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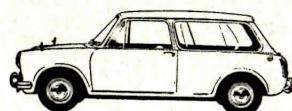
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THE
HORSHAM SOCIETY

THE 1967 AWARD
FOR GOOD
URBAN DESIGN

QUARTERLY
BULLETIN

18

SPRING - 1968

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THE HORSHAM SOCIETY AWARD

For Good Urban Design

The Horsham Society carried out a survey in 1967 of schemes of new development in both the public and private sectors completed in the 12 month period ending 31st December, 1966. The survey was confined to the Urban District and the object was to select the scheme that in the opinion of the Society made the greatest contribution to good urban design with particular attention being paid to its aesthetic qualities, the relationship to its neighbours, layout, landscaping and quality of workmanship. The survey extended over the whole field of development and included individual houses as well as housing estates, schools, industrial and commercial buildings, a car park, a youth club, a public house and a shopping parade.

A provisional list of suitable schemes for consideration for the award was prepared by the Society's Projects Sub-Committee and subsequently the Society sought the advice of a leading architect to assist them in their final choice. They were extremely fortunate in getting Mr. Clifford Culpin to come to Horsham to judge the listed schemes and they are very grateful to him for giving so much of his valuable time and showing such interest in their project.

It is already widely known that the firm of which Mr. Clifford Culpin, O.B.E., F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I., is the senior partner, has been engaged by the Horsham Urban District Council as consultant architect for the Central Area Re-Development Plan. Mr. Culpin has a particular interest in the field of housing design and has been awarded four medals in the annual awards of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government besides a number of commendations. A fuller report of the accomplishments that he and his firm have attained appeared in the Society's quarterly bulletin for July 1967.

It seemed appropriate therefore that the entry selected by Mr. Culpin for the 1967 award, ratified by the Society's main Committee, should be a housing scheme. The scheme is Phase I of the County and Suburban development at Ashleigh occupying a site on the north-west side of Horsham and enclosed by North Parade, Pondtail Road and Ashleigh Road.

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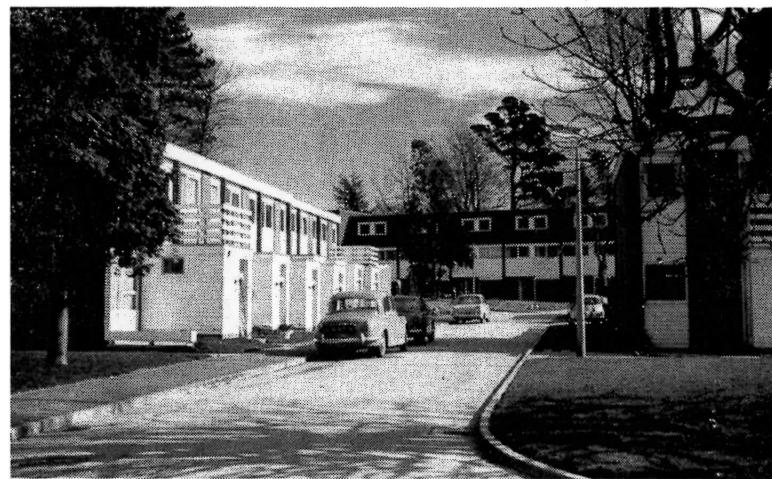
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ASHLEIGH — PHASE ONE

Developer : County and Suburban Holdings Ltd.

Architects : Thompson & Chipperfield, F.R.I.B.A.

Builders : G. T. Crouch.

Phase I of the development included 22 three-storey terraced houses, 5 two-storey detached houses, 19 two-storey terraced houses and a two-storey block of flats.

The architects have achieved a very attractive lay-out of their town houses by skilful and subtle grouping around communal lawns and landscaped areas in which they have retained a number of natural features, including mature trees.

In particular the preservation of the large trees along the Ashleigh Road frontage is most commendable providing a perfect foil to the white painted shiplap cladding of the three-storey houses beyond. These particular houses have a tile hung elevation to the upper floor; they incorporate an integral garage and such is the scale of these dwellings that there is no question of the living space being subordinated to accommodating the family car.

At the centre of the development, forming as it were a focal point to the scheme, there is a green featuring some large trees. This is enclosed on one side by two-storey terraced houses that partly follow the curve of the green and on the opposite side by a short terrace of three-storey houses. Between the two terraces and following the curve of the estate road, which terminates in a convenient vehicle turning point marked by stone bollards, there is a further group of five detached houses stepped back at irregular distances from the roadway. The subtlety of the curved terrace and the deviation from a fixed building line of the detached houses has resulted in the creation of an intimate community possessing the informality of a village green.

A well designed feature of all the two-storey houses throughout the development is the ground floor cloakroom extension in the form of a square porch which encloses the front door thus providing storm protection with a degree of privacy. Also housed within this extension are the services meters and dustbins. Its purpose is functional rather than decorative but being clad in a white painted shiplap boarding it is in complete harmony with the house. Natural light is admitted through a small window opening. The limited use of simple materials is undoubtedly the keynote to good appearance.

The garage accommodation for the two-storey dwellings is located in a block on the perimeter of the development thus ensuring a reasonable amount of peace and seclusion around the central green where it would be most appreciated. All houses are provided with a small paved patio at the rear and most are enclosed by open white painted fencing. Since these are the only private garden spaces within the development it might have seemed preferable, if privacy had been desired, to have provided solid walls or close-boarded fences. Otherwise, apart from small strips of unenclosed garden in front of the terraced two-storey houses, the lawns and open spaces are a communally shared amenity. These landscaped areas are, it is understood, maintained through a contract agreement between the estate developer's agent and the residents with some further control no doubt exercised by the residents' association. This form of communal open space is an innovation to Horsham so far as an estate of individual houses is concerned. It is assumed that the green was not designed as a play area for children and a family man might well question whether the lack of a private garden or of a separate play space for children is too prohibitive. The communal greens may not endure the treatment that children might expect to give them.

The adjudicating committee's terms of reference did not include an appraisal of the design of internal accommodation but it was understood that user satisfaction was fairly general. The shiplap cladding will require regular maintenance and the residents' association, if they have not already done so, might well consider the implementation of a comprehensive and regular painting scheme, which would ensure the most economical method of maintenance. This applies equally to the painting of the front doors and garage doors. If the present colour schemes are maintained all will be well but were each owner to express his individuality by an indiscriminate choice of colour the appearance of this very attractive estate might well be prejudiced.

Two other schemes particularly impressed the Society. These were the primary school in Blackbridge Lane and King and Barnes' new offices in Bishopric.

PRIMARY SCHOOL, BLACKBRIDGE LANE

Developer : West Sussex County Council Education Department

Architect : County Architects Department

Builder : James Longley, Crawley

Using an industrialised system, Scolar Mark 1A, developed by the architects, the school has been built on a difficult sloping site but the changes in level and the general landscape treatment including the playing fields and car parking area has been carried out to good effect. The strong horizontal banding of the fascia and that between the two floors of the main building provide an admirable frame for the building. The single-storey boiler house, kitchen and dining room have been skilfully linked via paved areas and raised paths. The tile hung panels that close the front and end elevations are in Sussex tradition and gives colourful relief to the glazed façade. It is to be hoped that drainage difficulties do not limit the use of the playing fields, particularly in the winter months.

KING AND BARNES' HEAD OFFICE, BISHOPRIC

Developer : King and Barnes

Architects : Godman and Kay, F.R.I.B.A.

Builders : George Potter

This building is strategically sited in the Bishopric and it replaces the former oast house. The choice of material is admirable with the red infill panels blending in well with the rustic bricks and the dark grey of the horizontal bands that frame the building at roof and fascia level. The gilt lettering and house crest applied to the fascia panel are in excellent taste being in complete harmony and scale with the façade. The quality of workmanship is most commendable.

The remaining schemes short listed for final appraisal were :

Youth Club, Blackbridge Lane.

Freshwater Parade, Bishopric.

Arun Point, Denne Road.

Car Park and Toilets, Horsham Park.

"St. Leonards Arms," Brighton Road.

These were all commendable. The levels at Arun Point were very well handled. It was regrettable that a mature specimen tree had been lopped in a merciless way. In the various schemes it was evident at times that cost was an inhibiting factor particularly in the quality of materials used. Often a scheme could be faulted on a detail such as the treatment of a gable end or the unfortunate choice of colour for paintwork.

The Award will take the form of a Plaque to be fixed externally in an appropriate position at the Award Winning estate. Details of the ceremony will be announced in due course.

Enterprise Neptune

In previous issues, reference has been made to the holding of a special Neptune Appeal Week in Horsham in 1968. It is now learnt that these plans have had to be abandoned—a great disappointment to both the organisers and the Society.

The organisers made strenuous efforts, but in spite of the Horsham Urban District Council's most generous invitation to use the Capitol Theatre free of charge, the support from other sources was not sufficient for a major campaign.

It is understood that the Council has donated £100 to "Neptune" now that the Capitol is not needed and it is hoped that other bodies and individuals will follow this lead by making their own contributions.

Tree sit-in

Housewives who organised a "sit-in" should warm the heart of Duncan Sandys, promoter of the Civic Amenities Bill. The housewives won a reprieve for two 200-year-old oak trees which were to be felled by a builder at Tattenhall. The women picketed the trees with prams and refused to allow the tree fellers access to the site. They ultimately won a delaying action in order to provide the Tarvin R.D.C. with an opportunity to debate whether the trees would warrant a preservation order. They did.

Common Purpose

Not only our footpaths but even the freedom of our common land is in danger. The Council for Nature's Journal "Habitat" discloses that barely a quarter of the common land in the British Isles has been registered, and goes on to say—"the traditional 'right' to wander over the Common lands of England and Wales may soon be lost in many places if more people cannot be bothered to register commons in their areas."

Registration may be carried out freely by anyone—but he must act by January 1970 when the Register closes.

Compare any old map of Horsham with the present one and you will see what has already happened to the original common land in the town. If you care for the freedom of open spaces and have reason to feel apprehensive about the future of any common land, write for advice to the Common Society, 166 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.

WE CAN DOUBLE OUR MEMBERSHIP IN 1968

... if each of you enrols one new member

Y O U

know that the Horsham Society is the only organisation in the town solely concerned with the protection of Horsham's amenities.

DOES YOUR NEIGHBOUR ?



Members of the Society who do not often walk in Brighton Road may not yet have seen the seat which we presented to the town and which was installed by the Council last autumn. Designed by David Mellor, R.D.I. Des., R.C.A., and approved by the Council of Industrial Design, the seat is in natural varnished Iroko on a black steel frame. We hope it will provide comfortable sitting this summer.

Middle Street

We must congratulate the contractors on their skilful removal of the old hardware shop in Middle Street. Although the building was unattractive both inside and out and had little to offer the modern retailer, the historic importance of the structure is not in doubt, and to know that it is to be erected again in an architectural Valhalla elsewhere in Sussex appeals to the antiquarian in all of us. It is also a pleasant change to watch a building being dismantled rather than knocked down.

Clearly this is an example of disinterested generosity on the part of the developers which deserves our thanks, but one need not possess a very cynical imagination to foresee a truly Machiavellian developer offering to resite a unique building which happens to be in his way. When planning application is in the balance such an offer might weight the scales in the developer's favour. No Council is likely to banish the Bishop's Palace from a Cathedral Close to make way for a Hilton Tower and tuppence off the rates. But some Councils might not resist the temptation to permit the removal of a neat row of 18th century shops to make way for a prizewinning rate-earning but quite inappropriate office block in the market square.

PAST AND FUTURE EVENTS

On January 26th, and for the second time in the history of the Society. Sir Hugh Casson addressed a large audience of members and friends at the Capitol. The Chairman, Mr. Francis Haddock, introducing Sir Hugh, briefly reviewed his major achievements as an architect. At the close of the evening he paid sincere tribute to him as a speaker.

It pleases Sir Hugh to pretend that he has only one lecture which he offers under a multitude of titles. Those who have heard Sir Hugh before know this to be quite untrue. Those who were hearing him for the first time in January look forward in turn to an early opportunity to prove him wrong.

On April 26th, at the King's Head Hotel, Horsham, Mr. D. R. Gould, Treasurer to Horsham U.D.C., will give a talk which he has entitled "Paying for Local Government." Come early; make sure of a seat. You will never have another chance to find out why and how so much is spent. If you have ever signed yourself, indignantly, "A Ratepayer," this is absolutely for you!

COMMENT

The activity at 27 West Street led some of us to expect a revealing exhibition of Horsham's redevelopment. The display panel of maps and pictures scarcely called for an unveiling ceremony although it might qualify for any competition in British understatement.

In the envelope with your rates demand you have received a most informative leaflet listing the services provided by both Town and County Councils. At the foot of the County column, under the heading "Other Services" and sandwiched between "Mental Health After-care" and "Issue of Excise Licences" you will find "Planning." No estimate of cost is mentioned for this service.

Sir Hugh Casson's remark that traffic may often be controlled by making roads more narrow was certain to receive publicity. The improvements to Hammerpond Road illustrate the inverse application of this principle.

Now the motorist can scorch carefree through Coolhurst and Doomsday Green without the harrowing experience of seeing pedestrians leap for safety up the steep and mossy banks. The banks and half the plants in the British Flora have been shovelled away, and the visibility is fine. The walker no longer needs the agility of a goat to avoid the traffic; he can walk quite safely ankle deep in the mud where the bank used to be.

FREEMAN BROTHERS

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