

HISTORY AND THEORY DISSERTATION
2021/22

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

How was the architecture of council housing estates in London, successful in aiding towards the development of community, culture, and attachment among its residents?

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All Praises to God.



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ABSTRACT

In the context of the social purposes of council housing, the objectives are often and unfortunately misunderstood. The focal meanings and intentions of these buildings are constantly shadowed by the pessimistic stigmas of council accommodation being publicised for political and economic issues, its appearance and its associations with crime and other antisocial behaviour. However, I believe these ongoing stigmas have overshadowed the positive aspects of mass social housing which is why these utopian dwellings are considered a 'home' to the people who dwell in them.

This study aims to analyse and prove the ways in which council estate architecture has positively impacted its communities. The research focuses closely on two London estates, Keeling house and Alexandra Road as case studies, and through critical and illustrative analysis the findings display the numerous architectural attributes used towards creating housing that communities flourish in. Site visits were used as a form of primary research as well as secondary research such as past study literature, critical literature, and historical context. This informed the key understanding of the topic as well as supported exploration and discussion of points.

The outcome of this dissertation proves the answer of how these schemes were successful in proving that the use of architectural strategies and conceptual techniques can build strong communities. Social housing communities that thrive off the culture of their estate and as a result, develop attachments towards these structures that provide them with a sense of place. A place called home.

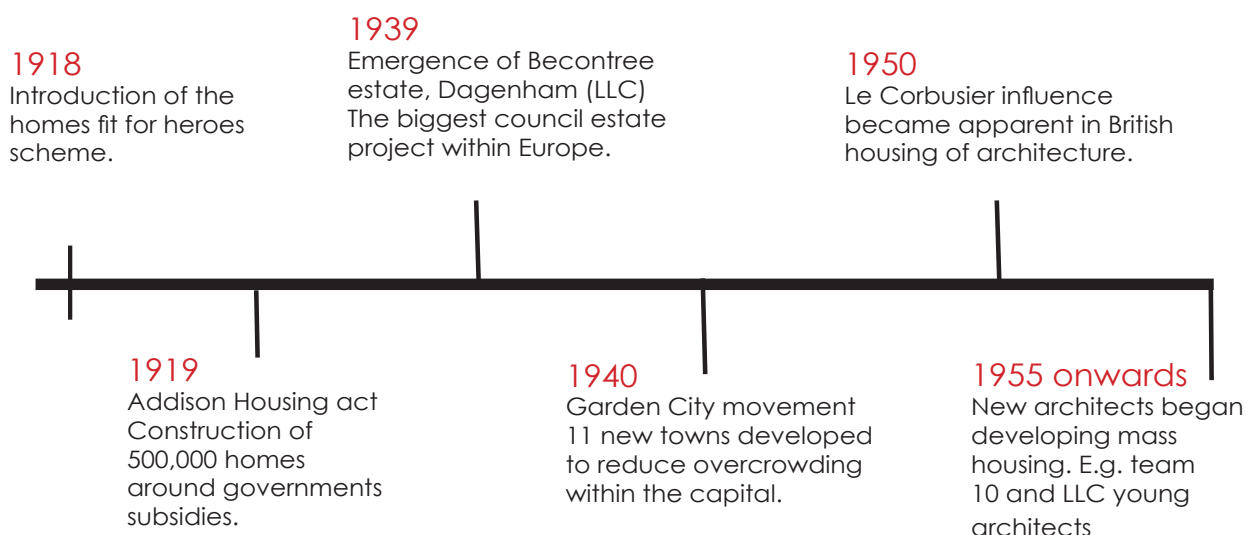
INTRODUCTION

It can be said that council estate housing provides a sense of social culture in many cities and towns within Britain. More specifically within the capital, where London is renowned for its substantial amount of social housing projects. London has seen major architectural innovation of the city's social housing infrastructure since the end of the first world war. During the year 1918, a promise of better accommodation was made by Prime Minister Lloyd George, in the hope to counteract the previous slum living conditions of army recruits and their families as well as reducing London's expanding population. This pledge later coined the phrase "Homes fit for heroes" (London Housing Council,2016).

The Inter-war Period progressively introduced the advances of council housing. this being stemmed from the Addison Housing Act of 1919 which started to construct half a million homes with the aid of government subsidies. Through this grand scheme, London was introduced to a renewed side of public housing where picturesque village-like estates comprising of 3-bedroom homes with front-to-back gardens were prioritised by housing ministers such as Labour's Aneurin Bevan (Boughton, 2018). An example of one of these bold projects is the famed Becontree Estate in Dagenham, Essex, approved by the London City Council (LCC) and completed in 1939. These were the first steps towards the 'new commitment' of state-supported working-class housing (Boughton, 2018).

However, as years decades went by, this simplistic form of council housing became less effective in achieving its aspirations. The idea of village-like estates became more impractical with planners and the environment less popular with tenants. This was proven during the twentieth century. After the second world war, the dilemma of the overcrowded population of London started to worsen, as housing plans were brought to a halt and most of the existing housing was destroyed during the war (Campbell, 1976). The government and LCC needed new architectural approaches to council homes that maximised the density of residents, whilst retaining the same sense of communal spirit and 'kinship networks' that was present in longstanding local communities.

Council Housing timeline (1919 to 1955)



This dissertation aims to discover the positive sociological impacts of post-war council housing architecture within the UK, with a particular focus being on the London estates., I will be briefly delving into the history and evolution of the post-war social housing period from the 1950s and onwards. Furthermore, I will be critically analysing two of London's most celebrated council estates in chronological order. The first case study is Denys Lasdun's "cluster" project, Keeling House, Bethnal Green (1957) and the second being Neave Brown's street-interpreted Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate, Camden (1967). The study will investigate in-depth how the architects differed in their approach towards the modernization of social housing and will aim to discuss both 'The Street' and 'The Cluster' concepts, proving the argument of how both models uplifted community living and how the communities responded to their efforts.

This dissertation will cross-analyse each scheme with point discussions. The points raised include the architect's conceptual approaches towards modernist housing and the architectural techniques used to foster social cohesion. The site + dwelling layouts will also be analysed. The projects will be scrutinised through written analysis, orthographic sketches (sourced), analytical diagrams and photographs, in terms of each project's known successes and unknown failures. The dissertation will evaluate the works against the key sociological study of Young & Wilmott's 'Family & Kingship' that became influential within architectural circles, and whose findings were read by practitioners in terms of the societal impact, such as the negative impact on tenants of breaking up existing communities. These lines of enquiry will be investigated using relevantly sourced secondary literature, webpages, written articles and video references. Primary research has also been acquired through site visits to each of the case study schemes where I have collected additional information about their characteristics which will be referred to in the main text.

This research will be used to unveil key factors and lessons learnt from the various studies analysed. It will highlight their benefits and how the architects formed the current state of social housing along with their achievements in developing relationships and connections between housing estates and their communities.

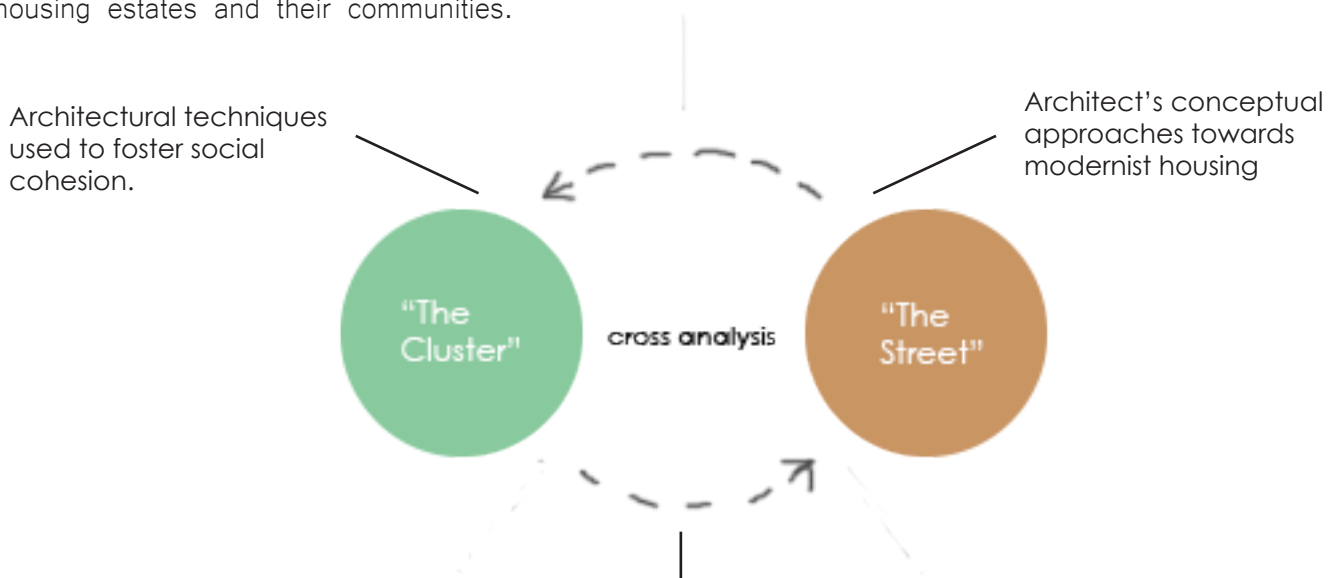


Figure 1 : Bubble digram to show aim of cross analysis (Shaw. G)

The topic of post-WWII modernist architecture has been studied comprehensively to an esteemed level. The debate over brutalism and its place within modern architecture and the built environment has displayed some controversy within political and architectural realms.

Through my extensive research into this topic, I have uncovered several key texts that focus on all aspects of the topic. These main pieces of literature that I have selected, praise but also scrutinise the general themes of post-war brutalist social accommodation as well as the societal reverberations of the building projects. More specifically the community attributes.

The first prominent piece of literature that I analysed was Young and Willmott's, "Family and Kingship in East London" written in 1957. Young and Willmott's sociological study led to influential findings of how working-class communities are affected by government social housing and development plans. Young and Willmott collected a sample of families within a tightly knitted East End community and conducted interviews and surveys to study how residents adjusted to being relocated from Bethnal Green in East London to a housing estate within Greenleigh in Essex. Interviews along with social observations into the residents' attitudes, feelings, and aspirations, were conducted between 1953 and 1955.

The findings from this study highlighted key community topics that were not recognised within the planning of social housing. Within the research, Young & Willmott emphasized the need for planners, politicians, and social work professionals to understand the social and cultural practices of working-class life, and to recognise people's desires to continue to live where they had been born and raised. The goal of post-war planning had been to encourage working-class people to migrate to new out-of-town estates, mostly situated beyond the green belt of London. The Bethnal green residents valued the better living conditions of Greenleigh and were fond of having their own terraced house with a backyard, however, tenants weren't happy with Greenleigh's interpretation of community spirit. People wanted housing that accommodated all their societal wants, whilst providing homes that are fit for living in. The research tells the unspoken opinions and thoughts of people that cherish community and attachment. Young and Willmott were able to present the stark contrast between two living conditions, further introducing the complexity of community.

Reyner Banham's "The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?" published in 1966, questions the duality of the brutalist movement overall. Banham posed an argument about the architecture style and the architect's principles being in conflict. The literature was targeted to establish a definite relationship between the title "Brutalism" and its ethical values. The critical analysis of the international selection of projects aims to challenge the style for its moral principles versus its aesthetic/stylistic qualities. Banham was successful at promoting the modernist architect's concepts and theories behind their designs, revealing the reasons behind them. This was achieved with the architectural drawings and photographs for each project. The social ethical argument, however, is only discussed briefly by Banham. I feel that this facet is not fully investigated by Banham or considered in terms of an ethical decision for certain projects.

LITERATURE REVIEW



Figure 3 : *East End Children*

Note. *East End Children*, Courtesy of the Tony Hall Archive at the Bishopsgate Institute

John Boughton's "Municipal Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Council Housing" was first published in 2018. Boughton retails the past and more present narratives of public housing. The book aims to widen the knowledge of the current historical information known of the country's housing reformations. Boughton also highlights and reveals the evident failures of the architects, government, and state's proposals to meet the expectations of the resident's living standards. The book also goes into additional depth about politics and economics while equally discussing the community importance of these council estates.

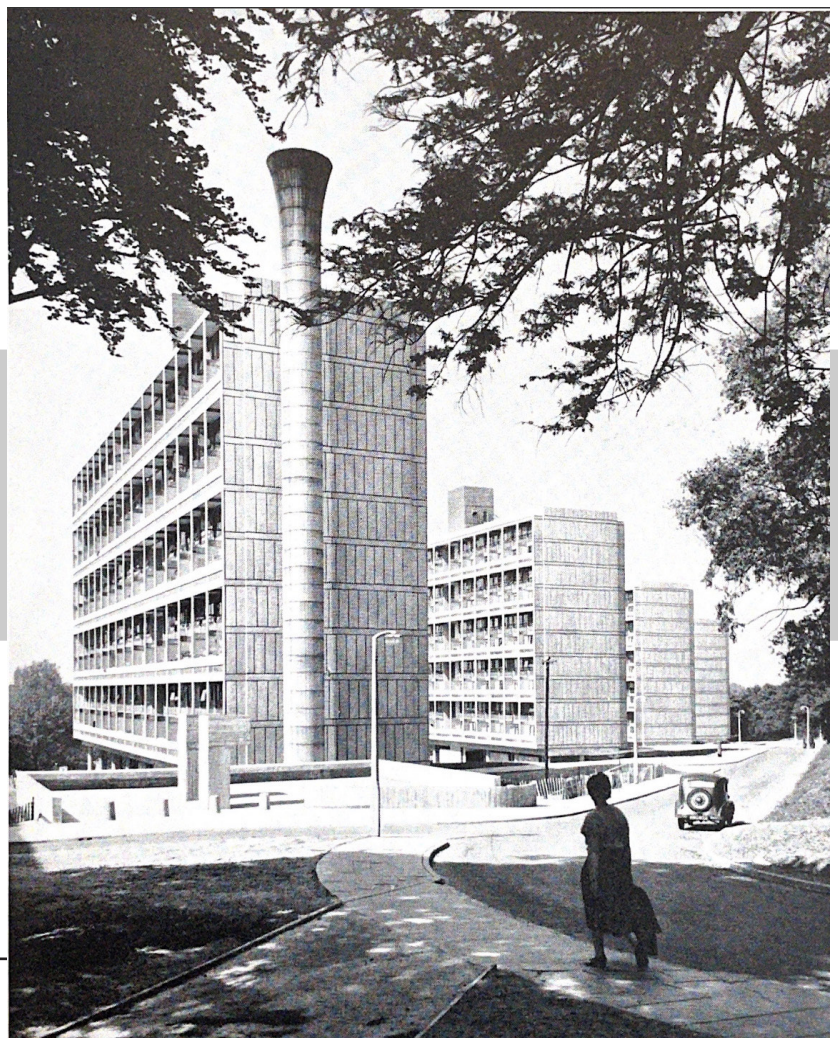
EARLY SOLUTIONS: HIGH RISE

Attitudes towards the planning and designing of social housing shifted when an abundance of young emerging architects partnered with the LCC and local council associations, to provide an alternative to the inter-war period housing during the 1950's. (BBC, High Rise Dreams, Post War British Architecture, 2003). Here is where the emergence of modernist projects blossomed. Inspiration for the new building styles stemmed from architects such as Le Corbusier, whose ideas were more focused on the change of material technologies used to produce social housing (Clement, 2011). Corbusier's Unité d' Habitation in Marseille was the pioneering design that drove the new monumentality of "Béton brut" or "Brutalism" (Churley & Mcleod, 2018) and inspired the 'Slab Block' Design.

The early fifties slab block became a symbolic characteristic for high-density council housing accommodation. This is evident through Alton Estate in Roehampton, completed 1959. Alton Estate site was populated with mixed developments of slab blocks as well as the introduction of the point block towers that we see often today (Campbell, 1976). However, these grand design solutions did not seem to reach the goals of social communion. Denys Ladsun explored the absolute possibilities of social housing where residences can be reintroduced as megastructures with the ability to create flourishing communities of working-class people through a range of distinct typologies and techniques.

Figure 4.1-42: Alton West Site, Roehampton, London (1959)

1. Walls of Slab Blocks



2. Block views from central lawn



Note. From Banham, R. (1966). *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* The Architectural Press.

05

1. North Facade



Figures 5.1–5.2: Sulkin House, Bethnal Green , 1955–58

2. South Facade



Note. From RomanRoad London (2019)– Photographs by Yev Kazannik

“THE CLUSTER LAYOUT”

Case Study One: Denys Lasdun’s Keeling House

The findings of Young & Wilmott’s sociological study in 1955 influenced several architectural innovations that followed. The found testimonies from Bethnal Green residents supported the argument that communal spirit is a factor that enriched the lives of the working-class people. Architects and housing associates took heed of tenants’ values of a functioning neighbourhood and being near to friends and family.

The new age of high-rise social housing took off with post-war architects such as Denys Lasdun. Lasdun was an English architect that was heavily involved in early Brutalism architecture in Britain. Lasdun was responsible for many commercial, educational, recreational, and social developments around Britain (*Clement, 2011*).

In terms of housing developments, Lasdun’s approaches were diverse, especially during the years of 1950s when most design and construction strategies were already synthesised. Lasdun was impelled by the F&K studies of social interaction between households. The residents within the sample presented a clear sense of neighbourliness and a build of various relationships. An example is Mrs Landon and her connections with her neighbourhood (*Young & Wilmot, 1957* pg.106-107). The residents exclaimed that in Bethnal Green ‘you can just open the door and say hello to everybody.’ (*Young & Wilmot, 1957*) which I assume Lasdun’s wanted to replicate in another form. Lasdun envisioned modernist housing on a more humanistic scale. He believed that the previous and popular architectural principles of some modernist housing were unsuccessful in encouraging and encapsulating the same ‘neighbourly spirit’ (*Hatherley et al, 2016*). He was known to “lunch” with the residents of Bethnal Green, to discover their wants and needs from their council homes (*Boughton ,2018*). Lasdun looked further into the mix and distribution of existing building types in the area which informed designs of two future developments, including Keeling House. Through these observations, Lasdun created the “Cluster Block”. Sulkin House was the first of Lasdun’s cluster projects completed in 1955. The original building follows a cluster system; a grouping of two or more blocks organised around and connected to a central service tower (*Clement, 2011*).

This formation style was later translated to the Keeling House project of 1959. Keeling House was also based on the cluster concept. Lasdun refined his approach by "clustering" four-tower wings, around a central service core containing the main staircase and lifts, as well as common service areas. The concrete building has a total of 64 dwellings. 56 two-storey maisonettes and 8 single-storey studio flats. The symmetrical plan of cluster blocks provides clarity to the building's abstract and sculptural design.

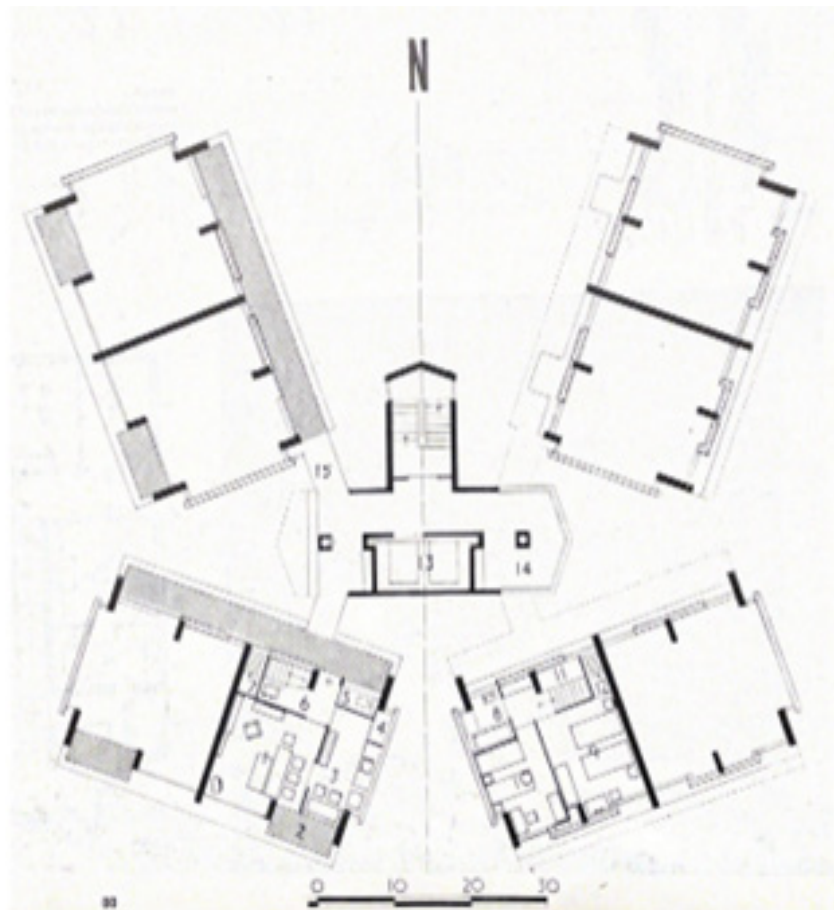


Figure 6 : Keeling house 'cluster' floorplan highlighting the interior and balconies of units

Within the interior, each 800 square foot maisonette is comprised of a lower floor with a spacious living area and kitchen plus a hallway and storage. The upper floor holds two-bedroom spaces, a bathroom, and a larger storage room. The arrangement of the blocks allowed direct sunlight to pass through the interiors while also delivering great views of the city. The ground floor of the building is reserved for electrical units and is used to increase privacy for the first-floor tenants. The distinct structure of Keeling House provided a modernised version of two up and two down maisonettes. The dwelling layouts are intended to emulate the existing Victorian streets that surround the site. Lasdun classified the local demographic as "people who came from little terraced houses with backyards." (*Municipal Dreams in housing: Keeling House 2014*). He intended to replicate a version of the Victorian streets below but as a high-rise alternative (*Boughton, 2018*). Essentially a row of London townhouses stood on their ends (*Clement, 2011*). Lasdun designed an innovative and progressive form that merges previous tower blocks schemes with 1950's terraced housing.

Note. From the *New Brutalism- Reyner Banham, 1968, pg.80*

I said no, they must have maisonettes, two up and two down, or whatever it was because this would give them the sense of home.” – Denys Lasdun

(Quoted from John R Gold, The Practice of Modernism: Modern Architects and Urban Transformation, 1954–1972 (2007))

LASDUN’S DESIGN TECHNIQUES USED TO STIMULATE SOCIAL USE AND COMMUNITY LIVING

Keeling house offered an equal and subtle balance between neighbourliness and solitude between residents, through a skilful design. Lasdun responded to the residents’ requests for accommodation that promotes social cohesion. The multi-storey cluster towers are angled towards each other so that residents’ balconies are slightly opposite, creating chances for everyday contact among neighbours. This was an inventive design concept that still offered the chance face to face interaction with multiple neighbours from opposing blocks. Separate access balconies only serve two flats each to provide a sense of privacy and reduce noise pollution. These are linked to the central core tower via short bridges. 75% of tenants claimed that they were able to access their homes without passing any other dwellings (Clement, 2011).



Figure 7: Primary Photograph– Right facade
01/2022

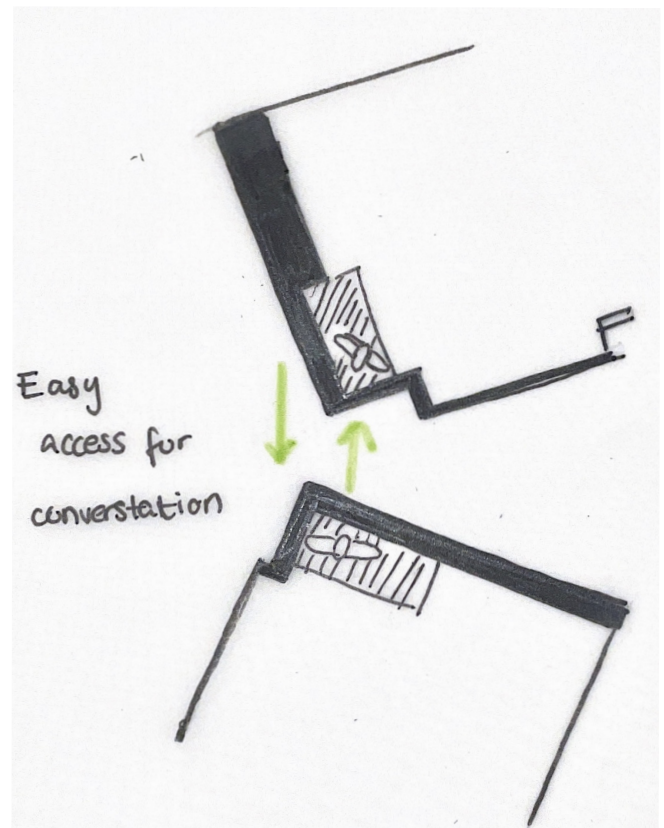


Figure 8 : Diagram showing interaction between clusters.
Shaw. G



Figure 9.1: (left): Primary photograph (north façade) 01/2022



Figure 9.2 : (right) Primary photograph (south façade) 01/2022

However, an opposing aspect with one of Lasdun's focuses being to ensure privacy, one underlying effect could have been the loss of community spirit. Everyone was so used to the naturalness of being near their neighbours. The disruption of this could have led to less meaningful interactions between neighbours. Lasdun offset this possibility by ensuring the previous communal drying areas within the service tower, required passing through to access the staircase and lifts (Hatherley et al, 2016). This provides communal qualities around socialising, meeting other residents, and forming relationships. From my observation upon visiting the site, residents can be seen conversing across their cluster blocks which proves the balance of promoting socialisation while sustaining the element of seclusion. A quote from an earlier resident praises the communal feeling of Keeling house:

"It was so peaceful. Beautiful at night and you didn't have to draw your curtains. There was a very good atmosphere and we had lovely neighbours: a Jewish lady used to make us lokshen soup and latkes."

(Quoted in Lee Servis, "Keeling Over!", East London Advertiser, 9 November 1995)

After some time, the central service areas did not make for leisurely conversation. Free access to the lifts and the common areas made the blocks susceptible to problems of crime, vandalism, and graffiti, a common problem for the tower blocks of London. A later refurbishment in 2001, confronted this problem with the addition of an entrance foyer with a concierge (Municipal Dreams in housing: Keeling House 2014). There is a possibility, the addition of the entrance foyer to the building may have sparked new and easier means of socialising with fellow tenants.

The introduction of high gates and entry phone access also added additional security to the site. (Municipal Dreams in housing: Keeling House 2014). The close perimeter of the building is clear from road access, with the south side being utilised for residents' parking. No outdoor public areas such as parks or playgrounds were integrated into the design, however, there are local green spaces and playgrounds located near the site, so children have an opportunity to socialise outside of the tower block.

Keeling House, despite its partial season of neglect and difficulties with construction, survived demolition from the Tower Hamlets Council. The resident's fondness over Keeling House was exclaimed to Lasdun's by the tenants. One tenant mentioned that 'we loved living in our crumbling tower block' (Municipal Dreams in housing: Keeling House 2014). Conservative Heritage Secretary Peter Brookes was also opposed to the demolition and rewarded Keeling House its Grade II status in 1993, making it the first UK tower block to be listed (Boughton, 2018). This listing status enabled protection and preservation over Lasdun's tower block. The building was later sold off and privatised.

Overall, Lasdun presented a timeless piece of housing architecture with the design of Keeling House. He adopted architectural techniques contemporary to the modernist era, that assisted community growth. I believe Keeling house demonstrated the heights of modernist brutal housing and its effectiveness in offering better quality homes for locals as well as attending to its purpose of building a certified kinship among its residents.



Figure 10: Residents onsite- Ground floor Maisonettes

Note. Hidden Architecture 2017

THE FALL OF HIGH RISE

Soon after the completion of Denys Lasdun's Keeling House, London's high-rise housing strategies started to become less favourable. The creeping flaws of high-rise tower schemes started to appear, and the innovative and praised solutions to public housing were now associated with the signs of crisis and social decay. The 1968 Ronan Point Disaster was a key point that marked the decline of high-rise estates within the capital. A gas explosion on the eighteenth floor of the Ronan Point tower in East London caused a collapse of the southeast corner and tragically killed four people (Clement, 2011).

Apart from construction concerns, Further disadvantages started to dominate the advantages of tower blocks due to the emergence of antisocial behaviour within the public spaces. Additionally, the central government strongly urged local authorities to use high rise system buildings despite its profusion of social shortcomings (Gough et al, 2010). This decline of welcoming environments and abandonment issues contributed to the ongoing stigma of council estates being labelled as "urban ghettos" or slums (Nowicki and White, 2018).

Prince Charles repeated these same issues in a speech at the 150th anniversary of the RIBA in 1984:

"Some planners and architects have consistently ignored the feelings and wishes of the mass of ordinary people in this country [...] To be concerned about the way they live, about the environment they inhabit and the kind of community that is created by that environment..."

(Quoted from pg. 239 of British Culture and Society in the 1970's -Gough, 2010)

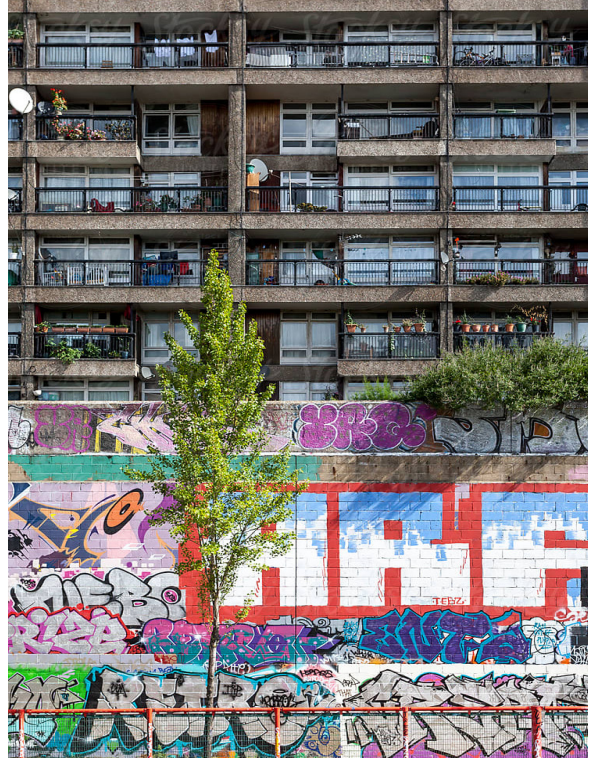


Figure: 11: Estate Graffiti

Note. Photographed by James Tarry

Due to all of this, government housing associations were eager to develop low-rise alternatives to public housing that ensured safety and security while also accommodating a high density of residents. Residents, on the other hand, wanted the government to recognise their failure of creating safeguarding communities within modern social housing. Modern low-rise estates began to materialize again within London's boroughs, transitioning from the former cottage terraced estate architecture and the mixed development estates developed during the 1950's. In the next stages of the social housing narrative, we examine the concept of "the street"; a remastered attempt to revive the older traditions of social living.

Figure 12: Primary photograph, East side of Estate (12/2021)

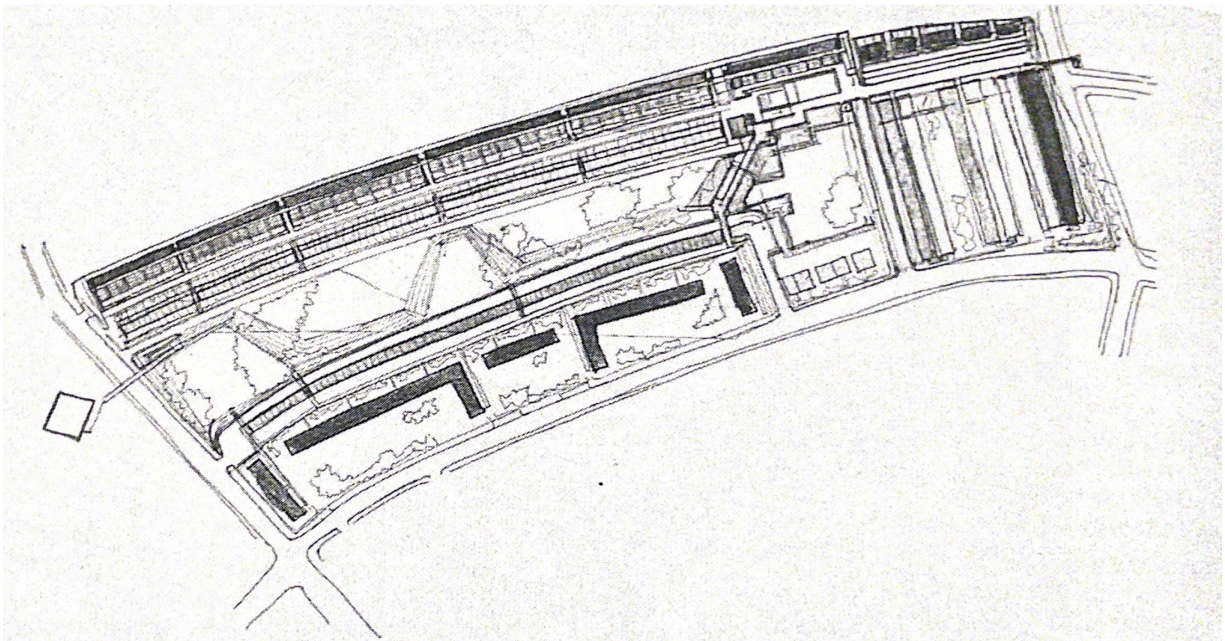


Figure 13: Detailed Site Plan

Note. From *Cooks Camden*, Mark Swenarton, 2017

“THE STREET LAYOUT”

Case Study Two: Neave Brown’s Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate

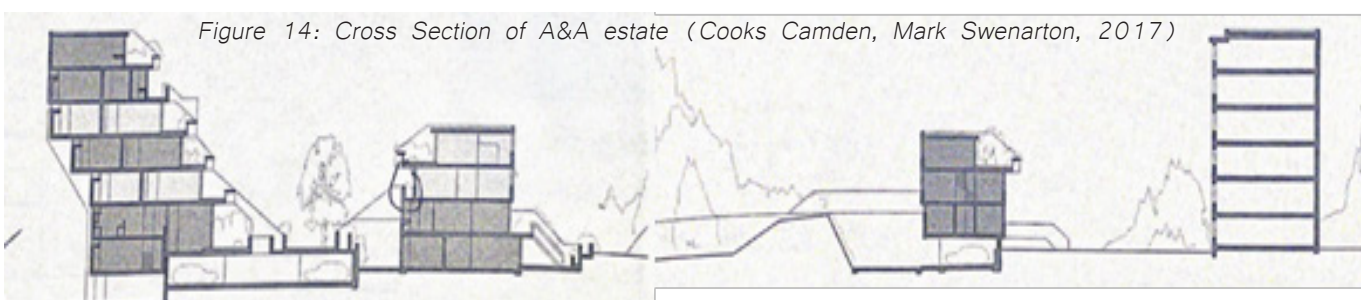
One of the most influential projects of the low-rise saga was Neave Brown’s Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate located in Swiss Cottage, Camden. It was completed in 1978 and commissioned by Sydney Cook. Brown was appointed to design the estate by Sydney Cook (the borough architect) and together they shared similar ideas towards the intentions of the project. Their visions were to build modernist low-rise developments that “geometrically defined open space” and paid homage to the “traditional quality” of housing (*Boughton 2018*). The brief was to provide housing at the full allowable density while also supplying housing for various generations and age groups. Most of the original demographic of residents on the estate were single or two-person households, many being pensioners. The remaining were larger families of up to 4 children (*Swenarton, 2017*). Brown’s conceptual approaches to fulfilling this brief were largely different to his predecessors that have tackled the design of social housing. Compared to Le Corbusier and Lasdun and who established new social environments within the embodiment of urban and unfamiliar high rises, Brown aimed to restore the street idea, but reidentify the architectural style it was known for, preserving the modernist movement.

ABOUT THE SITE

The building layout was influenced by Brown’s Fleet Road estate typology. Brown conducted preliminary studies to test all the possible configurations of units. The final configuration was a successful scaling up of Fleet Street design **(1)** equipped for higher density households. The estate consists of 520 dwellings of 3 terrace housing blocks with the addition of the LCC-owned Ainsworth Estate on the south of the site. Linear formatted ziggurat-style blocks stretch from the east to the west of each side. Block A is a 6-storey low rise that overcasts the railway tracks on the north adjacent to the site. The ribbed cantilevered back reduces the amount of noise pollution that penetrates the site. Block B is a four-storey accommodation block like Brown’s previous project Winscombe Street, 1967 **(2)** (*Swenarton, 2017*). The Block sits opposite Block A, both address the pedestrian street of Rowley Way

Block A is comprised of 346 maisonettes with 72 2-bed units (top floors), 232 one-bed units (intermediate floors), and 42 three-bed units (bottom floors). Block B had 66 two-bed units and the same amount of 3 beds. Block C has 40 four-bed maisonettes.

Within the Interior, all unit types at Alexandra Road were continuities of the Fleet Road and Winscombe Street design. All maisonettes followed Brown’s ‘upside down’ design approach.



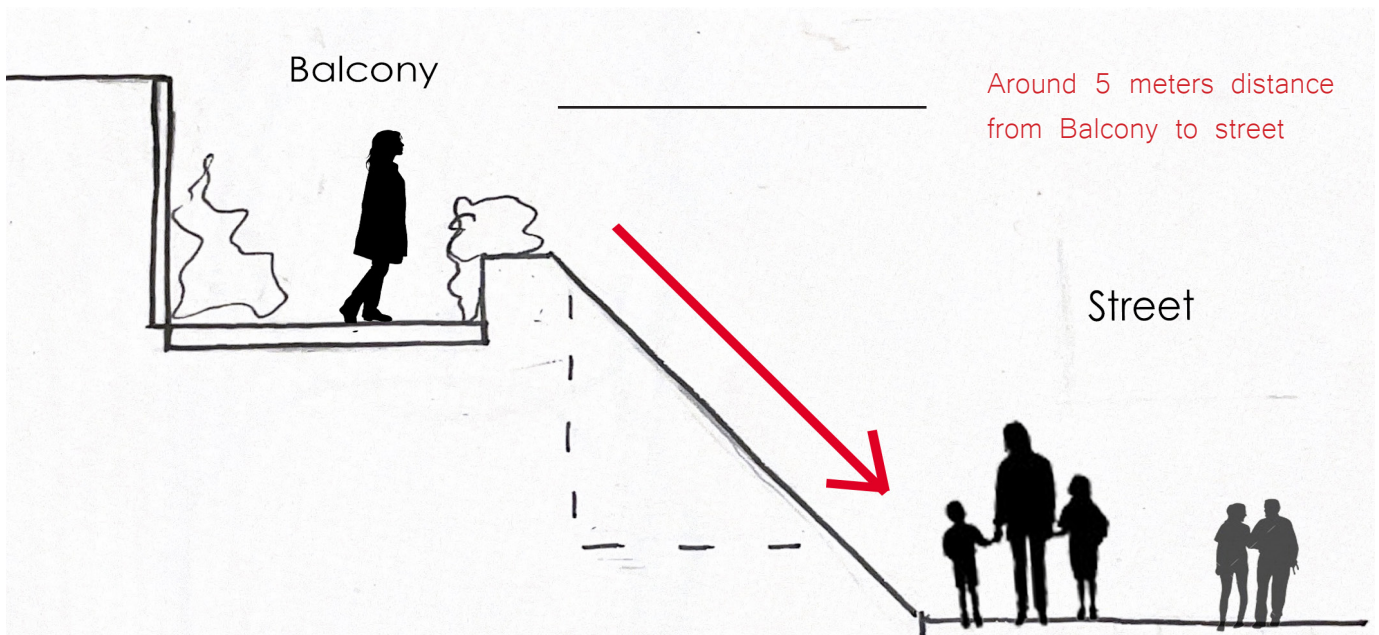
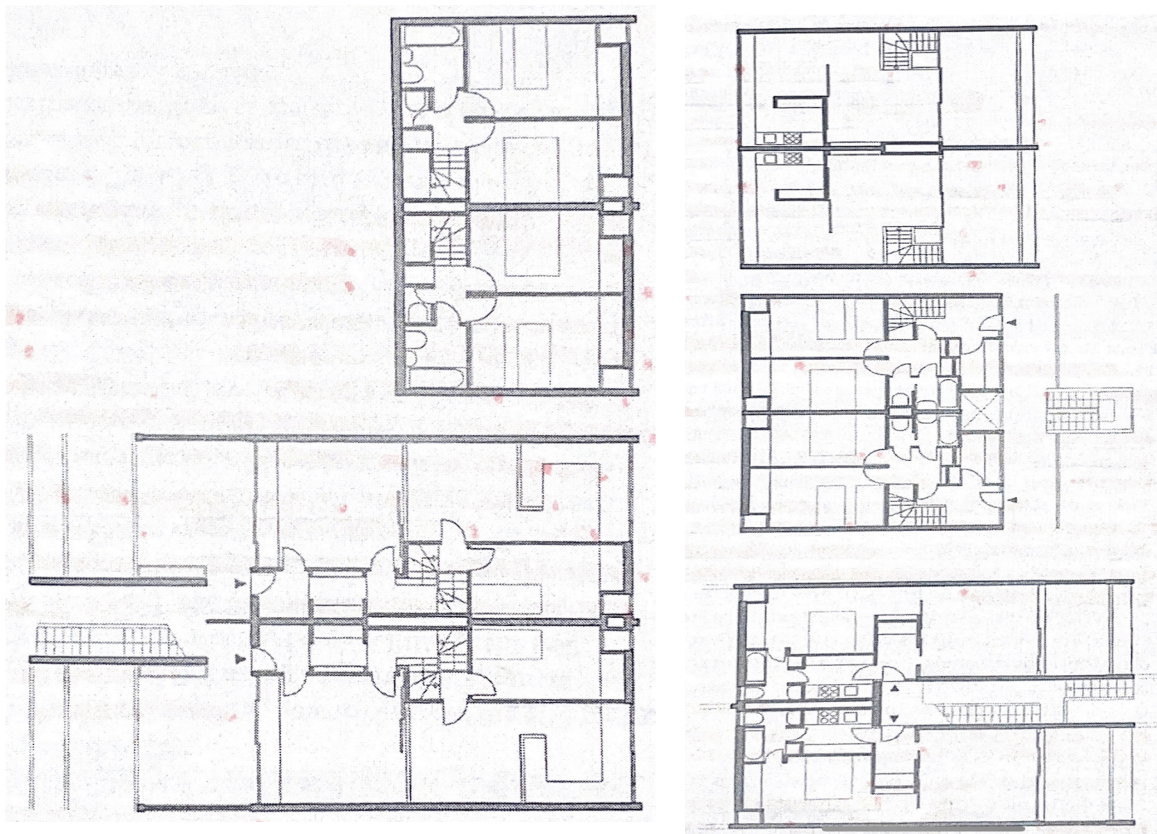


Figure 15: Diagrammatic drawing of distance between a unit and the street, Shaw. G



Figures 16.1-16.2: Interior block A plans of Alexandra Road Estate. Left : Lower maisonettes. Right: Upper maisonettes and flats.

The living room and kitchen are located on the upper floor and bedrooms/ private spaces are located on the lower floor. Brown included sliding partition walls to maximise circulation and open space within the interior. The living space then extends on the terrace balcony where residents are exposed to the outdoors space of the terrace balcony (Swenarton, 2017).

Note. From Cooks Camden, Mark Swenarton, 2017

BROWN'S DESIGN TECHNIQUES USED TO STIMULATE SOCIAL USE AND COMMUNITY LIVING

Neave Brown's Alexandra Road Estate guaranteed residents a community-orientated housing estate, where the connection between the dwellings and its society is not lost. Compared to Lasdun's reintroduction of the street concept that was achieved through a modernistic design, Brown opted for a forward-looking design that shined light on the qualities of streetlife.

Fluid pedestrian access was prioritised with the integration of streets and walkways (a requirement for traffic separation). The 600-meter main pedestrian street extends across the site and connects Abbey Road (east) with Loudon Road (west) and is a no vehicle access zone. (Swenarton, 2017). Due to this design strategy, these walkways appear natural to the environment although they are raised above car parking voids (Gough et al, 2010).



Figure 17 (left): Primary photograph of level 5 walkway | Figure 18 (right): Primary Photograph of Block A stair access

The inclusion of the street increases the number of daily interactions residents obtain with their fellow residents, further pushing the idea of a tightly knit community. The advantage of a no-vehicle access zone is that the street can then be a public space where children have free movement and residents can reap the social benefits of the street. Brown adopted the solution of stair-to-street access to Alexandra Road. The stairwells on Block A rise from the street, towards the front doors of the lowest level of flats. These stairwells continue to offer access to the flats above, until the fifth level where the stair meets a high-level walkway that is home to the upper maisonettes (Swenarton, 2017). In essence, Brown presented two examples of the street aesthetic within a single project. The adaption of Traditional streets and the "streets in the sky" model (which is seen in various housing projects and developed by The Smithson's) generated opportunities for all tenants to experience communal living within an estate setting. A sense of inclusivity and connection with the street.

Similar to the “Cluster” concept of Keeling House, the opposite-facing front doors and block units also promote neighbourly conversation and the prospect of enhancing relationships with longevity. The stepped concrete terraced blocks are formatted to face each other, reminiscent of the earlier Victorian streets that occupied the site. This further accentuates the closeness of the residents. Within the “One Below the Queen” Documentary conducted by the A&A resident association, tenants are interviewed to discuss their experiences and share their opinions about the estate. Two residents put into perspective the abnormal intimacy between neighbours that residents experienced at Alexandra Road Estate.

The estate is very closed in; door to door is very close together, so you can't really leave your house without bumping into a neighbour. So that does make it easier to get together as a community.

“You can hear my neighbour and my neighbour can hear me. I can also see the neighbours from across the road so, to some degree, we start participating in each other's lives”

(quoted from “One Below the Queen” Documentary, 2010)

This confirms the effects of increased levels of intimacy that the inhabitants have with each other because of Brown's street-inspired architecture.

Brown wanted to create a series of diverse spaces with various uses and character. He incorporated new public areas into the estate such as a four-acre park, which was said to be “the heart of the project”. The approved park model included a play centre building, an open play space, separate play areas for younger and older ages, a five-a-side pitch, an open-air amphitheatre, and quiet zones for relaxation. (Swenarton, 2017). The park is an important part of the plan as it creates harmony with the separate parts of the estate.

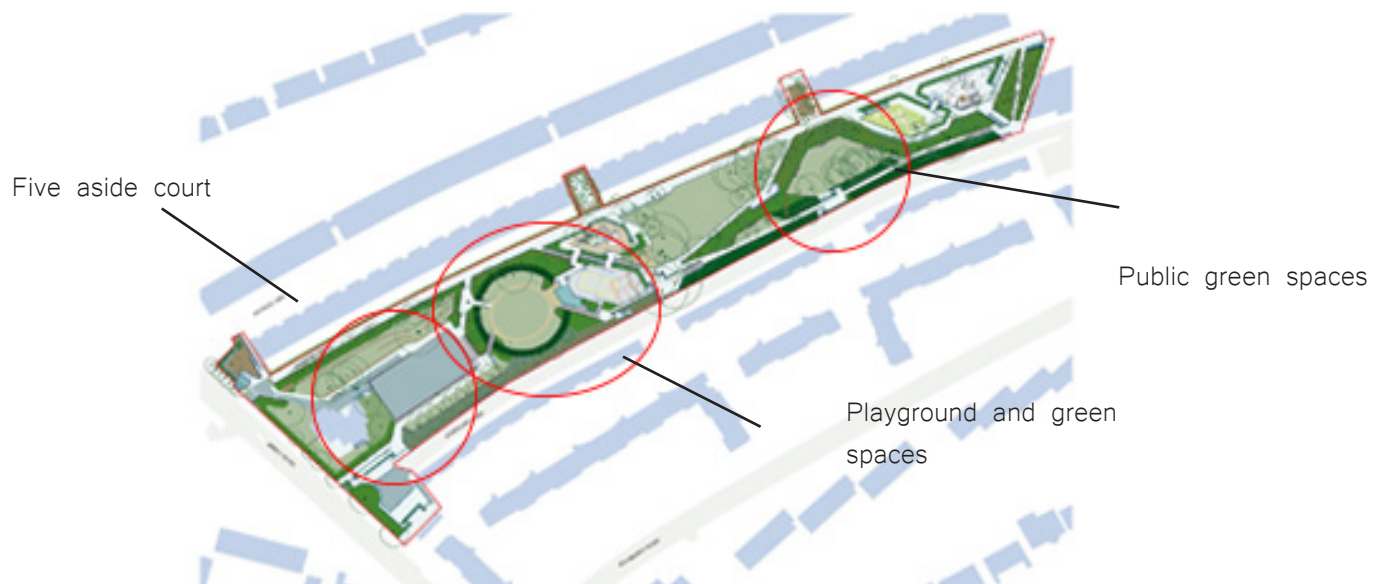


Figure 19: Plan of 4 acre park displaying the communal areas. Edited on Photoshop

Children can play outside in close proximity of their homes and the zoning of these parks/ playgrounds removes the burden of disrupted play due to vehicles. Social service facilities, homes for the disabled youth, and a children's reception centre are also features of the site. Most importantly, a bigger community centre was built on the estate. Other later additions included a youth club and premises for the council building department (Swenarton, 2017). The insertion of youth and community centres etc, adds a uniqueness to the estate and incentivises residents of all ages to gather and socialise in more unique ways that are interactive.



Figures 20-21 : Primary Photographs- Left: Open public green space | Right : Playground

During the 80's, the housing estate faced criticism for being unsafe due to the reported and unreported crime said to be significantly higher than nearby areas. A survey pointed blame onto Brown's 'complex design and layout of the estate' (Municipal Dreams in housing: Alexandra Road Estate 2013). These problems are still a lingering issue today and can be considered as a potential design flaw of Alexandra Road that counteracts the community spirit it is known for.

The descriptions from the Alexandra Road current tenants vary in their interpretations of the estate. It is evident by just visiting the site that some residents are intimidated by the togetherness of the community, as seen by the customisation of their balcony terraces to increase privacy. The idea of seclusion has been proven to be an important factor amongst neighbourhoods which was not a prime focus in Alexandra Road's design compared to Lasdun's management of both residential requests. On the contrary, other tenants described the estate as ... **"One big family home."** (quoted from One Below The Queen Documentary, A&A Residents Association, 2010) with the noun "family" further highlighting the multiple networks formed from living within the Alexandra Road state.

Alexandra Road is a great example of how modernist architecture conquered the real concept of social housing. Neave Brown conceived an estate that essentially carries the characteristics of an urban village that encompasses the traditional values and intentions but presents itself in the utopian style of brutalism. Residents seem to agree with the societal effects of the estate that are enhanced by their interactions and usage of it. As a result of this, the Alexandra Road estate is known for its sense of culture and belonging. The community seems to emulate the same sense of solidarity between each other that was exhibited through the Bethnal Grenners of Young and Wilmott's study. Residents identify themselves with the estate and this further proves the sense of understanding about Brown's intentions. In 1994, English heritage prized the estate with a Grade II listing after 17 years after completion. Alexandra Road was the first modern estate to receive a Grade II listing (Churly & Mcleod 2018).



Figure 22: (left): Primary photograph- View of Rowley Way | Date Taken: (2/2021)

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of these case studies, it is evident that both approaches towards the building of estate communities were successful in the way in which they are executed. Both design schemes have shown similar community aims which are dealt with in two contrasting designs. Denys Lasdun's interpretation of community living provided residents with reserved living experiences while also acknowledging the need for socialisation. The formation of the cluster was a uniform design strategy that condensed the idea of the street to a scale that could still support human use. Although Keeling house possessed a few of the typical tower block societal flaws, the project flaunts its positive attributes that recognises the necessities of its residents. On the contrary, Neave Brown's interpretation of social living succeeds on the opposite end of the housing development scheme. Alexandra road is the best example of how society can be in cooperated into a design. What heightened this project was the essence of experimentation. Brown was able to redefine the older architectural approaches while also utilising the principles to produce a functioning community where they all share the same quality of belonging.

However, they are factors that are threatening communities more than ever before. Housing estate communities are being erased, with the burgeoning demand for newly developed privatised housing in the capital. The actions of demolition are proposed to many council estates across the country in the expectation of creating luxurious high-rise, high-density apartments. Robin Hood Gardens in Poplar became a prime example of the effects of demolition. The estate designed by Alison and Peter Smithson that encompassed the ideology of "streets in the sky" lost its battle for listing rights and was set to be demolished in 2017 (Crinson ,2018). Residents had no choice but to be evicted or relocated due to these new builds, causing them to be detached from their homes and the community that Robin hood Gardens fostered. (Robin Hood gardens: Requiem for a Dream, The Architectural Review ,2014). But how can we cultivate new types of social housing without destroying existing communities?

The objective now will be for future designers to adopt similar practices in hopes to retain the same prospects of bettering communities. We have already witnessed these innovations in recent years where the idea of "co-living" or shared communities has been introduced into private housing developments across the country. Communal sharing zones and the abundance of public spaces within accommodations, push the notion that socialisation is a key factor when designing living spaces. This idea has heightened the possibilities of new methods. The ability to reform and expand communities and merge the current duality of social housing.

The relationship between the physical and social reasonings of council housing must coincide to enable us to appreciate and judge the true implementations of the architecture towards the people that inhabit them. I hope that we can now visualise our council estates in a new light that is focused on the optimism of social housing and how it has shaped people's livelihood in terms of community cohesion, attachment, and cultural impacts.

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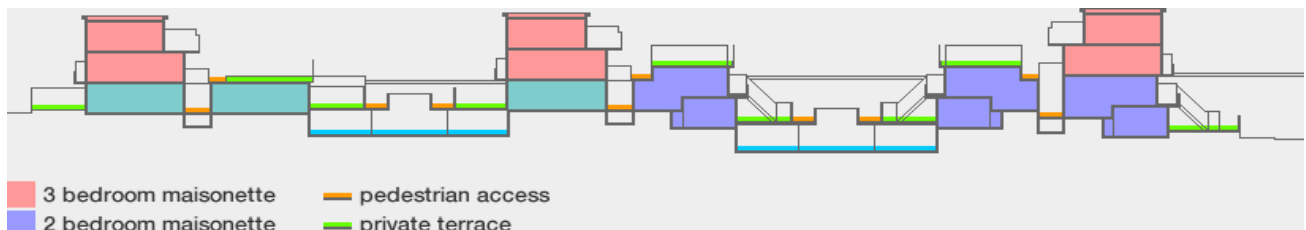
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23. *Figure 23. Edited Image, Children playing in a Estate in Brixton, London 1970 , Martin Mayer* (<https://twitter.com/britcultarchive/status/1254864675717574657>)

1. The Dunboyne Road Estate (now known as Fleet Road Estate) completed in 1975 – was the UK's first high-density low-rise scheme. Its parallel rows of blocks include 71 maisonettes and flats with terraces. The was Neave browns first take a lowrise developmets which later on inspired the layout for thr Alexandra Road estate.

Youde. K, 2017: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/insight/the-architect-who-refused-to-follow-the-tower-block-trend-53208>



Cross section of Fleet Road



Image of Fleet Road terraces

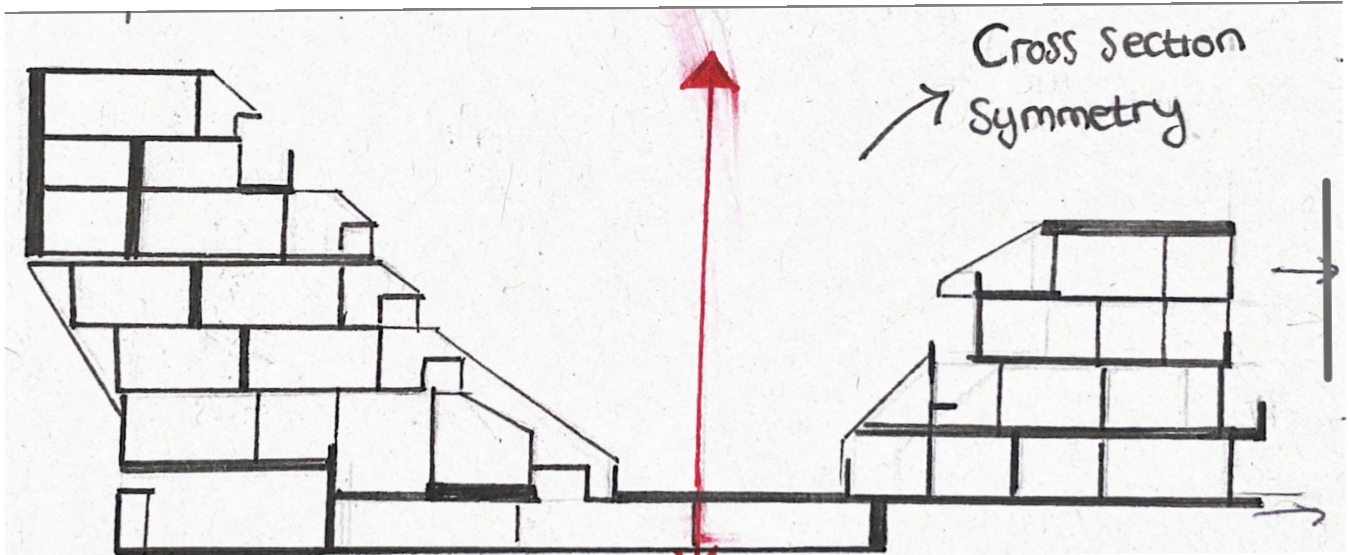
2. Winscombe Street is terraced home development in north London,

The private co-housing scheme was funded from a loan from Camden Council, and also influenced his larger public housing schemes.

Images from: <http://modernarchitecturelondon.com/buildings/fleet-road.php>



Primary photograph: Ergonomics of the A&A walkways



Primary: Cross Section Symmetry Diagram of A&A estate