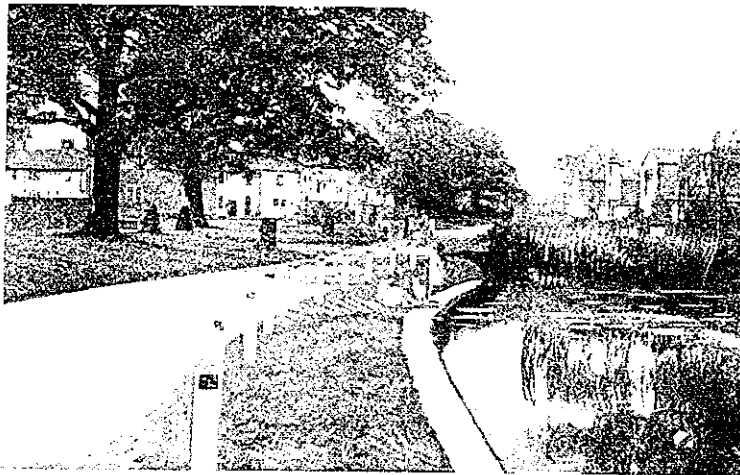


WHAT IS WRONG WITH OUR CITIES?

Welwyn Garden City, Herts., England.—A country lane utilized in the street lay-out. The magnificent oaks



have been preserved and the water in the foreground is an old farm pond planted with lilies and bordered by a rock garden.

ON every hand to-day we are confronted by great and vital developments. New Zealanders are awakening to national and civic consciousness and this new-found sense is finding expression in activities which are moulding the country's character.

It is a commonplace to say that to-day is the day of great and rapid developments, but a commonplace which will bear frequent repetition if it eventually opens the public mind to the significance of these developments and to the necessity for their intelligent control.

Our concern for the moment is with the future development of the cities of the Dominion, and I hope to show along what lines this development might take place by drawing from the experience of other countries where civic art has reached an advanced stage.

An intelligent critic, bringing a fresh eye to anything in course of creation, whether it be a picture, a piece of sculpture, my lady's dress, or the building of a city, often detects faults to which the creator's jaded eye is blind.

Just as the artist steps back from his easel to get a comprehensive view of his picture, so the builders of cities should make a mental review of the work under their hands to fairly judge of its merit.

The last decade has marked phenomenal development in Auckland and its environs, and coming back to these shores after an absence of ten years or so, one reviews this growth with mixed feelings. Some aspects are happily inspired and wholly good, others merely commonplace, and others again, deplorably misconceived and abortive.

Perhaps the strongest impression one gains from these manifestations of activity is the extraordinary lack of co-operation and collective thought evidenced by the varying results. One feels sometimes that the good work of some is nullified by the distressing efforts of others, and the whole earth is crying out for some comprehensive and consistent policy concerning its development.

SPACE will not permit me to deal with many aspects of city development, so I choose that which is, perhaps, nearest to the hearts of most of us, the development of our residential areas, the environs of our homes and the homes themselves.

One need not look far for instances of unwise suburban development, vast deserts of uninteresting houses unrelieved by open spaces, shady trees, and grassy walks. Hideous streets, paved for their full width, without a blade of grass or the vestige of a tree are flanked on both sides by langalows whose only

IT IS GENERALLY ADMITTED TO-DAY THAT ENVIRONMENT EXERTS AN INCALCULABLE INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PEOPLE. THERE IS NO GREATER FIELD OF ENDEAVOUR FOR THE SOCIOLOGIST AT THE PRESENT MOMENT THAN IN THE REFORM OF OUR PREVAILING METHODS, URBAN AND SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT. MEN AND WOMEN ENGAGED IN THIS GREAT WORK ARE MAKING A BIGGER CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD'S WELFARE THAN THOSE WHO ENDEAVOUR TO PERSUADE THE POOR THAT THEIR LOT IS BETTER THAN IT REALLY IS—FOR THAT IS WHAT "CHARITY" HAS COME TO MEAN.

By A. J. BROWN, A. R. I. B. A.

distinguishing characteristics are those of the speculative builder—these are what we have exchanged in only too many instances for green fields and fine groups of shady trees.

The people who dwell in these places have sold their birthright for a mess of very bad pottage.

At whose door are we to lay the sin? Who are responsible for this abomination of desolation? Hide-bound local authorities, land-speculators interested only in monetary values, builders with a similar outlook and tenants dead to the fitness of things!

These shade-giving trees might

have been preserved along with other local amenities and characteristic local features; these arid streets might have been planted with well-kept grass margins and ornamental trees and the commonplace houses might have reflected the cultured taste of the occupants.

These things are given more consideration in other countries, particularly in Great Britain, America, Holland, France and Germany, and in view of our Government's interest in Model Garden Suburbs it may be useful to turn our eyes to the Mother Country for inspiration in these matters.



ASMUN'S PLACE, HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB, LONDON

A quiet residential street with narrow carriage way, grass margins and trees. A charming street picture—homogeneous but not monotonous.—From "Town Planning in Practice," by Raymond Unwin.

The Garden City

THIS term has been much abused and mis-applied until it has come to mean, for the man in the street, anything from a place where social cranks congregate, to a row of cottages laid out on "model" lines.

In reality it is neither the one nor the other, but primarily a town where industries are carried on and the bulk of the population engaged in some capacity in those industries.

Some might insist that the homes exist to serve the industries, but we will take the point of view that all the other features of the town are for the service of the citizens.

Thus areas are set aside for business premises, shopping, civic buildings, and factories.

A belt of agricultural land may encircle the town and supply it with fresh produce—vegetables, milk, eggs and so forth.

Streets and Roads

IN laying out streets and roads it is most likely that some old roads exist, and these may often be used to advantage in the street schemes. A winding country lane with fine trees at intervals and flanked by growing hedges may be widened where necessary for traffic and still retain much of its rural charm. The preservation of such features so long as they do not seriously interfere with development, is a wise policy.

The 66ft. road has been generally adopted in New Zealand, both for main traffic routes and for residential roads. The guiding principle in the minds of those who settled this question was, broadly speaking, a good one, but a moment's reflection will show that its indiscriminate application is unsatisfactory.

An arterial traffic route requires greater width than this, while a minor road merely giving access to houses may be considerably less.

By revising these conditions concerning road formation local authorities could do a great deal towards reducing the cost of land and save the ratepayers' money in maintenance.

All streets in residential areas should have grass margins between the carriageway and the footpath, and these margins should be planted with trees both at regular intervals and in groups.

In most streets there is no need to make the carriage-way more than 18 or 20 feet. This would allow of ample grass margins, which could be kept mown for less than the maintenance cost of extra carriageway.

The vistas along our streets are of great importance. By judicious

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