses of the Trust in operating the Scheme.' The Schedule also sets out fourteen clauses on works and development within the suburb. Tenants, for example, must not make alterations to the external appearance of any building without the consent of the Trust. Nor should a tenant erect a boundary wall or fence or cut down or destroy any tree or hedge without first obtaining the appropriate consent.

Some trusts find the schemes a useful tool for managing the settlements, others feel that because the schemes are inherited and have not been up-dated, they no longer serve the purpose for which they were originally intended. Additionally, the maintenance fees in many of the schemes are not reflective of current property values and maintenance costs. Port Sunlight's maintenance fee is £1 per year, with no scope to increase this to meet increasing costs of maintenance. The Trust feels that the scheme is no longer fulfilling its original objectives. Hampstead Garden Suburb's Scheme, however, is worded more appropriately, allowing the Trust to charge a fee appropriate to the expenses of operating the scheme.

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation is one of the more unique trusts. It is an Industrial & Provident Society registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies under the Industrial & Provident Societies Act 1965, and has exempt charity status. It, too, has a Scheme of Management but because it operates a number of trading subsidiaries that raise profits for the Foundation, the LGCHF is not entirely reliant on the fees for maintenance. The Scheme of Management for Letchworth is not, however, used to its full potential because it has not been updated to coincide with changes in planning legislation.

Welwyn Garden City, whilst originally established with a company, the Second Garden City Ltd, was taken over by a Development Corporation and later the Commission for New Towns. The town does have an Estate Management Scheme inherited from the original company, however, and whilst the present Council has access to this, it is not used in the management of the garden city. The Council has considered replacing the Estate Management Scheme with an Article 4(2) direction (for parts of buildings that are publicly visible) but insufficient resources are deployed to implement this.

2 Local Authorities and Conservation

Local authorities have responsibility for planning, development and conservation issues within the garden city settlements. There are advantages and disadvantages in this arrangement. It certainly helps that a local authority has the potential to can bring to bear a wide range of skills and resources. On the other hand, a garden city settlement will represent only a small part of the overall area administered by the authority and, for one reason or another, it may be poorly served.

Listed Building and Conservation Area Legislation

Many of the settlements are protected by planning, listed building and conservation areas legislation. In 1990, most of the provisions relating to heritage properties were consolidated in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. The focus of this legislation is on conserving the environment, accepting that change has to occur but at the same time conserving and enhancing the environment's assets. The Act has successfully protected the character of many of the garden city settlements. As well as the buildings, it is used to protect the trees and landscaping within

the settlements. Invariably in these settlements, the landscaping is an essential part of their character. The legislation requires that at least six weeks' notice is required before any works are carried out to a tree, thus helping the Council to control inappropriate actions.

It seems, however, that we may well be at a turning point. Whilst this legislation has worked well in the past, it is apparent (within Hampstead Garden Suburb in particular) that garden city settlements are facing more sustained pressures and that existing measures are not proving powerful enough to give the required level of protection.

Listed Buildings

Buildings of special architectural or historic interest are 'listed' to prevent demolition or alterations without the approval of the local authority. Many of the garden city settlements have buildings with listed building status. Almost all of those in Port Sunlight are listed while in Letchworth Garden City there are nearly 400 listed properties, many of them residential. Given that any changes to these buildings will require consent, the legislation helps to self-police development and offer some protection to the character of the settlements. This is particularly useful when local planning authorities do not have sufficient resources themselves to monitor the settlements for unauthorised or inappropriate development. This system does, however, rely on local residents reporting works which they think do not have listed building consent. It is not uncommon for unauthorised works to go unnoticed however. In Port Sunlight, for example, the Trust and the local authority find it difficult to monitor and manage changes to the interiors of buildings. Whilst the occupier at the time of discovery is responsible for restoring any damage caused, it is often difficult to gauge what this restoration should constitute when the original form has been lost.

The criteria used to list a building are defined in national terms. This means, therefore, that if a building is important, historically or architecturally, at the local level but not sufficiently worthy of listed status nationally, it is afforded no protection. Some settlements are, therefore, more at risk of losing some of their locally important buildings. This problem has been recognised by North Hertfordshire District Council. The Council recognised that 'a number of buildings (in Letchworth) outside the proposed conservation area boundary do not merit statutory listing and are not protected by conservation area designation but are important individually in a local context.'[20] The Council has therefore compiled a Register of Important Local Buildings (some of which are not within Letchworth itself). The value of the Register is that the local planning authority is able to take account of these buildings when it is considering a relevant planning application.

[20] North Hertfordshire District Council (March 2002) Register of Important Local Buildings for Letchworth

Conservation Areas

As well as protecting individual buildings it is important to safeguard the character of the wider area. Local planning authorities have a duty to 'determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and to designate such areas as conservation areas. Many local authorities have designated the garden city settlements as conservation areas. For example, in 1968 the special character and appearance of Hampstead Garden Suburb led to its designation as a conservation area. The Council pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance and carefully examines all development proposals affecting the area. Silver End is also designated as a conservation area (dating from 1983). Other settlements may be only partially designated.

Whilst it is the responsibility of the local planning authority to enforce conservation legislation, the trusts as well as the residents have an important part to play too. Many of the trusts advertise the importance of conservation areas in publications such as design guides, often produced in partnership with the local planning authority. The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust and Bournville Village Trust, for example, have both joined up with their respective Councils to publish design guidance. Hampstead's guidance neatly sums up its role in the opening paragraph: 'the Trust and Barnet Council can do much to guide and co-ordinate protection of the area, but residents must ensure that their own property is cared for with the attention to detail shown by the original designers. We all have a duty to protect the special character of the suburb, not only for the residents and visitors of today, but also for those of tomorrow.'[21] These guides are a useful tool for the local authorities and trusts: they help to advertise their commitment to the settlement and explain the importance of the conservation area to residents. It was apparent from the case studies that residents would often move into a property within a conservation area and not realise this until they undertook unauthorised works to their property. On the other hand, there was evidence in Hampstead Garden Suburb of residents 'buying into the conservation area' because of the added value the status gives to property.

Aside from design guides, the information available on conservation areas varies from one settlement to another. Hampstead Garden Suburb, as previously mentioned, has design guidance that refers to the importance of the conservation area and offers advice on any building works, alterations to existing properties and works to trees. Port Sunlight, on the other hand, has a Conservation Appraisal (as does Bournville) that has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Guidance Note. The appraisal confirms the boundaries of the area, discusses its character and important qualities and the relevant development policies. It helps to define exactly what it is about the conservation area that is being protected and helps planners to determine planning applications against the important characteristics within the

[21] Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust and London Borough of Barnet (1994) *Hampstead Garden Suburb Design Guidance*

settlement. A common problem across the settlements is that, whilst they have the protection they deserve, it is not always clear what it is that makes the area so special. Without understanding this, and the context, it is difficult for local authorities and trusts to enhance and plan for future development.

Birmingham City Council responded to this problem by publishing a conservation strategy, the latest being in 1999. Whilst it relates to Birmingham as a whole, its content is equally applicable to Bournville as in other parts of the city; indeed, specific reference is made in the document to the garden village. The value of the strategy lies in the fact that it has acknowledged that Birmingham's varied historic and distinctive landscapes contribute to the essence of the city, identifying it as a place with its own character and history. The strategy therefore takes a more proactive approach, setting out the opportunities provided by Birmingham's historic environment to promote urban regeneration. Each strategy revises previous objectives and assesses past achievements.

3 Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Development Plans

Some local planning authorities have included policies on listed buildings and conservation areas within their local development plans (or local development frameworks as they are now known). These policies vary in detail. Some development plans, like the London Borough of Barnet's Unitary Development Plan, have generic policies. Section 4, for example, has policies on 'the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas,' 'areas of special character' and 'the protection and preservation of listed buildings.' These policies apply to the whole of Barnet and, therefore, as much to Hampstead Garden Suburb as other conservation areas within the borough. Two examples are Policy HC2 which states that 'outline applications for development within conservation areas will not be acceptable.' Policy HC5 states that 'the council will refuse development proposals which fail to safeguard and enhance the landscape and townscape features which contribute to the identity of areas of special character.'[22] Whilst in the supporting text to these policies specific reference is given to Hampstead Garden Suburb[23], it is difficult to gauge exactly what it is that the local authority aims to achieve in conserving the suburb. These policies are more likely to be used in a reactive way, helping the local authority to make a decision on a development proposal.

More specific policies are better in defining the local authority's objectives and, therefore, more clearly set out the local authority's intentions for preserving and enhancing a garden city settlement. The North Hertfordshire Unitary Development Plan adopted in 1996, for example, has policies on 'Letchworth Garden City Design Principles' and 'Conservation Areas', while

[22] Barnet Unitary Development Plan: Revised Deposit 2001, pp. 52-56
[23] For example under 'Areas of Special Character', Hampstead Garden Suburb is referred to because the policy is seeking to protect skylines and views from the suburb.

the Wirral Metropolitan's Unitary Development Plan has a policy (CH9) on Port Sunlight Conservation Area. The latter states that:

'in relation to Port Sunlight Conservation Area the principal planning objectives for the area will be to:
i) preserve the planned layout of the village and unifying features, such as the scale, massing and design of buildings, including the use of superblocks, together with their landscape setting;
ii) to retain the historic factory frontage overlooking the village from Wood Street…etc.'[24]

3 Local Authorities and Planning

3.1 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Development Policy

Before local planning authorities became responsible for town planning, the original ground landlords and their consultant architects controlled development within many of the garden city settlements. Today, local planning authorities are responsible for overseeing the statutory and regulatory planning system at the local level. Their work is strongly governed by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which brings almost all development under control by making it subject to planning permission. The garden city settlements are therefore subject to this legislation in the same way as development outside the settlements. Notwithstanding the controls given by the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 already discussed, any development that exceeds the permitted development rights[25] requires planning permission. Local planning authorities assess these applications against policies within the local development plan (now known as the local development document, following the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act). Many of these policies are generic that apply as much to the garden city settlements as to the rest of the area of the particular local authority.

The plan adoption dates vary from 1993, when Birmingham City Council adopted its development plan, to Welwyn Hatfield's more recent plan of 2005. At the time of writing, all local planning authorities were reviewing their policies under the new planning framework. The Birmingham City plan, that includes Bournville as part of the city as a whole, has policies on new development, playing fields, housing and open spaces. In Letchworth, the North Hertfordshire Unitary Development Plan has generic policies on housing proposals, business uses, tourism and car parking. Because these policies become outdated so quickly, on their own they do not readily respond to contemporary pressures. Together with the fact that policies often benefit from elaboration, many local planning authorities have adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (or Supplementary Planning Documents under the new legislation). These documents, when adopted as policy, are

[24] Unitary Development Plan for Wirral (adopted February 2000)

material planning considerations in the planning application process. Much of this guidance has been published in the form of a design guide as referred to earlier in this chapter.

3.2 Design Guides and Supplementary Planning Guidance

The guides vary: some are published by the local authority or rust only while others are published under a partnership arrangement. Some attempt to bring together generic planning policies with the conservation policies; for example Birmingham City Council and Bournville Village Trust adopted a Conservation Area Design Guide for Bournville in 1997. This guide was produced following the publication of the conservation area character appraisal that defined the character of the conservation area and therefore a guide was needed to help preserve and enhance this. As well as demonstrating how the policy can be implemented, the design guide sets standards for development. For example, the guide asks that residents design their conservatory to blend in with the main house. It advises that 'a highly decorative conservatory will not look right with a simple house design. It should be built in timber and painted rather than stained.' The Brentham Garden Estate Policy and Design Guide is, however, more of a policy document, focusing on what powers are available to the local authority for the control of development and setting out the Council's policies.

All guides offer design advice, although to varying degrees, following a similar format and explaining the importance of the garden city settlement and the relevance of the controls (such as listed building consent). They also give advice to owners and their professional advisers on the type of alterations that can be carried out. It is difficult to gauge what direct impact these design guides have had in helping to conserve and enhance the settlements, particularly when design guidance is a subjective issue and what constitutes a success can often only be gauged through experience and a knowledge of available alternatives. Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation felt that their guide was a success and was being heeded well by residents because in 2003/2004 the Foundation only gave an outright refusal in 3% of cases for requests for consent. It is, of course, difficult to isolate these figures from other possible influences. Furthermore, buildings cannot be treated in isolation and written guidance can only be given on relatively obvious matters. Implementation of the guidance requires a sensitive approach and a proper appreciation of the intentions behind the original design. The guides are therefore by no means definitive; much of the success is dependent on the delivery systems. It is felt, however, that the guides that are published by the local authority, in partnership with the appropriate Trust, are particularly effective because it demonstrates that the agencies are working together towards the same goals. The fact that the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation announced that it would be reviewing its design guide[26] and the London Borough of Ealing is currently updating its design guide of 1988, suggests that the local authorities and Trusts find the guides to be a useful tool in helping to manage their garden city settlements.

[26] Insight Magazine (Summer 2005), page 11

In contrast with this evidence, Welwyn Garden City and Port Sunlight are two case studies that have not adopted a design guide (the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral Council had a draft guide for Port Sunlight but because of insufficient resources has not adopted it). It is not apparent that the character of either settlement has suffered as a result, although the local authorities for both settlements agree that a guide would help planners to negotiate development proposals and enforce standards.

3.3 National Planning Policy

Local policies may also gain support from planning policy at the national level. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), as amended through Circulars 01/2001 and 09/2005, gives a more up-to-date planning policy than some of the local plans. This can be usefully referred to when planners make decisions on development proposals and need the support of policy that is more relevant to the time. However, national policy can often be too removed from the local level to be able to influence issues within the settlements. Furthermore, given that building conservation has not appeared to be apriority for the current government, national planning policy in this field is limited in its impact. Moreover, in some of the case studies, development proposals have been taken to appeal and assessed by an independent Planning Inspector. Sometimes it seems that these decisions, taken at national level, are inappropriate because the Inspector has a limited understanding of the garden city community and its principles and, therefore, decisions are made out of context.

National planning policy may also at times seem to run counter to the interests of garden city settlements. The local authority must respond to the government's planning aims and initiatives e.g. to the need for more, high density housing, in addition to those for conservation. Some of these policies will be damaging to the character of the settlements. In particular, policy on brownfield sites, intensification of urban development and sustainability may put pressure on the present low-density environment of the garden city settlements. Local authorities are in the difficult position of having to strike an appropriate balance between conservation and enhancement on the one hand, and meeting the government's initiatives on the other. This may sometimes force cause a local authority to relax its conservation standards.

3.4 Permitted Development and Article 4

Whilst development may require conservation area or listed building consent, it may not always require planning permission. Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, residents can make minor alterations to their properties without the need for a planning application, provided that it meets the criteria set out in the Order. This permitted development legislation, however, is having a detrimental impact in many garden city settlements. Although only minor changes can be made, the cumulative impact can be harmful. In Letchworth Garden City the original style of windows is being lost due to inappropriate replacement windows

being installed. This alters the appearance and the character of the property itself and, cumulatively, changes the character of the street. Exacerbating this is the fact that the judgement on whether an alteration to a property materially affects the external appearance of the building is often liberally judged. Brentham Garden Suburb, on the other hand, has been successful in maintaining the quality and character of its conservation area. This is partly because the suburb remained in the single ownership of the Ealing Tenants Co-Partnership Company[27]. After this, the Suburb was controlled by an Article 4 Direction.

Many local authorities believe that the listed building and conservation areas legislation needs strengthening. Such authorities have therefore obtained additional powers to control this type of development, by designating areas of a settlement where the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened with an Article 4 Direction. They believe that this has helped curb the detrimental impact incremental changes to properties can have. However, Article 4 Directions have been applied to properties within conservation areas and not to those properties on the edges. Consequently, the views into and out of a conservation area continue to be spoilt as residents beyond make inappropriate alterations through permitted development. Furthermore, the proper enforcement of this Direction requires considerable resources to monitor the settlement; resources that neither the local authorities nor Trusts claim to have.

It can also be a problem when residents have made alterations under permitted development but then an Article 4 Direction is applied. Any development thereafter must meet more stringent controls, but the context for doing so relates to the time before the Direction was applied. This can make it very difficult for planners to negotiate development proposals; furthermore, it can create tensions between residents and the local authorities as residents feel that the local authority is being unreasonable in its requests.

Much of the work that takes place to conserve, manage and enhance the garden city settlements is reactive. The local authorities' resources are stretched to carry out the work brought to them in the form of planning applications and enforcement enquiries, and their proactive work is often quite limited. The Trusts also respond to requests for consent and work within the constraints of their budgets and articles of association. The Port Sunlight Village Trust would like to work more proactively but it is constrained by a lack of funds. It has numerous conservation projects that need to be carried out but it does not have the funding to do so. For example, the Port Sunlight War Memorial is in desperate need of conservation work but will cost approximately £70,000. The Trust has been raising funds to carry out this work. The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, on the other hand, being a charity and a property company, has sufficient funds to work proactively within the city. With the funds available, the Foundation is able to

[27] The principle of a co-partnership housing association was that each prospective tenant would take a share in the company's capital and as a shareholder would be entitled to a share of the profits. Further land could be purchased and all houses would be held in common by the Society. Brentham Society (1977) *Brentham: Ealing's Garden Suburb*

keep up the town's standards, build and develop where appropriate and help meet genuine needs.

There are some trusts that make effective of the limited resources available to them. Such bodies look for different ways to work proactively with the residents and they try to find new ways of improving communication between the trust and those who live and work within the settlement. The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust for example has recently published its second edition of *The Gazette*, which explains how the Trust sets about and finances its work and invites people to discuss the issues currently confronting the Suburb. Port Sunlight Village Trust publishes the quarterly *Port Sunlight News*, and the LGCHF publishes a similar bulletin, called *Insight*. Port Sunlight Village Trust has also been working hard to secure funds to develop a visitor attraction based upon the life of the Village, through the eyes of those who created it. The Trust eventually received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, in recognition of its work.

Whilst these approaches are encouraging, more proactive work is needed to better manage the settlements. Whilst the local authorities, and trusts in particular, have policies and guidance that set out how the settlements can be best managed, too few have a clear vision on what the settlement may look like in ten or twenty years. A notable exception is the Port Sunlight Village Trust, with a management plan for the village. Whilst this was instigated with a development proposal that went to appeal[28], the Trust and the Council have been proactive in developing a strategic vision. At the time of writing, this was being drafted by independent consultants.

4 Voluntary Organisations

In some garden city settlements the work of the local authority and trust is assisted by voluntary organisations. Brentham Garden Suburb, for example, has a Society (the Brentham Society) that was formed in 1970 as a residents' association in response to the movement in conservation. The purpose of the group is to make the facts about the conservation area more widely known and to encourage the maintenance of its amenities. More recently, in Port Sunlight, in response to a development proposed in the village, residents formed an association to actively campaign against the development and it has since remained in existence to involve all residents in the life of the village.

These voluntary organisations, together with residents individually, act as the eyes for the Council, keeping a watchful eye for any unauthorised development. They also help the local authority, and the trust where relevant, to promote appropriate development and raise awareness of the history and importance of the area. Unfortunately, this approach is not always

[28] The House of Commons Hansard debate for 8 March 2005 reported that 'if similar problems (with proposed development) are to be avoided in the future, it may be prudent for the trust and the borough council to agree a master plan for the village after appropriate consultation, particularly with local residents.'

reciprocated because of the lack of will and resources within local authorities. The planning enforcement sections of local authorities are often poorly staffed. Enforcement enquiries are, therefore, often prioritised with officers having to give priority to larger enforcement cases elsewhere within the borough, in preference to a case where a resident in a garden city settlement may have changed his front door without the Council's consent. Whilst the latter may, on the face of it, be a minor issue, the cumulative impact can be considerable. Furthermore, when taken in the context of a change of door within a conservation area, the issue becomes more serious. The local authorities' enforcement systems, however, do not cater for this type of judgement to be made when prioritising enforcement cases. A further problem, illustrated at Hampstead Garden Suburb, is that the trusts in particular are not aware of their enforcement powers. Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust is currently looking at its enforcement powers to see if they can be used more effectively. Unfortunately, enforcement action can be very expensive. With little or no middle ground between a stiff letter and a High Court injunction, trusts tend to negotiate rather than go the courts.

5 Implementation and Delivery

As indicated above, there is a broad framework of policies, strategies and legislation to help care for and manage the garden city settlements. Unless there are the appropriate agencies and resources in place to implement the necessary actions, however, mere policies and strategies will not be enough. The agencies responsible for this delivery vary but, primarily, they include the local planning authority and a trust, supported by more informal groups such as residents' associations and civic societies. In Hampstead Garden Suburb the Trust and Barnet Council work closely together, exercising control in different ways but both are committed to the same vision for the suburb. This is demonstrated by the design guide that was published in partnership to ensure that advice given by both bodies is consistent, and to help reduce delays for applicants negotiating with the two bodies. This is in contrast to Wirral Metropolitan Council and Port Sunlight Village Trust who work less closely together. The contrast between these two case studies has implications for delivery on the ground. If the residents sense that the leading agencies are not working in close partnership they can more easily question the commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the suburb and therefore their own individual actions.

In Brentham Garden Suburb, the local planning authority and the Brentham Society work together on both an informal and formal basis. Formally, the Society has a nominee on the Brentham Planning Advisory panel which comments formally on all planning applications in or affecting the Brentham Conservation Area. Informally, as a matter of course, Society committee members meet and talk to the Council's conservation officers and other planning officials. Unfortunately, this does not work very smoothly. Ealing Council has a high turnover of staff and at the time of writing had a large number of vacancies. This upsets the working relationship because too much time is spent recruiting and training new people. Furthermore, Brentham's

environment is jeopardised because there are insufficient staff to enforce the policy and legislation effectively. Continuity is lost and progress is slow.

As well as those responsible for seeing policy and legislation to fruition there are those who are responsible for delivery on the ground. Once agreement has been given to a scheme it is important that the builder is capable of implementing the plans accurately and to a high standard. 'Most builders have their little quirks on ways of building, very often based upon techniques that have been successfully used elsewhere, but can be out of keeping with design in Brentham.'[29] Poor workmanship is a problem in Brentham and is the main source of enforcement action. Good workmanship requires specialist skills and a clear understanding of the craft traditions involved.

One of the other common problems within the settlements is that of residents moving into a property, oblivious to the fact that it is constrained by covenants and legislation that requires them to obtain consent before development can take place. All too often these residents will start work until the Trust or the local authority threatens legal action. Residents should be informed of these restrictions by their solicitor but this does not always happen. The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation have identified this problem and have been devising packs for solicitors, so that they can pre-warn prospective purchasers of the controls on the property.

A further problem is that often the works required to a property and the materials needed are more expensive than the resident can afford, or alternatively a resident uses cheaper materials out of preference. Recognising this and the importance of materials and designs to the character of Letchworth Garden City, the Heritage Foundation has offered grants to preserve the character and style of Garden City properties. The Foundation is fortunate to have sufficient funds to offer these grants; unfortunately, very few of the trusts are in this fortunate position. Consequently, in some settlements a lack of funding can jeopardise the character and quality of the settlement.

[29] Kelly, J (Brentham Conservation Area Planning Advisory Panel) 'Welcome to Brentham: Conservation in Brentham Garden Suburb', www.brentham/planning

CHAPTER 5
WAYS AND MEANS: CASE STUDIES

The various garden city settlements considered in this project are all active in drawing on a range of powers to support their work in protecting their fragile environments. In addition to national legislation, it is interesting to see the extent to which the powers available to them are supplemented by local measures.

1 Bournville

1.1 Local Development Plan

Birmingham's development plan was adopted in 1993. There are no specific policies concerned with Bournville Village but there is a policy on conservation. The policy refers to Birmingham's conservation areas generally and the need to protect and enhance these areas, given their important historical and architectural value. It draws attention to the policies concerned with listed buildings and historic park and gardens, as well as conservation areas. It also states that 'development proposals in conservation areas will be considered in the light of four key policies including the need for development should to preserve or enhance the character of the local area and respect the character of the existing architecture in scale, grouping and materials.'

1.2 Conservation Strategy

The strategy, 'Regeneration through Conservation', was adopted in 1999 as supplementary planning guidance. It updates the previous strategy adopted in 1992. and sets a vision for the next five years, showing how the opportunities offered by Birmingham's historic environment will be realised and how the linkages between the importance and value of conservation and the economic success of the city and sustainable development can be made. It is worth noting that the Council intends to continue to prepare conservation area appraisals, as well as considering Article 4(2) Directions for conservation areas.

1.3 Conservation Area Design Guide

Birmingham City Council and Bournville Village Trust formed a partnership to produce a conservation area design guide for the Bournville Village. The guide contains practical advice and information for residents on the work that can be carried out on their property and their surroundings, whilst at the same time maintaining the character and integrity of the conservation area. The guide was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in November 1997 and is, therefore, regarded as a material planning consideration in any planning decisions concerned with the Bournville Village. The guide covers a

wide range of issues from repairs and alterations to getting planning permission for more considerable alterations to property e.g. house extensions. The following gives a summary of the key topics in the guide:

- Wall covering – the guide requests that residents do not paint or cover the original brickwork. Not only will this damage the architectural integrity of the building but covering the outer walls can lead to structural damage as moisture is trapped.

- Windows and doors – the guide recommends that the original windows and doors be retained. Residents are encouraged to repair windows and doors where possible but if a replacement is necessary then this should be with a replica of the original. They are strongly advised not to use uPVC or readymade replacements but should choose ones that copy the original (and that may need to be made to order).

- Roofs – residents are recommended to re-use roof tiles where possible and avoid using artificial slates or similar replacement tiles, particularly on visible aspects. If replacement tiles are necessary then these should replicate the originals as closely as possible.

- Front gardens and boundaries – the guide notes the importance of hedges and other boundary treatments within the village. Residents must retain and maintain these, given the collective importance they exercise on the street scene. The guide points to a period in the 1960s when an 'open plan' policy was adopted and many of the original village boundary features disappeared

- Driveways – the guide makes it clear that planning permission is required to lay a new driveway but steers residents away from doing this as much as possible. Instead, keeping the driveway as small as possible with suitable landscaping is preferred.

- Paintwork – the residents are permitted to paint to re-paint areas of paintwork but this must be in colours sensitive to the character of the local area. For example, cream is preferable to white; anything other than this may require planning permission.

- Extensions – for more elaborate developments, such as extensions, the Council makes it clear that planning permission is required. The guide offers numerous guidelines on what needs to be considered when designing for an extension, bearing in mind the need to make it in keeping with the property and the surrounding area.

- Porches and dormer windows – whilst these are small alterations to a property, they can have a considerable impact on its character and that of the surrounding area. Alterations to the roof will almost always require planning permission as will a porch or canopy.

1.4 Bournville Estate Design Guide

In addition to the Conservation Area Design Guide adopted by the Council and the Bournville Village Trust, the Trust itself adopted a design guide in 2002. The guide is used by the Trust to manage development across the whole of its estate and therefore it does not apply solely to the Bournville Village. Under the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act, the Trust, through its Scheme of Management, can retain control over matters affecting the appearance and amenity of the Estate. Residents are required to submit to the Trust for approval proposals that affect the external appearance of the property or garden. The guide sets out some guidelines on various topics including extensions, building materials, gardens and hard-standing.

1.5 Bournville Character Appraisal

This document describes the character of Bournville Village and outlines proposals for possible enhancement. The appraisal introduces the character of the village by describing its location, population, origins and development. It discusses its prevailing uses in the context of the history of the village and then describes in more detail the features that give Bournville its unique character. For example, the guide draws attention to the importance of open spaces that give the rural feel to the village.

The guide is aware that there are areas of the village that have the potential to be enhanced. For example, the loss of hedges and other boundary treatments has damaged the village's rural character, and the loss of key architectural features such as original doors and windows, and insensitive development such as inappropriate extensions, have had a detrimental impact on the character of the area. Parking is a problem within the village, intruding on the landscape and obstructing the local roads. Unsightly road signs and bus stops (particularly in Linden Road), and incompatible paving, have detracted from the character of the area.

The character appraisal therefore suggests opportunities for enhancement. Surface materials should be chosen carefully, avoiding the darker form of paving that has been used in areas where the kerb is lowered to meet the road. The guide recommends that black zinc rainwater down-pipes be reintroduced, replacing grey plastic substitutes. The boundary treatment of properties in the village needs to be given careful consideration, with the use of more appropriate materials than has become commonplace. Although the guide offers no solutions, it recommends that problems of parking be addressed, for example, to open up the vistas in Beech Road that are at the moment closed by parked cars.

1.6 Bournville Village Trust Scheme

This refers to a Scheme of Management produced under Section 19 of the Leasehold Reform Act 1967, to help ensure that the standards of appearance and amenity of the village shall be preserved and not deteriorate; and to guard against the likelihood of a tenant obtaining the freehold of a property

and changing it to something out of character with the local area. The Scheme stipulates that tenants must not make alterations to their properties without consent from the landlord, the Bournville Village Trust. Any tenant who has the freehold of a property is responsible for making sure that the property is kept in good repair, to the satisfaction of the Landlord. Should work be carried out on a property without consent, or that is damaging in any way, the Trust can stipulate the necessary works required to overcome its detrimental impact. A management charge of £67 per year is paid by each owner of a property to the Trust.

The second schedule of the Scheme elaborates on the responsibilities of the freeholder of any property. These are summarised as follows:

- repair, maintain and when necessary replace the boundary treatments to the property. Hedges should be kept in a good condition and properly trimmed
- the interior and exterior parts of the house should be painted and repaired as required to keep the property in a good condition
- the owner is responsible for making sure that the grounds to the property are kept in a good condition taking care of, in particular, any trees on the land
- there should be no extension or alteration carried out to the property without first obtaining the consent of the Trust

2 Brentham

2.1 Brentham Garden Estate Conservation Area: Policy and Design Guide

In May 1988 the London Borough of Ealing adopted the above design guide. A working group, Brentham Society and Conservation Panel, is currently reviewing and updating the guide but, at the time of writing, the guide adopted in 1988 was a material planning consideration.

The guide sets out the legislation applicable to conservation areas and the associated controls on the garden estate. It then sets out the policies against which development proposals will be assessed against. These are summarised as follows:

- Demolition and redevelopment – there will be a general presumption against the demolition of any building or part of a building.

- Extensions – extensions to dwellings will only be allowed where they respect the character of the original estate. Important design features should be incorporated into and the amenity of nearby dwellings respected.

- Dormer windows and roof-lights – there is a general presumption against new apertures in the roofs or gables of any property within the conservation area.

- Replacement windows – any replacement windows will be required to match exactly the original design, including the size and proportion of window panes, detailing of frames and glazing bars. Aluminium and uPVC will not be acceptable. The creation of new window openings will be resisted.

- Doors – replacement doors should conform to the original pattern for the house type.

- Painting and rendering – only surfaces which are currently painted, including woodwork, gutters, down pipes and rendered walls, should be painted. Colours should be of neutral shades except where an architecturally related group of houses has a suitable established colour scheme.

- Roof materials – re-roofing of buildings will be allowed provided that the materials to be used are consistent in colour, texture and dimension with the original character if the building. Original ornamental features such as finials and ridge tiles will be required to be retained or replaced.

- Parking in front gardens – the Council will encourage the retention of a traditional garden appearance and the formation of hard-standings for vehicles in front gardens will not be permitted.

- Programme of enhancement – the Council will investigate and pursue appropriate means of enhancing the character and appearance of the area.

These polices are supported with detailed guidance on the design, repair and maintenance of specific forms of development. In addition to the policies in the design guide, proposals for development will be assessed against the London Borough of Ealing's Local Plan.

2.2 Ealing's New Plan for the Environment

Ealing Council adopted its Unitary Development Plan in 2002. It sets a vision through to 2017. There is no specific policy within the plan for Brentham Garden Suburb. Amongst the generic policies the most specific is policy 4.8 (Conservation Areas). The Council aims to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting. It recognises the importance of ensuring that development outside the conservation area does not have a detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area itself; and it states that proposals for the redevelopment of existing buildings should preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.

2.3 Brentham Garden Estate Conservation Area Appraisal

Ealing Planning Services have produced a conservation area appraisal. The appraisal is to be updated and adopted but the present version is of value in providing an informative overview of the history of the estate and identifying its special features.

3 Hampstead Garden Suburb

3.1 Unitary Development Plan

The London Borough of Barnet Council adopted its Unitary Development Plan in 2001. There is a range of generic policies within the plan, including policies on the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings. The section on conservation areas states that the Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. Development proposals that do not meet this objective will be refused. Furthermore, the Council will refuse consent for the demolition of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. With regards to listed buildings, consent for demolition will normally be refused as will proposed works that will have a detrimental impact on the character of the building.

Hampstead Garden Suburb is also noted as an Area of Special Character within the development plan. It is important in this area that the skylines and views are protected. Development that does not enhance the landscape and townscape features will be refused.

3.2 Design Guidance

Barnet Council and the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust have jointly published design guidance for Hampstead Garden Suburb. The idea behind producing the guide is to ensure that residents are familiar with the controls exercised in the Suburb, and the roles and responsibilities exercised by the Council and the Trust. The guide is to be used by residents as a starting point when considering alterations to their homes and businesses. It begins with an introduction to the design of the garden suburb and the origins and status of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. It then goes on to discuss the importance of and the type of work acceptable to the following:

- Extensions – rear ground floor extensions may be acceptable. Front extensions are normally unacceptable. Side extensions must not close the important visual gaps between properties; this can otherwise create a damaging ‘terracing’ effect. The guide continues to highlight some key areas which the Council will take into consideration when deciding a proposed extension e.g. the ground floor area, whether the extension is part of a group, whether the extension will be in character, and whether the extension will be visible from the road or another public viewpoint.

- Building Materials and Details – suitable materials and adequate detailing are important to retain the original character of properties. The Council encourages repair rather than replacement, using replicas where possible, with matching materials including roof tiles. The guide elaborates on these points: for example, it sets out the most appropriate walling materials and tiles for roofs as well as the form of windows, gutters, pipes and chimneys.

- Garages and Parking Spaces – the guide states that where there is room for a garage it should be designed sympathetically with the existing house and the surrounding area. In some areas the Council may not permit hard-standing to the front of the property because the landscaping that would be removed can often make a significant contribution to the character of the local area.

- Fences, walls and hedges – hedges are important to the overall appearance of the Suburb and should be preserved. Boundary treatments should be reproduced where possible.

3.3 Hampstead Garden Suburb Scheme of Management

Under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967, the Scheme was adopted to help maintain and preserve the character and amenities of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. The management of the suburb is exercised by the Trust and residents pay an annual management charge as a contribution to its expenses. This management charge is set in proportion to the expenses of the Trust. The Scheme stipulates the following:

- no garden, yard or forecourt will be built upon nor will an alteration to the external appearance of a building be made without written consent from the Trust
- no walls or fences will be erected around a property without consent from the Trust
- no caravan, trailer or similar moveable object will be stationed for more than 48 hours on any part of a property without consent
- no washing or clothes shall be exposed from any front elevation or front garden of a property
- the exterior of a property will be kept in good repair and all boundary treatments will be well maintained

4 Letchworth Garden City

4.1 Local Development Plan Policies

North Hertfordshire Council adopted its Unitary Development Plan in 1996. In addition to its generic policies the development plan makes specific reference to Letchworth Garden City in Policy 1 (Pattern and Character of North Hertfordshire) and Policy 58 (Letchworth Garden City Design Principles). Policy 1 recognises Letchworth Garden City as one of four towns in the district

with its own special character. It identifies its unique area as one of 'mainly low density residential areas with high quality architecture, tree-lined streets and separate industrial areas.' The policy seeks to maintain this existing pattern of development, restraining development pressures and enhancing its character. It notes that part of Letchworth Garden City is in a conservation area, which makes policy 20 (Conservation Areas) relevant. Policy 20 encourages the maintenance and enhancement of conservation areas and sets out a range of criteria for assessing planning applications for development in conservation areas and permits their refusal if they do not comply. For example, development will not be allowed if it does not respect and reflect the visual quality of the area.

Policy 58 (Letchworth Garden City Design Principles) recognises the importance of the unique environment that Letchworth holds. The policy helpfully sets out twelve key principles that make up the garden city, including its vistas and group design, and states that development will only be acceptable if it respects these key elements and is in sympathy with the traditional buildings. The policy has an illustrative element. Using the Rushby Mead housing scheme as an example, it sets out these elements with an illustrative street layout and photographs.

The policy is also helpful in identifying those generic policies within the development plan that are of relevance to Letchworth Garden City. Policies 1 and 20 have already been noted; others include Policy 2 (Green Belt), Policy 8 (Development in Towns) and Policy 18 (Listed Buildings). There is a green belt around Letchworth Garden City that aims to maintain the separate identity of the garden city but also to prevent development spreading onto valuable agricultural land. Given that the urban edges of the garden city are stark, the policy recommends that additional landscaping will help to soften this impact.

Policy 21 recognises the importance of the landscape and open space pattern within Letchworth Garden City. It notes the importance of the earlier landscaping (e.g. Norton Common and the shallow valley of Pix Brook) that pre-date the garden city, the important views from both outside and inside the town, and the open spaces within the town associated with the urban layout. The importance of retaining and enhancing these features is stressed.
With reference to housing, Policy 26 expects development proposals to follow its 'Garden City Design Principles', so that new development is in keeping with the original ideas of the Garden City. For example, low-density housing, landscaping and hedges, and the grouping of properties, are all key characteristics of the city.

The development plan recognises that not all parts of the Garden City currently achieve a high environmental standard and therefore the Council has made a list of environmental priorities to improve the attractiveness of the area. These proposed improvements range from additional tall trees on The Grange and the provision of off-street parking bays in Hillbrow, to environmental improvements such as verge tree planting in Works Road and the reinforcement of the boundary with the residential area in Icknield Way West.

There is a further section of policy 21 that refers to Letchworth Town Centre. Letchworth is currently experiencing competitive pressures from outside: from other shops, leisure facilities and entertainment venues. In 1986 the Council commissioned a study into the town's shopping problems and devised a potential revitalization strategy for the area. Consultants are looking at this again for the Council. In the meantime, Policy 21 promotes enhancements to the town centre to improve the environment for pedestrians and manage traffic in the centre.

4.2 Design Guidance for Residential Areas in Letchworth Garden City

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and North Hertfordshire Council have jointly produced a design guide that has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the local plan. The guide first explains the importance of Letchworth Garden City: that it is the world's first Garden City based on the theories of Ebenezer Howard. In this context, the guide highlights its purpose as being to give detailed advice to owners and professional advisers on the maintenance, alterations and extensions that can and cannot be carried out within the Garden City.

The guide makes it clear that in the majority of cases, planning permission will be required from the Council as well as landlord's consent from the Foundation. The latter is a requirement under a resident's lease and the Scheme of Management. The guide is well illustrated and first sets the context by describing the existing controls within the city. Firstly, it explains that development within the conservation area will require consent from the Council and should seek to preserve or enhance the character of the area. Nearly 400 buildings in Letchworth are listed and therefore any alteration or extension to these properties requires Listed Building Consent from the Council. A third control is 'Areas of Development Constraint.' These were set up by the Foundation, to ensure that minor alterations to property that do not require planning consent remain under some form of control, and therefore remain appropriate to the character of the area.

The following gives a summary of the key topics of the guide:

- Maintenance and Alteration of Early Garden City Houses – the guide encourages the retention and repair of properties before replacement. In this way the special features and individuality of the house can be retained. The guide highlights the importance of unity between houses and therefore the choice of materials can be important to the character of the house itself as well as the character of the street.

- Extensions – residents are encouraged to make the best use of the space available before considering the need to extend the property. In this way the special character of the property can be retained as much as possible. If it is necessary to extend the property, the guide highlights some key guidelines to follow.

- Building Materials and Design Features – The guide notes that the properties in Letchworth Garden City were first designed with an understanding that the choice of materials and detailing would be under unified control. The guide is helpful in detailing what the original features of properties would have been and therefore encourages the use of the same or similar materials as much as possible.

- Garages, hard-standing and paving in front gardens – consent is required from the Heritage Foundation for garages, boundary treatments and hard-standing to the front of a property. These works may also require planning permission. For hard-standing, the guide recommends a range of materials and form of landscaping to minimise its impact on the character of the surrounding area.

- Landscaping and Trees – the open spaces and trees contribute significantly to the character of Letchworth Garden City. Hedges should be well maintained and kept to an appropriate height; the hedging should be privet, box or beech. There is a presumption in favour of retaining all trees within the Letchworth Conservation Areas and outside; owners should still seek consent from the Foundation for the felling of trees.

The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation runs a bi-annual Garden City Heritage Awards Scheme which gives recognition to people who observe the principles of good design and workmanship as set out in the guide.

4.3 The Garden City Estate of Letchworth: Scheme of Management

Under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 the Letchworth Garden City Corporation adopted a Scheme of Management. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that the character of the Garden City does not deteriorate by virtue of owners obtaining freehold of a property and making alterations that are out of character with the surrounding area, and therefore cumulatively changing the town's character.

The Scheme of Management requires owners to make sure that the external appearance of the property is maintained and kept in a good condition and, where necessary, shall maintain, repair or replace walls or other such boundary treatments. The owner must also maintain and keep the grounds of the property in a clean and tidy condition. Under the Scheme of Management the owner must not carry out any development or alteration materially affecting the external appearance of the property, nor change its use, or carry out a trade or business without first obtaining written consent from the Foundation and the Council where applicable. The Scheme adds further restrictions that although may appear minor on their own, can collectively protect the character of the area. For example, the owner must not erect an aerial, display advertisements or store vehicles in front of the building line without the consent of the Foundation.

4.4 Character Statement for Letchworth Conservation Area

This document identifies and defines the special character and appearance of the conservation area to ensure that the importance and special character of the area is understood. The statement is used by the local planning authority when making decisions on planning application. It identifies the special character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole, as well as concentrating on individual areas. The includes the following sections:

- an overview of the special character of the whole conservation area;
- a description of the special interest and character of the town centre;
- an overview of the residential areas in the Letchworth Conservation Area;
- a more detailed review of the residential areas.

5 Port Sunlight

5.1 Local Development Plan

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council has a Unitary Development Plan that was adopted in February 2000. It has a variety of generic policies from housing to safeguarding mineral reserves, but also a more specific policy on the Port Sunlight Conservation Area. Policy CH9 (Port Sunlight Conservation Area) seeks to preserve the essential elements of the village that gives Port Sunlight its special character and layout. The policy states that the layout (including Port Sunlight's green spaces) and the historical character of the village must be preserved. It also identifies particular buildings, such as the Art Gallery, where the setting is to be preserved, and the factory's frontage that is to be retained. There is also a more generic policy on the protection of heritage. Policy CH01 seeks to balance the need for new development against the importance of protecting evidence of the past. This policy seeks to protect buildings and other structures, local areas and sites and monuments of historical importance.

5.2 Scheme of Management

The Scheme of Management is in the form of an H.M. Land Registry record which imposes restrictive covenants on the village. The covenants set an annual fee of £1 towards maintenance. There are four schedules to the register setting out the covenants for the properties and the individual tenant's entitlements. In particular, Schedules 3 and 4 list the restrictions on works to properties. For example, residents must, at all times, keep the exterior of the building in good decorative repair and condition, must not carry out any alterations or construct any extension (without the appropriate consent), and must not erect any radio masts, television aerials, satellite dishes or other similar equipment.

6 Silver End

6.1 Local Plans: The Adopted Local District Plan 1995

The Braintree District Local Plan was adopted in February 1995. Like other development plans it has a range of generic policies but in the chapter on housing there is specific reference to Silver End. The plan refers to the Village Envelope that has been drawn tightly around the village of Silver End to maintain its compact shape and protect the village from further development on its edges, and to protect the good quality agricultural land and the surrounding open countryside from being developed. Policy BDP 5 (Town Development Boundaries and Village Envelopes) states that 'new development will normally be confined to the areas within the Development Boundary and the Village Envelopes. Outside these areas countryside policies will apply.' Policy BDP 7 (Visually Important Spaces) states that development in areas that are visually important will be resisted and Policy BDP 8 (Development within Village Envelopes and Town Development Boundaries) states that 'development will only be permitted where it satisfies amenity, design, environmental and highway criteria.'

The overall objective for Silver End Village is to make sure that any changes are in keeping with the character of the existing built and natural environment. The Council is, therefore, keen to pursue schemes of environmental improvement. Policy BDP 168 states that 'an improvement scheme will be prepared for the shopping centre and adjacent areas at the Broadway.' Policies BDP 41 (Conservation Areas: General Policy) to BDP 56 (Environmental Impact Assessment) state how the Council aims to make sure that development makes a positive contribution to and enhances the area.

6.2 The Revised Deposit Plan May 2003

The Council is undergoing a review of its local plan. This process is currently at the stage where it has a revised deposit plan from 2003 to 2011. Whilst not complete, the deposit plan will be used in planning decisions and it is worth noting the differences between this plan and the one adopted in 1995 in relation to Silver End Village. Very minor changes are proposed to the policies discussed in the previous section; for example under Policy BDP 8 (Development within Town Development Boundaries and Village Envelopes) it is recommended that an assessment of the impact of a development on the surrounding area is a matter of judgement as to whether it 'materially' detracts rather than 'simply' detracts from the character of the area. A more significant change is under the policy on conservation areas. The Revised Deposit Plan now states that 'where developments are cumulatively detracting from the special character or appearance of a Conservation Area the Council may withdraw permitted development rights.'

6.3 Silver End Conservation Guide

Silver End is within a conservation area and the Braintree Council, with Essex County Council, have produced a guide that was adopted in 1999 as supplementary planning guidance. The guide explains the scope of the controls within the conservation area. It illustrates and advises on the form of development that would be considered acceptable and sets out the procedures for making a planning application. The following provides a summary of the key aspects of the guide. The guide takes a slightly different approach to those mentioned so far in that it refers to the Article 4 Direction and then lists those works that require planning permission. A section at the back of the guide elaborates on some of the key points made below, using pictures and diagrams where appropriate.

- Extensions – the enlargement of the dwelling house and the erection of any outbuildings require planning permission. Front extensions are considered inappropriate as are poorly sited and designed minor buildings e.g. garages.

- Windows, Doors, Roofs, Porches & Porch Canopies – following a list of alterations that require planning consent the guide goes on to describe the importance of the Crittal windows to the conservation area. The Council encourages the repair and retention of the original windows as much as possible. Encouragement is given to replacement metal windows to re-create the effect of the original fittings. The shape and materials of the roofs should not be altered and existing roof slates should be retained. The covering of brick walls is not acceptable.

- Fences, Gates etc. – boundary treatments are considered integral to the character of the conservation area and should be maintained. The height of such structures and their materials should be given careful consideration.

- Parking Spaces and Access Ways – the Council encourages the retention and reinstatement of hedges and trees wherever possible. The construction of access ways and parking spaces may be acceptable and therefore are subject to the Council's assessment.

7 Welwyn Garden City

7.1 District Plan

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan was adopted in 2005. The plan is generic for the whole of the local authority area but the garden city is recognised in a number of sections

- Development in the Future

  Policy H1 (New Housing Development) identifies Welwyn Garden City's town centre as a site for development during the plan period.

Furthermore, the Welwyn Garden City industrial area is allocated for development as an Employment Area.

Welwyn Garden City town centre serves as a minor sub-regional centre for Hertfordshire. It provides the main centre for comparison goods shopping in the district, serving a catchment area beyond the district boundaries. The development plan sets out a strategy for the centre, primarily to provide opportunities for new retail development and increase the diversity of uses. Given that the centre comprises a retail core surrounded by areas of mixed uses, the development plan sets an agenda for each of these areas.

- Welwyn and its Green Belt

  Welwyn Garden City is surrounded by designated green belt. Policy GBSP2 (Towns and Specified Settlements) states that development will be concentrated within the existing boundaries and limited to that which is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of its character.

  Policy GBSP3 (Area of Special Restraint and Structural Landscape Area) makes specific reference to the area of land at Panshanger Aerodrome. This will be safeguarded against potential further growth needs beyond the period of the plan.

- Conservation Areas

  There are two areas within Welwyn Garden City that are designated as conservation areas: the town centre and the Beehive Area. The Council recognises the importance of preserving and enhancing these areas, given their significant historical and architectural value.

  Policy R22 (Development in Conservation Areas) states that 'any proposals for new buildings or extensions and alterations to existing buildings will only be permitted where they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.' Policies within this part of the plan go on to set out guidelines for the demolition of buildings in conservation areas, works to listed buildings and historic parks and gardens.

7.2 Supplementary Design Guidance

Welwyn Hatfield Council adopted the above development plan guidance in February 2005 and, therefore, it forms a material planning consideration when determining planning applications. The guidance applies to all areas of the district and covers a wide range of topics from quality of design to energy efficiency but, in particular, it offers guidance on conservation areas and listed buildings. The guide should be read in conjunction with the development plan. There is a specific reference to advertisements in Conservation Areas:

it is stated that advertisements should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Signs should be sensitively positioned.

7.3 Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Character Study

The objectives of the appraisal are to 'define the qualities that make the Town Centre Conservation Area of Welwyn Garden City special, and to identify why it should be protected and enhanced. The document provides a framework within which proposals for the conservation, enhancement and possible future development of the conservation area may be evaluated.'

The guide defines the location and setting of Welwyn Garden City and gives some background to its history and evolution. It defines the character of Welwyn Garden City and the conservation in the town centre, describing its key features including open spaces, views and listed buildings.

In the last section of the guide, the Council has set out a range of guidelines for development within the town centre. These are summarised as follows:

- Building Materials – strict control should be exercised over the replacement of traditional materials for modern ones. UPVC windows are to be avoided given their cumulative impact on the character of the surrounding area.

- Public Seating is in need of repair and should be colour co-ordinated across the town. The original Garden City street lamps designed by de Soissons should be preserved.

- Shopkeepers should comply with the original intentions for advertising within the centre. Commercial signage all too often is out of keeping with the original design principles.

- Care should be taken to preserve the many open and park-like perspectives in Welwyn Garden City. Cluttering the townscape with railings, lights and signage should be avoided.

The guide gives reference to key areas of the centre that require environmental improvements. These include the College Way that requires remedial attention to improve its visual properties. Furthermore, the appearance of the car park at Wigmores North needs to be improved. There may also be an opportunity to develop the 'sunken open space' at the junction of the pedestrian subways on the south side of Bridge Road for safe, outdoor recreational facilities.

7.4 Estate Management Scheme

Under Section 19 of the Leasehold Reform Act 1967, Welwyn Hatfield District Council has a management scheme for the garden city. The purpose of the

scheme is to administer the maintenance and enhancement of the amenities of the garden city with due regard to the welfare of the residents.

Every owner is responsible for the appropriate maintenance and upkeep of their own property. If they fail to keep their property in order, the management scheme allows the Commission for New Towns (a successor in title) to enter the premises and carry out the appropriate works. The scheme stipulates that if an owner wishes to carry out works to the property that requires consent from the Commission, s/he must give notice in writing. The Commission will then consider the proposals and any representations made before granting consent.

The scheme of management lists conditions that are binding on each owner. These include:

- to keep and maintain the property in good repair and condition, including the main walls and exterior walls, the roof, external doors and windows and boundary treatment including walls, fences and hedges.
- to keep the garden and the grounds well maintained
- to not cut down, lop or top any tree exceeding 15 feet
- to not paint the exterior of the building in a colour that is out-of-keeping with the surrounding area
- any proposed hard-standing should not be laid until consent from the Commission has been obtained

Furthermore, the owner should not store any vehicle, caravan, boat or other such moveable object on the land to the property without the Commission's consent. There is also a stipulation on TV and radio aerials. The owner must not erect or affix to the exterior of the property an aerial without first obtaining consent from the Commission.

8 Wythenshawe

8.1 Local Development Plan

Manchester City Council has a unitary plan adopted in 1995. The plan gives specific reference to Wythenshawe, noting that it suffers from high levels of unemployment, poverty and deprivation but that its location close to Manchester Airport gives it considerable potential. The plan identifies priorities of the regeneration programme being to refurbish the Civic Centre, improve the Sharston Industrial Estate, and widen and promote the range of heritage and leisure activities offered by Wythenshawe Park. The development plan elaborates on this vision by referring to proposals in West and East Wythenshawe. There are over 15 and 40 policies respectively for these areas. Many of these policies are generic and without specific mention to the original garden city but relate specifically to Wythenshawe:

- West Wythenshawe

The aim in West Wythenshawe is primarily to retain the residential character of the area and protect and improve the quality of both the built and open environment. The regeneration programme will provide adequate leisure and community facilities as well as improve accessibility in the area by road and rail.

- East Wythenshawe

The objective in East Wythenshawe is to achieve the right balance between protecting its character and realising its potential. The Council aims to protect and improve the quality of both the built and open environment and to provide a suitable range of leisure and community facilities. The Civic Centre is within East Wythenshawe and this will be subject to a programme of modernisation and improvement. Transport links will be improved and Manchester Airport will be further developed.

8.2 Regeneration Framework

Wythenshawe faces serious social and economic problems and to help combat these problems Manchester City Council has adopted a Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF). The framework identifies Wythenshawe as a well-planned garden suburb on the southern edge of the Greater Manchester conurbation. It provides a detailed appraisal of Wythenshawe's population and demographics, household structure and tenure, economic activity, employment and unemployment rates. In the light of this appraisal, the framework identifies the key challenges and opportunities for Wythenshawe. The key opportunities are summarised as follows:

- Manchester Airport – maximise the potential given by the airport's close proximity to Wythenshawe to attract commercial development. Develop a much tighter integration of the airport and Wythenshawe so that the latter benefits from access to a range of employment opportunities and training.

- Role of Education – Wythenshawe should seek direct employment from the local universities and use education facilities to act as regeneration catalysts. Schools and a network of learning centres could become growth hubs in the community.

- Strategic Service Clusters – there is potential to build on aspects of Wythenshawe Town Centre, encouraging the evening economy and bringing in new residential development.

In this context, the all-encompassing vision for Wythenshawe is to recognise the area as Manchester's Garden City. The framework states that 'the idea of Wythenshawe as Manchester's Garden City brings together the positive aspects of Wythenshawe's housing and green space with the dynamic sense of growth and change in the Wythenshawe economy… the vision of Manchester's Garden City suggests enhanced growth and change while

maintaining a distinctive “garden” identity for Wythenshawe which relates to the original concept of Wythenshawe as the Garden Suburb.’

The framework makes an important reference to the fact that while ‘the distinctive “garden” feel of Wythenshawe should be retained and nurtured, there are opportunities to integrate higher density development within this context in a sensitive way and these should be welcomed and grasped.’

CHAPTER 5
GARDEN CITY WORKSHOPS

During 2007, four workshops were held at various locations across the country. The purpose of the workshops was to enable discussion amongst interested parties of the recommendations that were emerging from earlier meetings with representatives of individual garden city settlements, and from a study of related documentation. It is important to remember that not all recommendations are appropriate to each location. This chapter indicates the headline messages that were debated in the workshops and is supplemented by a record of the more detailed discussions held at each of the four locations.

1 Points for Discussion

The following discussion points formed a basis for a lively debate in the four regional workshops.

1.1 Funding and Land Values

- Trusts avoid going to court because of the cost implications. Can Trusts be given greater powers so that the issues that a Trust needs to take action on can be carried out?

- There is a need to increase the resources within the local authority's monitoring and enforcement sections.

- Better access needs to be made to grants and funding schemes (or more of these made available) for Trusts and residents so that appropriate changes can be made within the settlements (affordability can be a problem e.g. residents not being able to afford the appropriate materials). Perhaps funding could be regularised through a tax system / grant scheme (heritage at the moment is not given sufficient value to warrant adequate funding/grant schemes).

1.2 Community

- The roles and responsibilities of the local authorities and the trusts could, in the majority of cases, be better conveyed to the residents. This would help to save time that is currently wasted when residents liaise with the Trust when it's more of a matter for the local authority.

1.3 Management

- Local authorities need to put better systems in place so that unauthorised development in the conservation areas, however small, can be appropriately prioritised against bigger development outside the conservation area.

- The working relationship between the Trust and Local Authorities could be much improved – but how? Is the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trusts a model of best practice?

- Advertise more widely the importance of the settlements in the context of the garden city movement – in the majority of the settlements too much emphasis is placed on protecting incremental changes through conservation measures with insufficient attention to the 'bigger picture' e.g. on where the settlement is heading in the next 5-10 years.

1.4 Extending the Scope

- A body / institution could oversee / advise on garden city settlements

- A register could accurately record and classify garden city settlements so that there is an accurate record (record history, size, population, legislation etc). This has already occurred at Welwyn Garden City in the conservation areas.

- Encourage local authorities to adopt a score card that aims to put a value on the change that is occurring within the settlements (assists with monitoring change)

- Gifting green estate to a management trust.

1.5 Legal

- All settlements could be covered by Article (4) to assist with LA resourcing

2 Points Raised in Workshops

2.1 Workshop 1: Bournville 20/06/07

General points:

- New Supplemental Planning Documents (SPDs) for Mature Suburbs can be used in refusal reasons as has occurred in Walsall, Streetly and Aldridge. This has been very successful in Solihull.
- What are we preserving? The density of development or the green setting or the interface between the built and natural environment?

- Could the project be broadened out to a wider selection of locations at a later date?

Recommendation 1: Make more use of existing powers:

- Article 4 exists for Bournville and Moor Pool. Powers are under a scheme of management.
- Bournville Village Trust (BVT) is troubled because if they lose an appeal it would weaken them.
- Liaison with Birmingham City Council is strong but on an ad hoc basis.
- If an individual approach was taken, then there would be differences in interpretation.
- Overall it was felt that there is power, and importantly, enough power: Moor Pool can take scheme of management quite a long way, but not to court.
- There has been successful enforcement – discussions with owner.
- BVT and BCC worked as a unified front, without that liaison enforcement issues become much more difficult.
- Scheme of management reveals local land change
- Can use Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to try to maintain character if within a conservation area. However, fruit trees are not protected. Hedge protection is also unsatisfactory. Local Planning Authority is reluctant to endorse blanket TPOs. However, the BVT scheme of management does cover trees.
- The Four Oaks Estate is now a conservation area.
- What are the challenges of conducting photographic surveys of Bournville?
- If a conservation area were to have an Article 4(2) enforcement, then new designations would be needed to Article 4 as well.

Recommendation 2: Obtain more legal powers and resources:

- Powers are there – both political and financial. S.215 notices are very important.
- The replacement of PPG15 will be very important as getting a building listed is currently quite difficult.
- BVT have adequate powers and BVS has power for external alterations. This is adequate for front drives and plot boundaries.
- There have not been many legal challenges to date at Bournville.
- How could Trusts be empowered? Trusts would be worried about losing - Letchworth is an example where this has happened in the past.
- There are only a handful of challenges. There is a resistance to conversion of habitable rooms.
- Access to funding schemes: lottery money was used to erect a plaque but overall small grants have disappeared.
- BVT does not offer grants to people.
- An endowment fund would be beneficial which would assist in the day to day operation of scheme of management
- The idea of an improvement award scheme might facilitate stakeholder reaction.

Recommendation 3: Engage more fully with relevant stakeholders:

- Residents are not necessarily aware of who has what role and where responsibility lies.
- Some might be unclear about whether a hierarchical relationship exists between BVT and BCC and the Scheme of Management.
- New residents receive a welcome pack from BVT, which includes information about local estate offices and agents.
- Stock of rental housing is a concern – is this out of step with the whole of Birmingham or just southwest Birmingham?
- Lettings – 23% to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and change is relatively low.
- Cultural issue with regards to BME groups in terms of approach to listed buildings, lobbying occurs more frequently. The Pakistani community prefers to lobby councillors rather than going to appeals.
- Do we accept that changing dynamics of a city affects suburbs?
- Engage commercial suppliers – to improve quality
- Environmental Sustainability – do-it-yourself solar panels. BVT has list of sources/suppliers for refurbishment.
- Would market respond to heritage aspect?

Recommendation 4: Adopt a more unified approach:

- Ward committee basis of Bournville.
- Section 19 of Leasehold Reform Act, a group did exist at one stage.
- How does this relate to smaller communities? Are there many others? Who would be in a potential online forum?

Other points made:

- Base information is important – photographic surveys can be invaluable
- Trusts are vital. What can be done for trusts that are not well-funded? Should resident groups form a trust? Could this become a new recommendation?

2.2 <u>Workshop 2: Wythenshawe 27/06/07</u>

General points:

- Common recognition about shared challenges
- Mention was made of the benefit of design guides that other garden cities and suburbs have.

Recommendation 1: Make more use of existing powers:

- Should Wythenshawe be a conservation area? After the right to buy, control lost leading to a loss of detail issues and the introduction of such items as fake lead windows.
- Sometimes these changes are not negative things – there are budgetary constraints to take into account. It is also important to remember the scale of Wythenshawe and therefore this makes it more difficult to manage.

- Are there any properties that are really altered? Some have exercised their rights, but council did not have money to restrict in any way.
- Owners need to present properties in an attractive way - will be aesthetically pleasing and will add value.
- Understanding/appreciation – Manchester could have put covenants on – too late for this to happen.
- LDFs can give good examples and suggest pilot approaches
- Garden city principles are at work, but could turn the corner and be back in a housing estate.
- Area focus – street to street differences throughout the suburb.
- Politically, residents would feel a sense of satisfaction – perception from within if the garden city brand were to be strengthened.
- At Port Sunlight the issue of Article 4 Direction which is on the agenda for the future.
- There is certainly more scope to be more imaginative with the new planning system and produce a SPD
- How do we make people aware of garden city heritage? Interpretation boards? Education is key and local schools need to recognise heritage and valuable local areas.
- The issue of how can change be monitored?
- It's the community that makes a place, not the buildings. Only recently reminded of Garden City status (Manchester City Council viewpoint)
- The relationship between councils and RSLs who only took over housing recently.
- Regeneration team should keep in touch with RSLs.
- In Wythenshawe, Willowpark/Parkway Green – both RSLs struggling with issues of car parking.
- Consistency of approach and coordination falls to regeneration team
- Management of Wythenshawe Park, etc. – All down to City Council. If there were a trust then this could potentially be a strong community asset.
- Wythenshawe Hall is utilised, but Baguley Hall unused
- Ownership of land issue too, need some new element on the site to make it work
- Wythenshawe Urban Regeneration Team is a clear channel through which all owner organisations are managed and coordinated.
- Take a regeneration overview, but still part of city council
- Moving on toward next business plan – physical side beginning to gain momentum in terms of regeneration.

Recommendation 2: Obtain more legal power and resources:

- Too few funding schemes.
- Should seek more diverse sources but a question of what can be grant funded?
- Funding available for new building through the Housing Corporation
- Regional Capacity Building Grant – from English Heritage

- Full characterisation assessment might be useful for Wythenshawe
- Mainstream funding is difficult to access
- Introduce design and economic issues to mainstream funding regimes. Money coming through RSLs and they have £90m to spend. HELM resources mentioned as a potential source.

Recommendation 3: Engage more fully with relevant stakeholders

- Active residents groups in Wythenshawe, 7 or 8 associations work with Parkway Green and with school and youth groups, but how effective are they and how often do they raise concerns?
- Mostly concerned with environmental issues and more basic issues as opposed to design and built environment issues. Resident groups are however involved with housing.
- Wythenshawe Environmental Forums and Northenden Civic Society were mentioned as two societies that are currently active.
- Residents associations are also active in Port Sunlight.
- Maybe need to demonstrate examples of good conservation with some pro active methods of persuasion which would encourage residents that conservation is a worthwhile cause.
- Improvement program devised by City Council and set up procurement vehicles: Greater Manchester Procurement and Impact Manchester
- Already planned for 5 years of refurbishment
- Housing trusts are leading departmental programs and there are political issues: local members and senior politicians tend to have a market led perspective
- Market driven and increasing in value – vast difference in value
- DIY issues: too late to tweak the details of the investment programme – investment welcome, infrastructure renewed.
- Council finances – more important things to spend money on than details which are pertinent to other garden city suburbs.
- Sustainability agenda - UPVC life course and eco homes issue
- EH bring out a series of guides on renewable energy on historic environments, conserving wooden doors/windows.
- Nothing specific as to why Wythenshawe is special – nature and location. The overall environment adds to a sense of place but there are deep seated social issues.
- How would the local authority implement a design guide when starting from such a low base? The maintenance/management issues would also be too onerous.
- Wythenshawe had strong/static community. What is their understanding of a garden city?
- Green spaces and trees are incredibly important, green setting is important to the local community and adds to the sense of place.
- Raise awareness – EH open to taking an approach – good conservation outcomes.
- Has to be an issue about property values
- Wythenshawe as a whole has not been promoted until the last five years and is now marketed as Manchester's Garden City.

Recommendation 4: Adopt a more unified approach:

- Forum for Garden City Settlements.
- Forum across Wythenshawe and but also linked with residents associations.
- Share best practice and the potential for a delivery forum.
- Solutions/characteristics of the various settlements could be shared.
- Port Sunlight to be included.

2.3 Workshop 3: Letchworth Garden City 02/07/07

Recommendation 1: Make more use of existing powers

- There are pros and cons to article four direction: Hampstead Garden Suburb has an Article 4(1) and Letchworth an Article 4(2).
- In Silver End there is enforcement on breaches and also monitoring.
- Problem relates to the 4 year rule which can lead to resentment.
- Had baseline plot survey in 1998 across Silver End.
- Enforcement is reactive, not proactive and is often at the initiative of a local councillor which demonstrates that local activism is very important in all cases.
- Letchworth has not benefited through Article 4
- Conservation area was reviewed in Letchworth and lots of surveys have been done.
- Increased level of bureaucracy – did work closely with NHDC who are very good with providing support.
- WGC is looking at an estate management scheme, should this go into article 4, Council members asked WHDC to look at all options.
- Local authorities need to respond to cases of unauthorised development – but resources are not there.
- Comment from a Councillor noted that people are less and less prepared to be told what to do, we live in an increasingly litigious society.
- In HGS there are regular trust meetings with Barnet Council
- Resources – heritage foundation had over 2000 applications in Letchworth and the Council may pick up another 1000 apps. Significant issue of duplication of resources
- Primary legislation, is there an issue of revising the GPDO? People know when they buy a listed building but in a conservation area people feel that the council is interfering
- At a national level EH feel that conservation areas vary greatly, and the tandem issue of local lists – weight of PPG15 may alter.
- The issue of merging of Conservation Area Consent and Planning Permission. Will this change devalue its importance?
- Existing powers fine on paper, but not in practice.
- It was noted that the appeal rate in Silver End is 100%.
- There would be concern if PINS don't understand the value of these settlements and intrusions into them.
- Cumulative appeals – sharing appeals between settlements would be very useful

- Importance of good conservation area appraisal – previously people didn't appreciate the value of this but it is becoming increasingly important.
- If powers are split between LPA and a trust does this create a tension?

Recommendation 2: Obtain more legal powers and resources

- A need to empower trusts: they are responsible to those who pay management charges.
- Funding Schemes: Some small scale applications to Heritage Lottery Fund but in general grant funding has dried up and is not expanding very much at all.
- Economic led schemes look at more run down areas that the garden cities/suburbs.
- It was felt that overall there should be more opportunity for community organisations and community trusts to access such funding streams.
- In terms of reviewing the taxation system then the long running VAT issue was still viewed as critical.
- Gifting land to trusts – Welwyn ended up having a £1.3m burden from this and so perhaps not a useful way forward.
- Maintenance and onward revenue lost due to resources needed to maintain land.
- The idea of a Local Environmental Trust was suggested. Nobody wants to take on the financial responsibility of managing gifted estate. A local building preservation trust was also seen as useful.

Recommendation 3: Engage more fully with relevant stakeholders

- If a community feels ownership of a place then this is valuable to maintain.
- Parish Council fairly active at Silver End and the Garden City society exists in Welwyn Garden City.
- The perception of the LGCHF is mixed.
- Need for a common forum – how do you get across the message to residents?
- Hampstead Trust and residents association causes confusion – The Trust puts together some gazettes.
- Welwyn Garden City society is fairly involved and the Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust is a new group.
- It is the threat of change gets people involved, and people take notice
- At residents meetings, or other public meetings, getting the average resident rather than just vocal minority engaged is a difficult problem.
- Significant changes in Welwyn Garden City since the 1980s which has changed the character of the settlement.
- In terms of engagement, people don't always know what the term stakeholder means.
- DIY issues: Silver End have put leaflets in DIY stores.
- Letchworth have limited resources to do this.

- HGS working with local joinery companies as it is essential to have buy in from local suppliers.
- Positive publicity is the best way forward to show what can be achieved.

Recommendation 4: Adopt a more unified approach

- Forum approach outlined would be very welcome.
- Regular discussion with those settlements facing similar issues would be helpful.
- Newsletter/online forum/website source of info.
- Unified responses to government papers/policy documents.
- English Historic Towns Forum something along similar lines for Garden Suburbs/Cities.
- Enabling those less confident to get together.
- TCPA potentially could lead on this subject to funding.

2.4 Workshop 4: Hampstead Garden Suburb 12/07/07

Recommendation 1: Make more use of existing powers

- The question was posed, do existing powers fall short? Are there conflicts? The example of satellite dishes was given to illustrate the ineffective aspects of Article 4.
- This demonstrates a need to update Article 4 directions but there are large resource issues in doing this.
- Members do not like Article 4 as a tool – not income generating for a local authority.
- The idea of developing a model for an Article 4 direction was seen as something that the TCPA could usefully do.
- Issue of speed in determining applications increasingly being bestowed on local planning authorities linked in with the HDCR and Microgeneration and the overall thrust of the Planning White Paper.
- In Brentham the Article 4 is very out of date.
- Article 4(2) strengthens at local level. New A4 (2) for front of properties.
- Heritage White Paper: Heritage for 21st century – great deal of information but for local planning authorities the resource issues are significant.
- Many authorities shy away from Article 4 – need to obtain permission from Secretary of State and this is a lengthy process.
- Enforcement is a huge problem; there is an incremental erosion of character, even over the last ten years. Adequate resources are perhaps the biggest problem.
- At HGS good perception locally about what the trust does and the management scheme says trust can gives 3 months notice.
- The real power lies not in the legal aspect of the scheme, but in securing involvement in the area.
- At LPA it is a matter of resources – 4 year rule in terms of enforcement and there simply isn't time to be proactive.
- It is important to understand an area to have the ability to take legal action and in order to monitor change there needs to be a

consistent base which is where there is a role for bodies/organisations in the suburb.
- Brentham – an area wide network and a newsletter.
- EH undertake a snapshot survey every four years, residents can be involved in this.
- Idea of score card system – can employ a local person/architect to undertake this work.
- Christine Garnaut talked about Colonel Light Gardens in Australia where the council is vigilant. People have been told to stop certain developments – issues of garages and carports and over time this has altered the overall character of the area.
- Need to remind people of importance of garden cities – education.
- In South Australia: when new residents move in – publication on gardens and homes are distributed and this is linked into educating local estate agents in explaining the character and value of an area.

Recommendation 2: Obtain more legal power and resources
- Appeals decisions and precedents are also very valuable in presenting a united force.
- What would a model scheme of management look like today? This might be a useful exercise to undertake.
- Review taxation system – ongoing issue but greater perhaps than the scope of this work.
- Gifting Green/Land/Estate trust – encouraging land owners to take a longer term view.
- Review of regeneration of suburbs – Sea Mills, 20% of houses need replacing as they are concrete. Save Sea Mills want conservation area to be extended. First council housing to be designated as CA. There are 33 CAs in Bristol, but none with article 4 directions.

Recommendation 3: Engage more fully with relevant stakeholders
- Encouragement of amenity societies and dialogue between authorities and voluntary bodies essential.
- The Brentham Heritage Society/Brentham Society and in a wider sense across Brentham people wanted it to be a conservation area.
- In terms of DIY products the ability for individual craftsmen to produce appropriate designs was seen as useful, although this of course is far more costly than an off the shelf design.
- The conservation roof light was trialled and initiated in Hampstead and is now a standard product.
- The value of taking photographs of what is done and creating a visual library as time goes by is very important.

Recommendation 4: Adopt a more unified approach
- Forum approach would be useful – TCPA ideally placed to do this.
- Perhaps more international if resources allow.

3 Summary Recommendations

3.1 Recommendation 1: Make more use of existing powers

3.1.1 Tools:

How can trusts be empowered to enforce regulations? Trusts and local authorities need to be more informed and have more direction with regards to using powers designated under Article 4, for listed buildings and conservation areas, TPOs, S215, PPG15,etc.

There needs to be more clarity with regards to enforcement issues and available tools for enforcement. Linked in with this is the issue of resourcing enforcement offices so that a more proactive approach can be taken.

3.1.2 Coordination:

Management at the local level needs to be properly coordinated between trusts, local planning authorities and central government. In particular, it is clear that where local partners work together as a unified front more successful outcomes and relationships are achieved. Thus far, trusts have demonstrated that they are an effective management tool and that schemes of management are useful if they can adapt to current conditions.

3.1.3 Resident Involvement:

Local government will exercise authority more effectively if residents understand and feel they have a stake in maintaining the community character. This links in with the education points made later.

3.1.4 Focus:

To make the most of existing powers, there is a need to isolate aspects of garden cities and their heritage and identify what are the core preservation/conservation objectives. There will be tensions as time progresses between the existing powers and those introduced under reform of general planning powers. This is an area where the project should be strong in reaching some solutions.

3.2 Recommendation 2: Obtain more legal power and resources

3.2.1 Review Taxation System:

There needs to be a review of taxation system. VAT, especially, is a longstanding issue and one which causes problems when it comes to the refurbishment of buildings. There would be scope for the TCPA to lobby on this subject.

3.2.2 Review Available Funding Options:

- Seek diversity of sources, grants, trusts.
- Mainstream funding is difficult to access and disappearance of small grants.
- Housing corporations, RSLs
- Local Trusts and Gifting.
- Endowment Fund.
- Improvement award scheme might be a worthwhile approach. It would facilitate stakeholder reaction.
- What can be done for trusts that are not well-funded?

3.2.3 Resourcefulness:

Deals and arrangements can be sought for purchasing services from craftsmen or suppliers of windows, doors, building materials, etc. For example, the Bournville Village Trust created a list of suppliers for refurbishment.

3.3 Recommendation 3: Engage more fully with relevant stakeholders

3.3.1 Education:

Public engagement will be far more productive if proper steps have been taken to educate and inform. Residents need to properly understand the structure of their local authority and how they can be involved. Issues of design and economics need to be brought to the mainstream. Design guides are useful for clarification. Schools and youth groups should be made an integral part of the education process.

3.3.2 Inclusion:

Be wary that interest groups/residents groups are involved in the process. An inventory should be taken of all associations and organisations in each area. Some areas have engaged commercial suppliers as well.

3.3.3 Incentives:

There need to be incentives for people to be involved in the management process:
- Understanding what they have a stake in
- Score Card System
- Improvement Award Scheme

3.4 Recommendation 4: Adopt a more unified approach

- How can smaller communities benefit? They need to be included
- An online forum was generally felt to be useful (similar to the Historic Towns Forum)

- Need to be conscious that each community needs to embrace their individuality but also have a space where they can share ideas./appeals decisions etc.
- Should create a mode of delivery for sharing of best practice
- Get local people involved in the process so that they make informed value judgements

CHAPTER 6
'THE PATH FOLLOWED UP'

We return now to some general ideas. Garden city settlements, in one form or another, remain an attractive environment and are popular with householders and businesses alike. They make a strong case to be cared for, not for reasons of nostalgia but for the valuable contribution they continue to make as good places to live and work. This chapter concludes with Howard's words, that there is still a path to be 'followed up'.

In his own seminal book of 1898, Ebenezer Howard headed one of the later chapters, 'The Path Followed Up'. He opened the chapter with these words:

> 'The reader is now kindly asked to assume, for the sake of argument, that our garden city has been fairly launched, and is a decided success, and to consider briefly some of the more important effects which such an object-lesson, by the light of which it will throw upon the pathway of reform, must inevitably produce upon society, and then we will endeavour to trace some of the broader features of the after-development.'[30]

The current reader, with the benefit of more than a century of subsequent experience, is invited to follow the same path. We can tread lightly over the now familiar ground of how the first garden city experiment was launched and how it was followed by later examples. Of the latter, none were truly to follow to the letter the advice of Howard but (as earlier chapters of this report have shown) the twentieth century saw a whole generation of garden city settlements, displaying some if not all of the characteristics of the original model. Fundamentalists might decry the dilution of the true gospel, but in the leafy avenues and human scale of these offspring developments many were to enjoy a quality of living environment that alternative models of planning and architecture, notably Modernism, have never been able to rival.

There is room for debate, of course, and while for some the garden city movement is a creed for others it has always been an anathema, a rejection of the avowed virtues of high-density city life. Of one thing, however, there is no contention: the garden city has proved to be one of the most enduring models of the past century, influencing planners, architects and politicians across the world. The question, though, to revert to the above opening lines of Howard's chapter, is whether there is still a path to follow up, or, to adapt his own words, is there still mileage in trying 'to trace some of the broader features of the after-development'. And, if so, we might add with the benefit of hindsight, how can we buttress the model against the kinds of pressure that have already eroded so many of the original features?

[30] Howard, E. (1898), *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, Swann Sonnenschein

4.1 An Idea Out of its Time?

Is there not something rather quaint in expecting an invention (for that is how Howard thought of his garden city model) that is conceived in one period to remain applicable more than a century later. Howard was in every sense a late-Victorian – in his dress, his language, his sense of hope – and the garden city was very much a solution for the problems of his time. In the introduction to his book he gets straight to the point: 'it is deeply to be deplored that the people should continue to stream into the already over-crowded cities, and should thus further deplete the country districts'.[31] A key issue of the day was the dual dilemma of people living in slum conditions in the burgeoning cities while at the same time the countryside was suffering from depopulation and deprivation. The garden city was devised to address both sides of this same coin, to marry the best of town and country within a new form of settlement.

In large parts of the world, the dual dilemma that was a problem in England in Victorian times is still recognizable. Countries experiencing rapid growth and development all too often exhibit conditions not unlike those observed by Howard: sprawling cities where people live in congested conditions while at the same time migrating from a countryside that for centuries has provided a livelihood for poor but stable communities. In contrast, within the more developed parts of the world, the situation is more complex: some cities continue to grow and others are losing population, but in all there is a significant reverse flow, away from urban centres to the ever-expanding suburbs and beyond.

There is no logical reason why garden cities could not be applied to these different situations in all parts of the world, and the outcome would undoubtedly be infinitely preferable to what exists now. Before such a transformation could even be considered, however, there is an even more important issue to be addressed. The world has moved on and a new agenda has been set. Just as Howard, at the end of the nineteenth century, could identify a single issue that was largely beyond contention so, too, there is now a common problem of global dimensions, namely, that of sustainability. Solutions for the future must, first and foremost, be reconciled with the capacity of the Earth to accommodate them.

Although Howard wisely concentrated on the conditions in his own country we can no longer enjoy that luxury. If they are to be of enduring value, modern planning tools, to match the scale of problems confronting them, must necessarily be capable of global application. Mother Earth is in poor shape, largely because of the relentless battering it has suffered in the hands of its ever-increasing populace, and it may already be too late to reverse the effects of certain damaging trends. Valuable finite resources, for instance, once used can never be recovered while others, like tropical rain forests, with a theoretical capacity to be replaced are also effectively lost for ever. There

[31] Howard (1898), *op cit*

have for several decades been timely warnings about climate change but, until recently, in the face of natural catastrophes, little heed has been taken.

Quite apart from any moral and philosophical questions, there are some hard facts that the present generation of planners cannot avoid. Cities must become less voracious in their appetite for scarce building and other resources; oil supplies are diminishing and we have to find ways to use less energy; sea levels will rise and many coastal locations will become vulnerable; climatic extremes will produce contrasting conditions of floods and drought, and, everywhere, generally warmer temperatures will affect the ways we live and food we can grow. Farmers in Europe, for instance, are already experiencing the adverse effects of summer droughts on their traditional growing patterns. Tomorrow's cities must take all of these and other factors into account and they will, inevitably, look and function differently from those of the past.

Howard and his fellow Victorian reformers had their own difficulties to contend with and at the time they probably seemed as insurmountable as those we face now. But by comparison the scale of what is required of modern planners is altogether different and, politically, it will always be more difficult to achieve concerted global intervention than action within national boundaries. Sustainability is at last on everyone's agenda but our response to it remains largely rhetorical in relation to the scale of what needs to be done. There have, to date, been few changes in on the ground.

Against such a daunting background can the garden city really have anything to say? Surely it is a bit like retrieving one of the pioneering motor cars of the 1890s, models designed at the same time as the garden city, and expecting it to hold its own on a modern motorway. Or taking down a trunk of late-Victorian clothes from the attic and wearing them to go to the office. Those days have long passed and it is hard to believe that anything more than nostalgia would encourage thoughts of revival. Why not simply consign the garden city to the realms of heritage?

The answer to such questions is that the garden city is, first and foremost, about values rather than form, and values are the more enduring of the two. It is about creating a civilized environment that respects the wishes and preferences of its occupants. It is about finding ways to support the creation and sustenance of vibrant communities. It is about finding a balance between individual aspirations and collective needs and services. It is about social justice, offering all members of society access to local facilities. It is about setting something in motion that can be nurtured and supported over time. And, most topically, it is about achieving a balance between Nature and development.

Even if we ignore the details of the late-Victorian template, many of which would, of course, not be applicable, it is hard to gainsay the enduring worth of these underlying values. In particular, in the context of a contemporary need to find sustainable solutions, Howard's concern to achieve a balance between Nature and development is as valid and relevant today as ever it was.

Without recognizing it at the time as such, the garden city was in the very vanguard of sustainable development. Today we are more likely to use the term 'ecological footprint' to describe the need to limit the impact of a city, as far as possible, to its immediate surroundings. But in his unassuming way, eschewing the use of jargon and striking well clear of ideological rhetoric, Howard was planning for just that.

As a model of sustainability, the garden city offered various features that we would continue to value. For a start, as its very name suggests, the garden city was a city *within* a garden as well as a city *of* gardens. It was surrounded by its own agricultural belt, providing not only fresh air and access to the countryside but also a plentiful supply of locally produced food. In this simple design was a natural symbiosis, with the city's sewage and other refuse being used to enrich the soil in the agricultural belt. Howard had in mind a mixed farming regime, with allotments as well as large farms, smallholdings alongside dairy pastures, the aim being to meet the varied needs of the local population. And it was all carefully calculated so that the acreage devoted to farmland would be sufficient to meet the demand for its produce. Moreover, there was no danger that the population would outgrow what its surroundings could provide as, when its defined limit was reached, new growth would be diverted to a separate garden city. In turn, a cluster of garden cities could draw on a higher level of services than a single settlement could provide. In this progressive sub-regional model of settlement, Howard was able to retain a healthy balance of town and country.

For the modern planner there is an added feature in the agricultural belts. The observant reader will see in the diagrams of this part of the scheme, frequent reference to artesian wells, reservoirs and even waterfalls. Tucked away in an appendix on the last (and probably most neglected) pages of his book is an explanation of these features. In some ways this is Howard, the inventor, at his best, looking for ways to guarantee each garden city a plentiful supply of fresh water, as well as making further use of this resource. His aim is ambitious but clear:

> 'The municipality of the garden city would be able, at a comparatively small cost, not only to supply the whole of its members with water for ordinary domestic and trade purposes, but also with water power for driving machinery and generating electric light, together with a large body of water for transport purposes as well as for boating, bathing, skating, etc. It would do all this, too, in such a way as to effectively drain and irrigate the whole estate, and to beautify the town in the most remarkable manner.'[32]

The relevance of these ideas in the context of modern concerns about water shortage cannot be overstated. At a technical level, as just one example, Howard shows how to design the water supply so that part can be purified sufficiently for drinking, and part can be of a lower quality but perfectly adequate for gardens and fountains, flushing sewers and drains, and cleaning

[32] Howard (1898), *op cit*

the streets. Perhaps of more significance is that it serves as an illustration of how our water supply might at least partially be managed at a local level, to tap to the full what is immediately available and avoid the loss that occurs as it is conveyed from one part of the country to another.

In important respects, then, the garden city was a model of sustainability although that particular term was not used as such. It was to be another century before 'sustainability' became an everyday word with reference to the environment. People then thought more in terms of 'balance', recalling, perhaps, the pattern of traditional market towns each with its own rural hinterland. The terms may have changed but there is more than a casual connection between this earlier interest in balanced communities and the present search for sustainability. An interest in the past is, therefore, far more than an indulgence in nostalgia. It is time, surely, to re-visit the garden city, not as an historical curiosity but as a model that could yet have a new and important role to play.

The world is at a crossroads. We can either throw up our hands and carry on just as we are. Or we can recognize not just the gravity of the situation but also the opportunities that exist to find a way forward. If it is to be the latter then the kinds of values inherent in garden cities cannot be ignored. Garden cities are unlikely to provide the only solution but they offer too many opportunities to even consider jettisoning the idea at this crucial juncture. We should be cautious and ever critical but there is, indeed, still a path to be followed up, the path that Howard first charted all those years ago.

4.2 Learning from Experience

At least, in testing the potential value of the garden city for the future, we have the advantage of a fund of experience from the twentieth century. We know, for instance, how hard, if not impossible, it is to create a full-blown model in the form that Howard envisaged. Letchworth and Welwyn went closest to the original design but even these were blown off course right at the outset and some important features had to be jettisoned. One of the main differences was a result of having to attract investors who wanted to see a safe return on their investment and were less interested in Howard's notion of securing the rewards of rising property values for the people who were to live in these pioneering settlements. Fortunately, some of the value has been captured, particularly in Letchworth, but important compromises had to be made along the way. Likewise, in the town centres commercial interests loom much larger than Howard would have wished. Elsewhere, the deviations are far greater, which is why this report refers to garden city settlements rather than simply garden cities. Even the exemplary Hampstead Garden Suburb was just that, a suburban extension rather than a self-standing city.

So the first lesson might be that there is a very wide gulf between the drawing board and what actually happens on the ground. Much depends, of course, on the initial balance between realism and idealism. Howard tried to strike an

effective balance, and went to great pains to demonstrate the practicability of his proposals, but even he was to be disappointed.

A second lesson is that, no matter how good the original scheme, there is an inevitable and unforgiving set of pressures that will seek to pull it apart. Garden city development is a little like a tapestry with loose threads that can be tugged, potentially to unravel the whole. This report has accumulated compelling evidence of this kind of process, showing in the various case studies that none of the settlements has emerged unscathed. If ways are to be found to promote a new and even more sustainable model of garden city the reasons for this pervasive negative tendency need to be better understood.

The problem is really quite simple. Garden cities (or for that matter any other type of settlement) were designed and built, usually over the space of a few years, to meet the needs of society at a particular point in time. From the moment that the first brick is laid the concept will be out of date, in matters of fine detail at that stage but more radically as time moves on. The gap inevitably widens between the time-frozen original concept and the onward changes in society.

When Howard saw the publication of *To-Morrow* in 1898 he was living in Stoke Newington, then one of London's outer suburbs but now very much part of the inner city. His nation was rigidly and unevenly divided into three classes: a very small but influential aristocracy, owning most of the land and a high proportion of wealth; a larger but still small middle class, jealously guarding its own ascendancy up the social ladder and emulating the aristocrats through the employment of servants; and a large majority (more than three quarters of the population) in the working class, destined to sell their labour in the factories, mines and fields, not to mention domestic service. Howard, himself, was a lowly clerk, on the bottom rungs of the middle class, there by virtue of a good education and parents in trade.

The streets he knew would have resounded to the clattering of horse hooves on cobbles, smoke and steam would have hung heavily around the rooftops, and the houses he passed would invariably have been terraced and often shared by more than one family. So much poverty around him and yet he, like other reformers, knew that Britain was at the heart of a rich and vast Empire. Periodically, working men were taken from their cramped surroundings to march behind the Queen's flag, defending one distant outpost or another. Howard would have been aware of all of this but he could never have anticipated the unprecedented changes that would sweep through the whole of society in the coming century. His was a cameo shot of what life was like at the time and of how it could be improved.

Everything was to change. Two world wars and numerous regional campaigns, political revolutions in other countries and far-reaching reforms at home that saw the end of the rigid class structure (though not of class itself), technological developments that fed off each other to transform everything that was once familiar, the implosion of Empire and the arrival of ethnic

groups with their own cultural aspirations, and, in the West at least, the accumulation of material wealth that must have been beyond the wildest dreams of Howard and his contemporaries. And, more recently, cutting across all of this are the threats of a world that is over-heating and sinking under the weight of insatiable resource demands.

Seen with this hindsight, nothing could be more predictable than the fact that garden city residents would want to change their surroundings. Why, when everything else was changing, would it have been otherwise? The ways in which these new demands have had an impact on the garden city fabric are discussed in earlier chapters. As people have become wealthier they have required additional space, extending their cottages upwards and outwards if they can, packing as much as possible onto their increasingly valuable plots. Once a bicycle was enough to get around but now two or even three cars per household have led to the re-surfacing of front gardens and use of green verges for parking. With modern sound systems, residents have become noisier and often less considerate neighbours, asserting individual rights and not taking kindly to communal sanctions. There has also been a love affair with DIY stores and media-driven house makeovers, leading to the progressive replacement of historic detailing with easy-to-fix, low maintenance alternatives. At the same time that money is poured into individual homes, public bodies complain of a shortage of funds and prefer to see hard landscaping to natural vegetation, once a defining feature of garden city settlements.

The cumulative effect of such changes is that the original garden city environments are all, without exception, degraded. Bold attempts have been made to stem the tide of unwanted development, but it is all very much a rearguard action in the face of the steam-roller effects of unremitting social change. No-one could have predicted all that has happened, any more than we can about our own future. For all that, one lasting lesson is that, no matter how well we design a modern settlement, people will want to change it to meet their own needs. Somehow, then, if we want to carry forward a form of garden city as a model of sustainability we must also design the means to assure its own survival. The mechanisms by which we can both protect and allow the new garden city to evolve will be as essential as the settlement design itself.

4.3 Second Time Round

In the previous section it was argued that garden cities have enduring qualities. As such, further efforts to conserve them are worthwhile. If the general concept was shown to be outdated then there would be little point in trying to do so. That is manifestly not the case: garden city settlements should be carefully conserved because they have a useful and continuing role to play. They provide urban environments that are still widely appreciated, not least of all by those who live and work in them. Letchworth, Welwyn, Bournville and Port Sunlight, and each of the other examples considered in

this report, are all settlements of the present and the future as well as the past.

The way forward, however, is by no means straightforward. In spite of the best efforts of so many dedicated individuals as well as organizations with a responsibility for their upkeep, garden city settlements are not what they used to be. More often piecemeal than by wholesale change, these carefully planned environments are suffering from attrition; their design strength is in the holism of the garden city concept yet it is this very holism that is most at risk. Every front hedge removed, every plastic window frame replacing wooden counterparts, every satellite dish surreptitiously attached to the back of a house – all of these things and more detract from the total concept. So what can be done differently in the future that has not already been tried to date? Is there any way to check if not to reverse this continuing attrition?

A starting point is to recognise that garden city settlements are valued not only by those who live and work in them but also by a wider public, in this country and internationally. They are not, however, museum pieces nor heritage theme parks. Planners, trust managers and voluntary groups all work hard to maintain the best features of such settlements and one must first understand why their task is so difficult. The fact is that these are all living environments and are not easily controlled in the way that a static showpiece could be. There are different reasons why this is so.

At the heart of it all, there is a mis-match between the type of settlement that was formed perhaps a century ago and the world as it is now. Garden cities and their close relations were designed at a very different time for a very different set of residents. In the ensuing period, the physical attraction of such places has remained largely undiminished but values, perceptions and needs have changed out of all recognition.

One big difference is in the relationship between private property and communal controls. At the end of the nineteenth century (and for some time after that) the common assumption was that most people would live in rented accommodation; even by 1914, 90% of properties were rented rather than privately owned by the occupants. Everyone was familiar with the idea of a landlord and the only distinction made by tenants was between good and bad ones. Certainly, the very idea of owning one's own property was beyond the wildest dreams of most people. Thus, when social reformers like Lever and Cadbury came along, offering not only superior accommodation but also a fair system of management, the new tenants were more than delighted and willing to follow the rules. Between landlord and tenant the garden city environment was in good hands.

Views and attitudes have since changed. Owner occupation is now the norm rather than the exception and private property is jealously guarded. Interfering 'busybodies', from the local authority or even a management trust, are not looked on kindly. No matter that occupants will have signed a covenant, the more litigious amongst them will be prepared to go to the courts

to press their case and the very cost and time of trying to uphold an agreement may be enough to deter the garden city custodians.

Moreover, even if a house is occupied by a tenant, rather than privately owned, there is likely to be the same disdain for authority and neglect of external space. The rule books, exhorting tenants to keep their gardens tidy and to cut the hedges, once kept for easy reference behind the mantelpiece clock are now more likely to be discarded. Originally seen as a privilege to be allocated a home in a garden city, many of the newer tenants may see this now as just another place to live – with little sense of history or responsibilities.

Closely associated with a tendency towards disdain for the rules is a universal demand for more private space. Again, as indicated in the previous section, the world has moved on since the late-nineteenth century and households demand somewhere to park extra cars, a utility room for washing and ironing, a music room or a study, and maybe even a granny annex. In the face of record property values, people are everywhere looking for ways to increase the floorspace of their existing homes, whether through loft conversions, conservatories, extensions or even a basement excavated by one of a new breed of specialist firms. The little cottages that typify the garden city estates, with their high land values, find themselves very much in the firing line of these assaults on their original form.

So, not because people are bad or good, communally minded or individualist, times have changed and the pressures experienced in the garden city settlements are, to a large extent, a reflection of this. Is there, in spite of all this, any way to reconcile these divergent forces, to create once again a compatible environment for the people who live and work there? Are there already any measures taken within the garden city settlements to achieve this?

4.4 Sharing Good Practice

The task ahead is not necessarily about finding something new, although that could be a part of the solution. There is already plenty of evidence of good practice and the first step should be simply to identify what really works and to ensure that this experience can be shared and applied elsewhere amongst garden city settlements. On the basis of the findings in the case studies used in this project a number of measures stand out as being especially effective: the ability to pass on a share of rising land values; the use of dedicated private and public funds to improve aspects of the physical environment; the existence of a body dedicated solely to the best interests of the garden city development; the active involvement of the community in upholding standards; and a creative use of varied legal means to restrict unwanted development. As well as acknowledging their own continuing value, a brief review of each of these will help to identify any further measures that are needed.

- Benefiting from Rising Land Values: The idea of the community enjoying a share of rising land values was, of course, a central – and probably the most inventive – element in Howard's original plan. With the freehold of the estate and the subsequent buildings remaining in the ownership of the development organisation, in trust for the community, the entire income was to be derived from rents. These rents would inevitably rise over time and were expected to provide sufficient income to repay the capital and associated interest used to develop the garden city, to fund a programme of public works, and subsequently to be used for a whole variety of welfare benefits; ahead of his time, Howard even had in mind old-age pensions and social insurance. It was indeed, as the sub-title of his book claimed, 'a peaceful path to real reform'.

  Yet, in spite of his sensitive approach, eschewing ideologies and seeking to avoid political confrontation, the idea proved too much for sponsors to accept. Was the whole scheme really no more than a socialist wolf in sheep's clothing? Investors wanted to see a guaranteed return on their money and were reluctant to allow any relinquishment of control. There was, in fact, little risk in Howard's scheme but it was undoubtedly different from normal business ventures and that was itself enough to deter them from wholesale support.

  All was not lost, however, and in the first garden city the common assets are now managed by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. In its first eight years (it took over in 1995 from a previous body) it saw a doubling of the value of its properties and was able to give back £12 million pounds to the community through direct charitable activities, as well as regenerating parts of the estate. In other places, like Bournville, the Trust reports a comparable story of valuable assets and a continuing programme of improvements. Elsewhere, in the absence of a form of shared ownership, the record is less impressive, evidence if it is needed that Howard was right in the first place and his ideas remain a continuing source of inspiration for new ventures.

- The Use of Dedicated Funds: Particularly with the passing of time, the fabric of the garden city settlements has shown normal signs of wear and fresh investment has been called for. Often this has led to an all too familiar dilemma in which a local authority, whose boundaries extend well beyond this one settlement, will argue that there is no justification to spend more on one part of their area of jurisdiction than another. The garden cities may have special recognition and require extra funding to maintain standards but this is unlikely to cut much ice in the Council Chamber.

  In such circumstances, a solution has sometimes been found through the attraction of special funding, either from a Government or Lottery Fund initiative or in partnership with private enterprise. Examples are cited in the preceding text of a limited number of cases where this has

worked to good effect. Building on this type of experience, models of effective partnership could be effectively developed in other areas too.

- Championing the Cause: It is better for a garden city settlement to be directly represented than not and there are important instances where a body exists solely to represent the settlement's interests. This will not be instead of a local authority, which will operate alongside, but the dedicated body ensures that the settlement has a strong voice in the right places.

  The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust is a good example of this type of organization, with the status to sit alongside the local authority and to speak for the garden suburb at public inquiries. In the absence of such a body it will be more difficult to advocate the special interests and character of a garden city settlement. Thus, in those cases where such a body does not exist, there might be value in exploring whether one should be formed.

- Involving the Community

  The idea of involving the community is too often cited as a platitude and, if it is treated as such, will be of little value. If, however, there is a genuine desire to involve people the potential gains are very considerable. Garden city residents are those with the greatest stake in successfully conserving the environment. Many will have chosen to live there because of its inherent attractions, but one cannot also ignore the fact that maintaining standards will have a direct and positive impact on property values. In places like Brentham there is a strong sense of community, and the innovative way of producing a book on its history is evidence of this. Often a community will come together in the face of a common 'enemy' (usually a development that is not wanted by local people) but an active community will do more than that. Its members will be constantly vigilant and its activities will extend beyond issues of planning into a wide variety of social initiatives.

- Making the Most of the Law

  Finally, it is interesting to see how different agencies have made effective use of a very wide range of statutory and common law opportunities. It is always going to be preferable to explore to the full what is already available than to campaign for some new measure that may or may not ever reach the statute books. Earlier sections of this report have referred to different measures and, at the very least, each of the garden city settlements might want to draw on the full repertoire.

  There is, however, a *caveat* that can also be drawn from experience. No matter how many measures are used their true effectiveness depends, in the last resort, on whether there are sufficient resources in the garden city settlement to make them work. Thus, even something

as all-embracing as an Article 4 Direction relies on people on the ground to identify illegal development and for enforcement officers to take appropriate action. Sometimes, the best of motives are thwarted at this final stage of policy implementation.

Some garden city settlements use one or other of the above approaches more effectively than others. This is partly because some measures are not easily transferable – the extent of common ownership, for example, cannot easily be changed. In other cases, it will be a lot easier to share good practice. At the very least, the various parties might consider getting together to see just what can be adopted and what cannot.

4.5 A Time for Innovation

This is not a time to retreat in the face of difficulties. Pressures on the quality of the various garden city environments are relentless but ways should be found to resist or accommodate them. At a time when so much of the present wave of house-building remains of a disappointingly poor standard, extra efforts should be made to conserve places of enduring worth. Three new ways to achieve this are suggested below:

- Forum for Garden City Settlements

  One of the findings of this research is that planners in the different garden city settlements are remarkably isolated, one from another. In spite of sharing common interests and problems, little is known in one settlement of how similar issues are dealt with elsewhere. It would cost very little and require minimum effort to set up an electronic network so that geographically dispersed planners in these settlements could report on different planning applications, outcomes of appeal and community initiatives. This electronic network could be supplemented, say, with a gathering once a year of the various subscribers to discuss the implications of development pressures and responses.

- Pro-Active Solutions

  A common trend reported in the previous pages is that garden city settlements are subjected to a succession of demands that themselves reflect changing lifestyles and attitudes. Instead of resisting them, some of these demands might be mitigated through positive design solutions. A satellite dish on the side of a listed building is an eyesore but is it possible to engage with manufacturers to find ways to reduce the impact, say, through the development of micro-technology or cabling from a single unit? Or, with the various additions to floorspace, there might be scope for joint action to influence manufacturers and builders in the appearance of extensions, conservatories and loft windows. There will not always be solutions to these types of problem but some creative thinking and joint action

could surely help to reconcile new pressures with the traditional appearance of garden city settlements.

- Extending the Scope

This research has concentrated on a limited number of case studies, including the better known examples. But the list is by no means exhaustive. There are other acknowledged garden city settlements and many more that are not. Of the latter, there are across the country pockets of suburban development, not widely acclaimed at the time but which have matured into pleasant living environments that are not dissimilar from other garden city settlements. Such areas will, like the more renowned areas, be subject to development pressures, and the safeguarding of their character would be strengthened by the adoption of similar measures to those used by their counterparts. They could be included in the network to share best practice and to learn from common experience.

4.6 A Future for Garden Cities

The first task is to secure a future for existing garden city settlements and this project has been directed to find ways to do this. There is no panacea but a common recognition of the problems and the sharing of experience will help to find ways to safeguard their future.

In this discussion of problems it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the garden city environment remains a prize worth securing. Given that it is still sought after as a good place to live and work, it follows that parallel efforts to create new garden city settlements are equally worth pursuing. Twenty-first century models are likely to be at a higher density than their predecessors, if only to assist the need to achieve sustainability – although one must recall that the pioneer settlements were quite low density yet also relied on people walking and cycling. In designing such places, modern planners would do well to review the experience of existing ones and, learning from this, to find ways to overcome difficulties in maintaining, in the face of inevitable pressures, the quality of the newly created environment. The title of the second edition of Howard's book, in 1902, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*, remains a relevant aspiration more than a century later.

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