

The Woodchurch Controversy, 1944

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During the late 1930s rapid changes were taking place in the social structure of the country, and expectations of standards in housing and health care had risen dramatically since the publication of the Tudor Walters Report in 1918. The Second World War accelerated the changes. Although improved standards of living were widely expected, both in standards of housing and in a more pleasant environment, the general public seemed to appreciate that Utopia would not emerge immediately the hostilities ceased. There was a recognition, rather, that public intervention might avoid a repetition of past mistakes, and thus an expectation that the public would have some input into decision-making about housing.¹ In that, the public mood was unlike that of its counterpart after the signing of the Armistice in 1918, when euphoria overwhelmed socio-economic reality and precipitated state provision of housing for the working class.²

During the early 1940s public interest in rebuilding Britain, or rather in planning for rebuilding Britain, was officially encouraged at all levels by exhibitions and numerous publications. As well as *Town planning* by Thomas Sharp, the first manager of Letchworth Garden City and a past president of the Town Planning Institute, there were pamphlets and booklets issued by political parties and other interested institutions, including the Co-operative Building Society.³ Popular magazines and periodicals also spurred on a growing public

¹ L. Potter, 'National tensions in the post-war planning of local authority housing and the "Woodchurch controversy"' (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Liverpool Univ., 1998), pp. 134–8.

² M. Bowley, *Housing and the state, 1919–1944* (London, 1947), p. 3.

³ G. E. Cherry, *The evolution of British town planning* (Leighton Buzzard, 1974), p. 130.

awareness. *Picture Post* published articles by J. B. Priestley on leisure, Julian Huxley on health, and Maxwell Fry on planning, all aimed at building 'a fairer, pleasanter, happier and more beautiful Britain'.⁴

Within this context of public and professional optimism and enthusiasm for planning, the Woodchurch controversy developed. Today the situation would probably be considered little more than a hiccup at local level, but towards the end of the war the complex issues raised during the dispute reflected national tensions in planning. Superficially the issue was a choice between a conventional layout for a housing scheme based on pre-war styling, and an experimental scheme which became the focus for lively debate and involved Birkenhead borough council in almost a year of acrimonious political wrangling. Underlying the choice of layout was the high profile given to raising the standard of housing developments; more importantly the controversy reflected national tensions within the traditional hierarchy of local authority planning departments. The inter-professional struggle for supremacy between engineers and architects would establish which would dictate the shape of the post-war environment in what was to become one of the most active periods of building. In Birkenhead the struggle was enacted, albeit in a somewhat one-sided manner, by Mr Bertie Robinson, the borough engineer, and Professor (later Sir) Charles H. Reilly, a former head of the Liverpool University School of Architecture.

Inevitably the various strands of the debate became inextricably linked and reverberations were felt far beyond the council chamber as the argument acquired social and political ramifications which resulted in an unprecedented degree of interest in Birkenhead by the national press. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the relevant documentation and correspondence were destroyed when Wirral metropolitan borough council was established in 1974. The sequence of events during 1944 and 1945 is recorded in council and committee meeting minutes which by their very nature omit details of debate, and it has been necessary to utilize press reports as supplementary material. Any inaccuracy, contradictory information, and hyperbole with which the debate was freely embellished will be identified.

The local press at this time accused councillors of being almost completely out of touch with the people whose interests they were

⁴ *Picture Post*, 4 Jan. 1944.

supposed to represent, while the voters were said to be content to grumble at what was done rather than ensure that the council was aware of their feelings.⁵ Nevertheless, although the war-time moratorium on house building was still in place, the Conservative-run borough council (they had been the majority party for almost five years since local elections were suspended in 1939) wished to avail itself of the equipment and manpower being offered by central government for site preparation for housing throughout the country. Many homes in the borough had suffered as a result of enemy bombing, while others had fallen victim to poor construction methods or lack of maintenance, and a new development was greatly needed for displaced residents as well as those returning from armed service.

Borough and city engineers were firmly established as chief officers in the hierarchy of municipal planning, primarily through their involvement with public health, and early in 1944 Bertie Robinson as borough engineer was instructed to prepare a layout for working-class houses. On 1 February Professor Reilly was appointed by the borough council as planning consultant to undertake a civic survey and produce a redevelopment plan for the borough.⁶ Reilly, the most colourful and the most vociferous protagonist in the Woodchurch saga, was soon making his presence felt. Aided by a facility for speech and rhetoric, his impulsiveness, enthusiasm, and ability to persuade and inspire were undiminished despite the fact that he suffered from a heart condition.⁷ He was seventy years old at the time of his appointment and, although well known in local circles while at the university, had retired some eleven years before. He continued to influence the architectural world for many years after his retirement,⁸ writing regularly for the *Manchester Guardian* on planning issues, while other national newspapers and professional journals published the contentious articles and criticism of official bodies which he instigated and obviously relished.⁹ He admitted to being controversial from early in

⁵ *Birkenhead News*, 6 May 1944.

⁶ Liverpool University Archives, personal papers of C. H. Reilly [hereafter Reilly Papers].

⁷ R. Gardner-Medwin, 'Science, art and the architect', *Town Planning Review*, XXIV (July 1953).

⁸ T. Kelly, *For the advancement of learning* (Liverpool, 1981), p. 359.

⁹ Reilly Papers.

his career,¹⁰ and was often tactless and overbearing. More pertinent to the situation in Birkenhead was his antipathy towards the garden-suburb style of housing and a long-held opinion that borough engineers were not qualified to design and plan housing developments.¹¹

An all-party finance and planning committee confirmed the decision to engage the professor but there is no evidence that the borough council invited him to take up a consultancy.¹² During the 1940s many local authorities engaged planning consultants who were figures of some stature in the field of architecture,¹³ and there is a theory that Reilly offered his services to a council which was seeking a notable figure from the architectural and planning profession who was not only familiar with but had some affection for the area, like Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Reilly's successor at the School of Architecture.¹⁴ Though Reilly lived in Liverpool when at the university, there is no evidence that he had a particular attachment to Birkenhead. Indeed his association with Wirral rested in Port Sunlight and his friendship with W. H. Lever, Viscount Leverhulme. Reilly's professed affection for Merseyside fell short of his remaining in the area after retirement. It is likely that the circumstances surrounding Reilly's appointment will remain a matter for conjecture.

With the exception of some joint planning of university buildings with H. A. Dod, Reilly's relatively few architectural projects were overshadowed by his achievement in promoting the School of Architecture. Professor W. G. Holford (later Lord Holford) opined that Reilly was not a distinguished architect in the accepted sense but that his influence was apparent in the work of his students.¹⁵ Some notable former students, apart from Holford

¹⁰ C. H. Reilly, *Scaffolding in the sky* (London, 1938), p. 122.

¹¹ Kelly, *Advancement*, p. 145.

¹² Wirral Archives, Birkenhead Council Minutes [hereafter Council Minutes] (Finance and Planning), 21 Mar. 1943.

¹³ S. Adshead, 'A plan for Merseyside', *Architects Journal*, 5 July 1945, p. 17, for example, welcomed T. Longstreth Thompson's Merseyside Plan of 1944, as imaginative, prophetic, and 'untrammelled' by regulations, by-laws or traditional methods. The most widely publicized scheme was that for the county of London in 1943 by L. P. Abercrombie and the London county council architect J. H. Forshaw.

¹⁴ G. Dix, 'Patrick Abercrombie', *Pioneers of British planning*, ed. G. E. Cherry (London, 1981), p. 103.

¹⁵ *The Listener*, 15 July 1948, p. 93.

himself, were W. Crabtree, J. H. Forshaw, H. J. Rowse, H. C. Bradshaw, Maxwell Fry, and G. Checkley. It was said that Reilly was too immersed in the School to produce much important architectural work himself,¹⁶ and indeed his projects are overshadowed by the progress made at the Liverpool School in the years following his appointment. His greatest achievement was the enhancement of the School's reputation,¹⁷ and the advances made were praised by Ramsey, Holford, and others.¹⁸ Courses already in existence were restructured, and the Liverpool School came to be acknowledged as 'a force in the outside world'.¹⁹ During Reilly's tenure as head, the work of the School was broadened in 1909 to incorporate the first Chair of Civic Design in the country, through generous funding from W. H. Lever, and the influential *Town Planning Review* began publication. New members of staff were engaged, including Abercrombie, Adshead, Budden, Mawson, and, as Reader in Ecclesiastical Architecture, Giles Gilbert Scott.

Reilly had shown little concern for town planning in the early years of the century, until the opportunity arose to establish the Department of Civic Design.²⁰ Believing that his friendship with Lever was responsible for the formation of the department, he assumed thereafter that the architectural profession possessed sole responsibility for town planning. His antagonism towards the engineering profession is evident in an exhortation to a prospective student that if he were 'merely interested in making things strong, so they are efficient for their purpose, he had better become an engineer. An architect must go further than an engineer . . . he must put feeling into his work.'²¹ Reilly was not alone in perpetuating the idea of the architect's supremacy, but he was possibly the least inhibited in publicizing his opinions. Indeed much of the Roscoe Lecture which he gave in 1934 was a tirade against the planning skills of the engineering profession, a line of argument which he later used throughout the Woodchurch controversy:

¹⁶ *The Leader*, 22 Sept. 1945, p. 15.

¹⁷ Kelly, *Advancement*, p. 145.

¹⁸ *The book of the Liverpool School of Architecture*, ed. L. B. Budden (Liverpool, 1938), pp. 25–8; *The Listener*, 15 July 1948, p. 93; *The Leader*, 22 Sept. 1945, p. 15.

¹⁹ Kelly, *Advancement*, pp. 138, 145.

²⁰ M. Shippobotham and E. Hubbard, *A guide to Port Sunlight village* (Liverpool, 1988), p. 48.

²¹ C. H. Reilly, in *Journal of Careers*, May 1927.

in Paris or indeed any considerable French or German town, these drawings [of projected buildings] are considered by the architect or architects appointed by the town. With us, in nearly all our provincial cities, including Liverpool, they go before a city engineer or city surveyor, whose duty it is to advise on their architectural fitness as well as their safety . . . It is indeed very indicative of our general outlook that the advice given on the appearance of our towns should be tendered by a man whose chief duty is either, where he is City Surveyor, valuing land or buildings, or where he is City Engineer, constructing roads and sewers.²²

Despite his advancing years and penchant for argument, Reilly was eminently suitable for the position of planning consultant at a time of national optimism about plans for post-war rebuilding. He possessed imagination and vision more than sufficient to produce an outline plan for the future development of Birkenhead. It was not anticipated that he would attempt to annex housing plans to his brief.

Birkenhead council could not fail to be influenced by the proximity of Liverpool and the successful policies of the city's housing director L. H. (later Sir Lancelot) Keay, who advocated higher-density layouts for municipal developments, with variation in style and size of dwellings, fewer narrower roads, open fronts to houses, dwellings facing common greens, and footpath connections to all parts.²³ Robinson's layout for Woodchurch, however, was similar to those already in the course of preparation for two other estates in Birkenhead, and followed inter-war low-density garden-suburb styling, incorporating the culs-de-sac, ample gardens, and tree-lined roads which had proliferated throughout the country through the work of municipal engineers for more than two decades.²⁴ This style of development became generally known as the 'garden suburb' and had been very freely adapted by many local authorities from the designs for Letchworth and Hampstead by Parker and Unwin, following the garden city principles of Ebenezer Howard.²⁵ An indication that the style produced by municipal engineers had lost favour at this time was the need for family houses mingled with flats for smaller households, identified later in 1944 in the *Dudley report*

²² Reprinted in Reilly, *Scaffolding in the sky*, p. 337.

²³ L. H. Keay, 'The amenities of living: the house and the neighbourhood', *The Architect and Building News*, 14 Sept. 1945, pp. 166–8.

²⁴ Wirral Archives: B. Robinson, Plan for Woodchurch, Feb. 1944.

²⁵ E. Howard, *Garden cities of tomorrow* (London, 1946).

on the design of dwellings. Many in the architectural profession, including Reilly, considered the density of twelve houses per acre far too low, and by 1949 the grouping of terraced and semi-detached houses with flats was advocated in the *Housing manual* to counteract uniformity and increase density.²⁶

Robinson's layout was approved in principle on 29 February 1944, although Alderman C. McVey, the leader of the minority Labour group, expressed some concern over housing projections as well as a lack of confidence in the organization of the engineer's department.²⁷ By April, Reilly had produced an alternative plan for Woodchurch,²⁸ based on the concept of communal living. During his initial visit to Birkenhead, soon after his appointment, the professor showed some concern for existing social problems, expressed through spectacular rhetoric about plague spots and infant mortality, but at this time there was no indication that he contemplated planning a housing scheme. His first glimpse of Robinson's drawing was the start of a severe clash of opinions, personalities, and politics, but there are conflicting reports about the circumstances of his first sighting, and indeed the nature of the drawing itself. In one account, Reilly maintained that he saw a drawing, showing roads only, 'lying on the floor' of the engineer's office,²⁹ while in another version the plan that he saw had acquired pairs of semi-detached houses.³⁰ A subsequent account positions the houses on curving roads, 'looking away' from each other.³¹ A copy of the document in question was apparently acquired by Reilly, who traced his own ideas over it. However, as his plan was little more than a sketch and as he constantly maintained that borough engineers were more fitted to plan drains and sewers,³² it is possible that at this stage the tracing was intended to highlight the more monotonous aspects of Robinson's plan and to irritate the engineering profession, rather than a serious attempt at planning a housing scheme. In Birkenhead, perhaps, there was the opportunity

²⁶ Ministry of Health Central Housing Advisory Committee, *Dudley report on the design of dwellings* (London, 1944); Ministry of Health and Ministry of Works, *Housing manual* (London, 1949).

²⁷ Council Minutes, 1 Mar. 1944.

²⁸ Wirral Archives: C. H. Reilly, Plan for Woodchurch, Apr. 1944.

²⁹ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 31 May 1944.

³⁰ Reilly Papers.

³¹ L. Wolfe, *The Reilly plan* (London, 1945), pp. 9–10.

³² Reilly, *Scaffolding in the sky*, p. 33.

to see some of his ideas come to fruition or, failing that, at least have them and his opinions publicized. If he succeeded he would be recognized as the designer of a revolutionary approach to public authority housing; if he failed he would have enjoyed the cut and thrust of another public argument.

The site for development at Woodchurch was agricultural land which had been purchased in 1926 when Birkenhead was seeking to extend its boundaries, with parliamentary sanction, by annexing surrounding areas including Prenton, Arrowe, Landican, and Woodchurch. Situated on the eastern slope of the Arrowe ridge, about three miles from the centre of Birkenhead, Woodchurch was a small civil parish dominated by the church of Holy Cross. Other buildings of note were the rectory and the school.³³ Population growth in Woodchurch had not paralleled that of Birkenhead. In 1801 the population was only 52,³⁴ and Ormerod's description of the wider parish (which included some 5,000 acres and eight other townships besides Woodchurch) was somewhat scathing:

Cheshire possesses no parish of similar extent, that has fewer claims to attention and interest, than Woodchurch; a district, which appears as if it had come unfinished from the hands of nature, and is certainly under very little obligation to the improvements of man. It . . . presents an appearance bare, moorish and cheerless, but never rising to the wild, or the picturesque.³⁵

By the time of the 1911 census the population had risen to 138, and Hewitt's description was a little more charitable:

little more than a hamlet . . . situated on the eastern slope of the Arrowe ridge, on the margin of the woods which now crown the summit and with the broad and somewhat marshy valley of the Fender separating it from the high ground of Bidston and Oxton.³⁶

After the purchase of the land from Ernest Royden for £69,000 plus expenses had been approved by the finance committee,³⁷ the

³³ E. H. Rideout, *The growth of Wirral* (Liverpool, 1927), pp. 13, 93.

³⁴ W. Hewitt, *The Wirral peninsula* (Liverpool, 1922), p. 179.

³⁵ G. Ormerod, *History of the county palatine and city of Chester*, revised T. Helsby (London, 1882), II, p. 520.

³⁶ Hewitt, *Wirral peninsula*, p. 179.

³⁷ Council Minutes (Finance), 4 June 1926. In 1928 Miss Joan Royden, daughter of (Sir) Ernest, established the Wirral Society, a branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, with the support of Liverpool businessmen who resided on the peninsula. The aim of the society was, and is today, 'to organise action

internationally respected firm of T. H. Mawson and Sons of London and Lancaster was instructed to prepare a housing scheme for Woodchurch. The senior partner, T. H. Mawson, a former lecturer in civic design at Liverpool and at universities in north America,³⁸ had been involved with the planning of the Lever estates in Bolton and Thornton Hough as well as at Port Sunlight. Predictably, the Mawson plan was not only influenced by this previous association but also by Howard's garden city principles. The first layout produced was used as the basis for discussions between Mawsons and the borough engineer R. W. Johnson, and the second, with details of houses and landscaping, was published and approved in principle in 1928.³⁹ As well as houses for rent, the Mawson project included a substantial number for sale. At this time legislation allowed a considerable proportion of council-built property to be sold,⁴⁰ and generous subsidies were available from central government. It is interesting to note that among the houses for sale was a small innovative development based on communal living.

The Mawson scheme was not realized. Although the reasons for its abandonment were not recorded in council minutes, it is thought that preparation of the site would have been hindered by the inadequacy of sewerage and drainage facilities. Many older residents of present-day Birkenhead recall that the river Fender regularly flooded low-lying land adjoining the site and that there was a deep pool in Pool wood, in the area now known as Pool Lane. Part of the site, originally intended for a cemetery, was found to drain directly into the Fender, and the cemetery was laid out instead on higher ground at Landican.⁴¹

Whatever the local difficulties, they were overtaken by the depression of the 1930s. In 1944 inadequate drainage still hindered development of the site. When in control some years earlier, a Labour administration had sold part of the Woodchurch site to the 'to protect Wirral from disfigurement'. Earliest records of the society, entrusted to the council archives, have been mislaid, but it is thought that there may have been dissent within the Royden family about the proposed use of agricultural land for housing.

³⁸ T. H. Mawson, *The life and work of an English landscape architect* (London, 1927), pp. 177–8.

³⁹ Wirral Archives: T. H. Mawson and Sons, Plan for Woodchurch, and *Report on the designs for the development of the Woodchurch estate* (1928).

⁴⁰ Bowley, *Housing and the state*, pp. 36–7.

⁴¹ Interview with J. Banton, Bradshaw Rowse and Harker, Liverpool.

Co-operative Society, and the laundry built there had further reduced the already limited sewerage capacity with the result that the existing system was able to service at most 550 new homes. In opposition to Wirral urban district council, the local authorities of Bebington, Wallasey, and Birkenhead had banded together to press for a dual system to deal with storm water and sewerage separately, and thereby protect the river Fender from pollution.⁴² Discussion between the authorities concerned continued, but the dispute with Wirral U.D.C. about sewerage arrangements in the Fender valley would have to be resolved before house-building could begin.

In Robinson's layout, a wide central avenue led from the church to the main shopping and public areas, which were situated around a rectangular 'square'. This area was planned to include banks, a post office, a community centre, and a library. Schools were sited in an educational area near the river Fender. Some 2,540 houses were planned, mostly at a density of twelve per acre and arranged in terraces of between three and eight dwellings. Each plot was allowed a frontage of 30 feet, with private gardens at the front and back of each house.

Reilly's scheme for Woodchurch was his first attempt at planning a housing estate. An early foray into domestic architecture had been a row of Regency-style cottages for Port Sunlight in 1906 with which Lever was said to have been less than satisfied.⁴³ Graphically, Reilly's plan was poorly executed, with little detail, which perhaps confirms a lack of serious intent at the outset. The layout shows a central area accommodating public buildings, with schools arranged in an educational area similar to that of Robinson's layout. To effect the communal scheme, conventional roads, apart from those leading to shopping centres, culs-de-sac, and closes, were abandoned in favour of one-way tracks around various sized 'village greens' surrounded by terraces of between three and eight houses, with some pairs of houses included 'to get around curves'. Each of the 3,057 houses was to have a small back garden and a 20-foot open frontage leading on to a narrow one-way track from which vehicular traffic was prohibited. All unused land between the greens and in the spaces where gardens converged was to be used as allotments. Pedestrian access only was envisaged to traffic-bearing roads, and footpaths were proposed for access between the greens. It is perhaps significant

⁴² *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 15 Apr. 1944.

⁴³ Shippobotham and Hubbard, *Port Sunlight*, p. 45.

that a substantial part of the hand-written notes on the plan do not relate to the layout itself but are criticisms of the municipal engineer's style of planning.

Reilly's accounts of his subsequent approach to Robinson and later to the estates committee varied with the passage of time and the audience he was addressing. In one he recounted his dislike of the engineer's scheme and his suggestion to Robinson that they draw a plan together,⁴⁴ while in another he showed his scheme to the engineer and explained that, if they co-operated, Robinson's name would be made.⁴⁵ A later version maintained that Reilly told Robinson that people would not be happy living in a garden suburb estate and that he [Reilly] would draw an alternative plan without fee.⁴⁶ Possibly the version which gives the most accurate indication of Reilly's opinion is the one in which the borough engineer's effort was labelled 'a damn bad plan'.⁴⁷ Whichever approach Reilly had used, the offer of assistance was rejected.

Having been accustomed to the compliance of both students and colleagues for much of his career, Reilly may have felt the rejection as both a personal and a professional rebuff. His determination to proceed, however, seemed strengthened, and a scheme which may have started as no more than a gesture of disapproval developed into an all-out effort to produce his own housing layout. Dismissing Robinson's rejection, Reilly approached the estates committee through the town clerk. Despite his lack of experience in planning working-class housing estates and despite that fact that it was outside his terms of appointment, Reilly reported that the estates committee was delighted to accept his offer to produce an alternative scheme for Woodchurch.⁴⁸ The somewhat unprofessional response of the estates committee may have indicated its dissatisfaction with Robinson's conventional style of planning, but perhaps

⁴⁴ Wolfe, *Reilly plan*, pp. 9–10.

⁴⁵ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 15 Apr. 1944.

⁴⁶ M. Edelman, 'Planning post-war Britain: the example of Birkenhead', *Picture Post*, 8 July 1944. Edelman's emphasis on financial considerations is unusual as it had little bearing on the outcome. Reilly would be forgoing a fee dependent on the professional scale in force at the time, but Edelman fails to mention that he was already assured of 1,000 guineas a year as planning consultant. Robinson, as a salaried employee, would not receive a fee. Reference to the financial aspect continued in the local and national press, and retrospectively in *Birkenhead 1877–1974*, published to mark the end of Birkenhead council as an independent local authority.

⁴⁷ *The Tribune*, 16 June 1944.

⁴⁸ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 4 Mar. 1944.

also anticipated the antagonism which a further rejection of Reilly's offer would bring.

Although Reilly's plan was difficult to interpret, certain elements in Birkenhead saw it as the ultimate in housing for the working class, if not a panacea for most of the social ills of the day. Labour members of the council (not usually sympathetic to visionary concepts), socialists, trade unionists, and the growing Communist Party, active in the shipyards of Birkenhead, were all in favour.⁴⁹ For them, besides alleviating a housing problem exacerbated by the war, the 'Reilly greens' redressed the balance of social inequalities of the past and matched the aspirations of the present. To some, the element of romantic Fabianism appealed at an intellectual level, while others on the left of socialism were attracted by Reilly's version of communal living. He had not promised a return to an older order, nor even proposed a viable housing scheme, but his realistic descriptions swept along those within the borough boundaries and beyond who were receptive to his ideas.

At the April council meeting both layouts were presented. Although party allegiance was clearly demonstrated, the comparative merits of the schemes were not considered. Indeed it became evident that councillors failed to comprehend either the plans before them or even the concepts which they discussed. The Conservatives were anxious to proceed with the adoption of Robinson's plan, but agreed to McVey's request that Reilly's scheme be circulated to council members and the press.⁵⁰ By admitting a hurriedly drawn sketch as an alternative to Robinson's plan, the Conservatives had created a precedent, albeit one which was later to prove advantageous to their party.

Barely a week later, details of Reilly's plan had been published in the local and national press, together with elaborate explanations of the social benefits which he alleged would accrue from their implementation. Reilly made himself available for interviews, some of which were reproduced verbatim by the *Birkenhead News* and the *Birkenhead Advertiser*. He maintained

I want to see the suburb, a stretch of green for a mile and a half, covered with cream painted houses . . . There will be many allotments. The British worker has got into the habit of digging and depending on himself for some of his food, and he wants to keep it up.

⁴⁹ *Liverpool Daily Post*, 27 May 1944.

⁵⁰ Council Minutes, 5 Apr. 1944.

Reilly had not designed the houses for the estate but had strong views about them:

The house I propose for the estate will be of the best possible type equipped with the most modern facilities from the kitchen to the bathroom, and they will contain all those conveniences for the housewife which have been devised since the war . . . they should be designed by an architect. There are many architects in the Birkenhead district who have vision and ability to design these houses.⁵¹

Reilly had long been known for concentrating on grand ideas, leaving others to work out the details,⁵² and Holford maintained that he did not heed limitations and had ‘the ability to float over them and from such an elevation they always appeared small’.⁵³ Commentators outside his circle were not so generous, and Reilly’s planning was accused of being ‘of the idealistic type which sweeps aside objections by one simple process of refusing to recognise them’.⁵⁴ Reilly’s response to such criticisms was that, although the plan for Woodchurch was not within the terms of his engagement, he had prepared it ‘voluntarily out of enthusiasm to see a new model satellite town built for Birkenhead’.⁵⁵ Predictably, some reporting was inaccurate. One enthusiastic account described Reilly as ‘the famous architect designing a village green suburb for 10,000 dock workers on Merseyside’.⁵⁶

On 29 April illustrations of sections from both plans, accompanied by rather poor artist’s impressions, appeared in the local papers, together with explanatory notes (Figs 6 and 7). Readers were invited to choose the ‘new Woodchurch’ and to act as referees between Reilly and Robinson. When the council debate resumed on 3 May, some members expressed disquiet at the way in which the press had represented the divisions within the council, and a Conservative member proposed a further adjournment as press comment suggested the matter was being rushed. McVey dismissed the idea of further adjournment and affirmed that Labour would support the Reilly plan on any future date. He opined that ‘feeling in the town’ was in favour of the alternative scheme but, when questioned, could not explain how he had arrived at this conclusion. He moved that

⁵¹ *Daily Mail*, 14 Apr. 1944.

⁵² *The Leader*, 22 Sept. 1945, p. 15.

⁵³ *Architectural Review*, May 1948, p. 181.

⁵⁴ *Post Magazine and Insurance Monitor*, 8 Jan. 1944.

⁵⁵ *Birkenhead News*, 15 Apr. 1944.

⁵⁶ *Daily Mail*, 14 Apr. 1944.

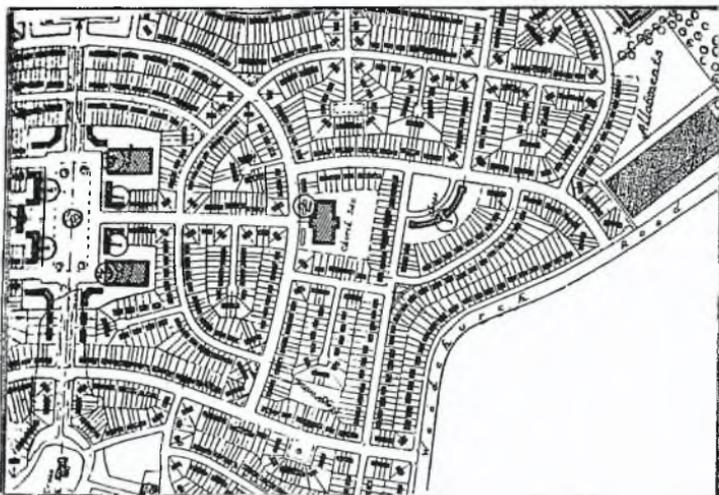


FIGURE 6 Section from B. Robinson's Plan for Woodchurch, February 1944.

both plans be forwarded to the Ministry of Health or that a ministry expert should assist the decision-making. The Conservative leader, Alderman G. Prentice, maintained that the council was capable of making a decision without outside help and reminded the chamber that Robinson's plan could have easily been forced through at the April meeting but that the decision had been postponed in deference to Labour councillors. Deploring the fact that support for Reilly's plan had now assumed political connotations, he stated that his party was not prepared to approve the alternative layout, and did not regard Reilly as 'a great international expert' or an 'expert on modern house layout planning'.⁵⁷ The decision to adopt a layout was again postponed and a further meeting arranged for 26 May. The debate closed with a request from the mayor, Conservative Alderman T. H. Herron, that an important question should not be treated 'as though it were a prize' by both council and press; he also remarked that he looked to the press to ensure that details of the plans were understood.⁵⁸ How this was to be achieved was not

⁵⁷ Council Minutes, 3 May 1944.

⁵⁸ *Birkenhead News*, 6 May 1944.

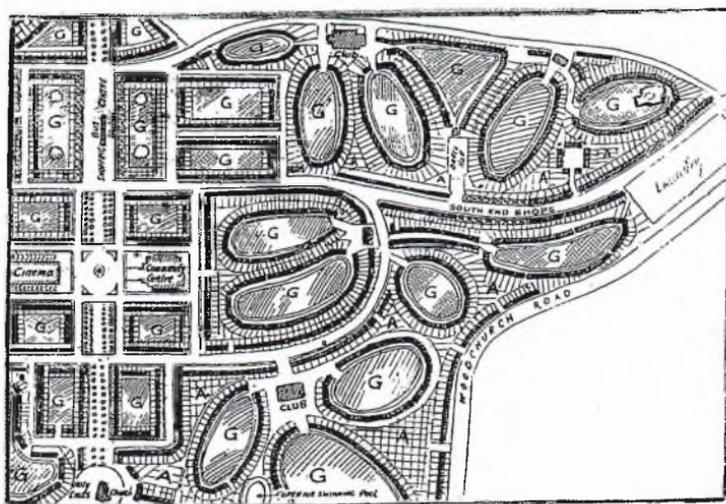


FIGURE 7 Section from Professor C. H. Reilly's Plan for Woodchurch, April 1944.

discussed, but the Labour councillor M. Halligan suggested that the plans should be exhibited on church notice boards.⁵⁹

In the weeks leading up to the meeting, Reilly promoted his layout vigorously and just as vigorously censured both the borough engineer's effort and the lifestyle which he alleged the garden suburb layout dictated. Indeed the term 'suburban', when used by Reilly and his supporters, became synonymous with 'inferior'. Anomalies had occurred in reporting the number of houses planned, the absence or presence of front gardens, and the size of communal frontages. There was also concern that the development of new housing on former agricultural land was taking precedence over rebuilding the bombed areas nearer the town centre. Extensive interviews with the press gave Reilly the opportunity to demonstrate his confidence that his alternative scheme would be adopted and to clarify the misconceptions which had been raised in press reports, as well as indicating how he envisaged his development:

I want Woodchurch to be a compact town, with no frayed edges spoiling the country round it. I want the Upton by-pass to be one boundary of it

⁵⁹ Council Minutes, 3 May 1944.

and to exchange land on the Upton side of it for other land to fill up the west boundary of my plan, so that a road with houses on one side of it only and looking out into the country, as at Hilversum in Holland, can encircle the whole little town, like a wall, and leave it and the country tidy.⁶⁰

The focus of the publicity, however, lay in a meeting organized by the Birkenhead trades council to be held in the town hall on 23 May. Although advertised as an opportunity for the ratepayers of Birkenhead to listen to explanations of both proposals for Woodchurch, Reilly was billed as the speaker.⁶¹ Robinson was invited but was unable to attend,⁶² maintaining that his position restricted any comment he may have wished to make on council business under consideration.⁶³ Some Conservative councillors became a little more active prior to the town hall meeting and arranged ward meetings to gauge the sympathies of the ratepayers.⁶⁴ Although these meetings were poorly attended, the lack of support was interpreted by their organizers as a firm belief on the part of the electorate in the ability of their representatives to make the appropriate choice of layout.

As the publicity escalated beyond the borough boundaries, Reilly's plan was heralded by some sections of the national press as the planning of the future.⁶⁵ Architectural merits within both proposals were subordinated as the controversy acquired national attention and became a test case of post-war rehousing plans. A cross-section of the national press followed events closely, with comment depending on their political tendencies:

Details of the controversy have been published by the 'Daily Mail', 'News Chronicle', 'Daily Mirror', and the 'London Evening Standard'. The last named went as far to suggest that Birkenhead was giving an 'excellent example of democracy at work'. It even stresses the point that 'every city should do as Birkenhead is doing.'⁶⁶

The *London Evening Standard* had indeed singled out Birkenhead for recognition, with an editorial article supporting the Reilly plan, but whether its readers knew the location of Birkenhead is a matter for conjecture: 'The whole of England should watch Birkenhead's

⁶⁰ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 24 May 1944.

⁶¹ Reilly Papers.

⁶² *Birkenhead News*, 20 May 1944.

⁶³ *Birkenhead News*, 24 May 1944.

⁶⁴ *Birkenhead News*, 20 May 1944.

⁶⁵ *London Evening Standard*, 10 May 1944.

⁶⁶ *Birkenhead News*, 20 May 1944.

decision . . . London should certainly watch, and if Birkenhead shows herself daring we would not be too proud to follow.⁶⁷

The town hall meeting was on the whole well attended and the audience was left in no doubt as to where the sympathies of the organizers lay.⁶⁸ Little was said by way of explanation of Robinson's scheme, but Reilly condemned the garden suburb concept, which he held responsible for numerous social problems as well as 'for the mentality it will create if translated into bricks and mortar'.⁶⁹ The following extracts from Reilly's notes are given at length so that his invective is not diluted.

Why was there such a contempt with novelists for suburbia? It was because it bred a narrowness of outlook, in which the team spirit was not developed. It lacked the intellectual development which came from sharpening one's wits . . . allowing everyone to play with his own toy castle had produced an anti-social spirit. The great growth of the slow moving, prejudiced suburban mind during the first half of the present century had led us into being humbugged by Germany.⁷⁰

The vicious attack on Robinson's profession, and by implication on Robinson himself, was thinly veiled as his ability was questioned:

Without being in any way personal, as an architect, I feel the layout of houses for human habitation is not in the first place an engineer's job. The engineer's training in steel construction in drains and such like inhuman things does not fit him for it. It is not humane enough. The architect however is always thinking in terms of human lives. He, I suggest, should do the planning and the engineer keep him straight on the mechanical side.⁷¹

Reilly countered probing questions concerning his scheme with criticism of the engineer's plan and maintained that as far as he was concerned the controversy was not just a matter of one set of plans against another; it was one set of principles of living against another.⁷² Reilly promoted his plan by allowing people to picture the idealistic way of life which it would sustain and the social benefits which would accrue from it. The realities of building an

⁶⁷ *London Evening Standard*, 10 May 1944.

⁶⁸ Potter, 'Woodchurch controversy' (thesis), p. 138.

⁶⁹ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 7 May 1944.

⁷⁰ *Liverpool Daily Post*, 24 May 1944.

⁷¹ *Birkenhead News*, 24 May 1944.

⁷² *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 7 May 1944.

experimental scheme were ignored. It is not clear whether Reilly failed to appreciate the problems that might arise, or whether, as was his wont, he chose to ignore them.⁷³ He conjured for his audience the bonhomie of life around the greens where happy housewives worked in 'prefabricated kitchens that had been dropped into the houses'. He assured his listeners that bus fares would be included in the rents, that a system of district heating could be installed, and that no child would walk more than half a mile to school.⁷⁴

Reilly took advantage of the optimism of his audience and told them what they wanted to hear. Many who attended the meeting assumed that the plans for the houses, nurseries, swimming pool, and cinemas were already completed, and this particular Utopia would miraculously appear at the end of the war. No reference was made to the cost of these elaborate schemes and neither Reilly nor his supporters ensured that the audience understood that in reality all that existed was a rough sketch of a layout. The meeting passed a resolution in favour of adopting Reilly's plan,⁷⁵ and the following day Reilly and his supporters celebrated their optimism through the columns of the press by reiterating the more abstract social benefits which would attach to his plan for communal living.⁷⁶

During the eagerly anticipated council meeting on 26 May members of both parties appeared to be more conversant with aspects of the layouts, and each scheme was criticized by supporters of the other. Reilly's plan was attacked for the inclusion of eight community centres, which Conservatives labelled 'public-houses', and the narrow tracks around the greens which, when blocked with vehicular traffic, would be unsafe for children; besides, existing by-laws did not permit the proposed width of the tracks. Other criticisms concerned the upkeep of greens and open frontages, and restricted access for emergency vehicles.

Although Robinson's layout was censured for having 500 houses fewer than Reilly's, in effect all other criticism was directed at the garden suburb concept. The Labour alderman H. G. F. Dawson dismissed the idea of front gardens on the grounds that the working

⁷³ *Post Magazine and Insurance Monitor*, 8 Jan. 1944. There is no evidence that Reilly or his assistant N. J. Aslan had undertaken or instigated any form of investigation into potential social problems, or indeed that they ever visited the Woodchurch site.

⁷⁴ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 24 Apr. 1944.

⁷⁵ *Liverpool Daily Post*, 24 May 1944.

⁷⁶ *Birkenhead News*, 24 May 1944.

man preferred to sit in his back garden and read his paper. The education committee criticized both plans as far as provision for schools and playgrounds was concerned. Personal and professional criticism of Reilly was included as a preamble to political differences. He was called a 'dreamer' for producing a plan 'still in embryo', and accused of neglecting the job for which he had been appointed. The political wrangling was spiced with emotional outbursts about men returning from the forces, and allusions to class differences. The situation in Birkenhead thus took on some elements of farce from which no political party emerged unscathed. Labour was accused of manipulation and stage-managing Reilly's propaganda. It retaliated by hinting at collusion between Reilly's opponents and speculative builders, and by suggesting that the estates committee had postponed contacting the Royal Institute of British Architects to recommend an architect to design the houses for Robinson's layout because it was afraid that the Institute would suggest Reilly.⁷⁷

Voting at the conclusion of the debate followed party lines, despite denials by both parties that politics had affected their attitudes. Robinson's plan was thus adopted and Labour's plea for a plebiscite was rejected. Reilly and the Labour members of the council vacated the chamber before the vote was taken to forward the approved layout to the regional planning authority and to ask the R.I.B.A. to recommend an architect for the houses.⁷⁸ Outside the chamber, recriminations and threats followed as Reilly and his supporters refused to admit defeat. Reilly blamed his failure on others, beginning with the borough council, which he accused of making itself 'the laughing stock of the whole country'.⁷⁹ Although he had previously confined his professional and personal criticism to Robinson, he now included those who had spoken against him or his plan in debate. While emphasizing the social advantages of his layout, he attempted to elicit sympathy for the working class. He spoke of 'this new little town [where] I was trying to give the poor something what [*sic*] the rich families enjoy at the moment'.⁸⁰

Reilly threatened to abandon long-term planning for the borough,⁸¹ but after a few days' reflection he announced that he had

⁷⁷ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 31 May 1944.

⁷⁸ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 31 May 1944.

⁷⁹ *News Chronicle*, 27 May 1944.

⁸⁰ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 31 May 1944.

⁸¹ *Liverpool Daily Post*, 27 May 1944.

decided instead to complete the task for which he had been engaged.⁸² He was frustrated but undeterred, and by this time it was not just a scheme for a housing estate that was being contested. Support for the plan had, by judicious promulgation of the social benefits of communal living, become support for a specific lifestyle. It was also a focus for left-wing publications. National papers which took up the story of the controversy frequently misled their readers with imaginative interpretations of communal living. They also argued that the people of Birkenhead were attempting to override an unpopular decision taken by the council and instead choose the housing scheme they themselves preferred. Support for the Reilly plan had become confused with support for the method of reaching a decision; what was being applauded was the spirit of the people who dared oppose their elected representatives, not the plan itself.

The local press commented on the deteriorating political situation:

The party truce which was declared with such high sounding avowal in the early days of the war has degenerated into an utter fiasco, wholly dormant in spirit if not in letter, and with not enough life left in it to survive the controversy which needs to be handled without prejudice.⁸³

The council meeting was postponed in June as it coincided with news of the D-Day landings,⁸⁴ but the planning debate continued outside the chamber, with a meeting on 20 June arranged by the Communist Party, where support for Reilly's scheme was confirmed.⁸⁵ In the hiatus following the Normandy landings, Labour members adopted an aggressive attitude which was carried into the July council meeting when McVey complained that the Conservative Party, particularly councillors who had not been before the electors for at least six years, no longer represented public opinion in Birkenhead. He also claimed that his party was supported by the local press and intended to ask the ministry to allow an election to decide the issue. The mayor dismissed Reilly's plan as a mere freehand drawing which no one could follow,⁸⁶ while the Labour councillor Melville reminded the chamber, somewhat inaccurately,

⁸² *Sunday Pictorial*, 28 May 1944.

⁸³ *Birkenhead News*, 6 May 1944.

⁸⁴ *Birkenhead News*, 10 June 1944.

⁸⁵ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 24 June 1944.

⁸⁶ *Birkenhead Advertiser*, 8 July 1944.

that the whole country was waiting to see if Birkenhead was courageous enough to adopt Reilly's plan; if it did, he averred, a hundred other towns would follow Birkenhead's lead.⁸⁷ McVey denounced the so-called truce and, with his supporters, left the chamber when his proposal for an inquiry was defeated.⁸⁸ During the summer recess, an article by Maurice Edelman in *Picture Post* compared the two plans and strongly favoured that of Reilly; for emphasis it was illustrated with photographs of end-of-term activities at a public school juxtaposed with those of residents of run-down areas of Birkenhead.⁸⁹ A similar article headed 'Community versus segregation' followed in the *Architects Journal*.⁹⁰

Reilly revised his plan in September 1944.⁹¹ Although never put before the council, it was undoubtedly produced to assist Labour's attempt to reverse the decision in favour of Robinson's layout. It shows little improvement in presentation over Reilly's earlier effort but a marked increase in the number of houses sited conventionally facing on to roads. Meanwhile the R.I.B.A. had recommended Herbert J. Rowse as architect of the houses for Robinson's plan. He had designed some of the finest non-domestic buildings in the Merseyside area,⁹² and had been responsible for an estate of working-class houses at Rainhill outside Liverpool which had been highly commended by Reilly, his former mentor.⁹³ Living and practising locally, he was highly respected in architectural circles in Liverpool, and his up-to-date thinking and technological knowledge were firmly based on established traditions.

At the October council meeting, Labour appeared somewhat resigned to the adoption of Robinson's plan, but raised a number of objections to the appointment of Rowse and the terms of his employment, echoing those tabled at an earlier meeting of the estates committee.⁹⁴ At this stage objections were merely a delaying tactic, and speakers from both parties increasingly adopted a cavalier

⁸⁷ *Upton and Moreton Advertiser*, 8 July 1944. This was exaggeration in the heat of political debate. Dudley, Bilston, and the Miles Aircraft Company of Reading later showed interest in adaptations of the 'village greens' scheme.

⁸⁸ *Birkenhead News*, 27 Sept. 1944.

⁸⁹ *Picture Post*, 8 July 1944.

⁹⁰ *Architects Journal*, 3 Aug. 1944.

⁹¹ Wirral Archives: C. H. Reilly, Plan for Woodchurch, Sept. 1944.

⁹² D. Bradshaw, 'Obituary', *R.I.B.A. Journal*, Oct. 1963, p. 421.

⁹³ C. H. Reilly, 'Some younger architects of today', *Building*, Dec. 1930, p. 524.

⁹⁴ Council Minutes (Estates), 9 Sept. 1944.

attitude towards the situation.⁹⁵ Attending the November estates committee meeting, Rowse explained that he had encountered difficulties in designing houses for Robinson's plan and, as a result, he recommended a layout on new lines. The full impact of this *coup de grace* was not minuted, but the committee resolved to supply copies of the new plan to members of the council and Professor Reilly, and to inform the Ministry of Health that a further layout was under consideration.⁹⁶ The 'difficulties' encountered by Rowse are not recorded.⁹⁷

Rowse's plan was possibly more conventional than adventurous but had enough innovative features to make it attractive to Labour members, with the further advantage of a resemblance in some external features of the houses to those at Port Sunlight.⁹⁸ The clearly drafted plan could be understood by the layman and did not require elaboration from the architect. Rowse's professionalism was an intervention to be welcomed, and acceptance of the layout meant that site preparation could proceed. The contrast between his presentation and working methods and Reilly's was readily apparent. Reilly's flawed sketch, requiring a great deal of work by others to turn it into a viable proposition, and Robinson's conventional layout, lacking house designs, were both superseded by a superior plan, well thought out in all details. Predictably, the Conservatives were accused of 'having a change of heart' at the December council meeting, where the opposition facetiously suggested a collaboration of all three planners. A 'period of quiet' was requested for the estates committee, but it is not clear whether Labour responded to this appeal or was subdued, rather, by the unexpected turn of events.⁹⁹ The meeting was relatively uneventful when compared with those of the preceding months, and it is remarkable that Labour members of the council accepted Rowse's plan with such little opposition.

⁹⁵ Council Minutes, 25 Oct. 1944.

⁹⁶ Council Minutes (Estates), 27 Nov. 1944. Ironically, the November issue of *The Builder* published an article detailing Robinson's approved plan and photographs of a model constructed by members of his department: 24 Nov. 1944, pp. 408-9.

⁹⁷ H. J. Rowse, 'Engineer and architect', *R.I.B.A. Journal*, Jan. 1944, p. 56. Although Rowse advocated co-operation between the professions, acceptance of his layout eliminated the problem of working for the borough engineer and established the architect's supremacy.

⁹⁸ H. J. Rowse, Plan for Woodchurch, deposited with Bradshaw Rowse and Harker, Liverpool.

⁹⁹ *Birkenhead News*, 9 Dec. 1944.

It was not until March 1945 that Woodchurch again became the subject of debate. Both parties, anxious to avoid a repetition of the previous year's fiasco, were inclined to placate their opponents rather than antagonize them. Even though they blamed each other for delays, the time was approaching when house-building could proceed, and neither party wished to be accused of preventing progress.¹⁰⁰ McVey and his associates failed to take advantage of a situation with the potential at least to embarrass, if not discredit, Prentice and his colleagues. It was pointed out, however, that although the Conservatives had objected to Reilly's layout because it was outside his terms of appointment, they were now supporting a plan by an architect who had not been engaged for the purpose. Labour wished to submit all three plans to the Ministry of Health and indicated willingness to accept a ministerial decision, but the Conservatives rejected this course of action. Councillor Short, for the Conservatives, maintained that his party had first chosen the better of two plans and now were choosing the best of three.¹⁰¹ The vote rescinded the earlier decision to adopt Robinson's layout and it was resolved to forward the Rowse plan to the ministry for approval.

Local press coverage declined drastically in the months following council approval of the Rowse layout, while the interest of the national press waned when it became apparent there would be no public challenge to the method of approving a plan for Woodchurch. Thereafter Labour councillors seemed to concentrate their energies on the forthcoming elections. Subsequently only minor technical points regarding the Woodchurch estate were discussed in council meetings. In effect the controversy was over. Agreement was reached between the interested local authorities to install the dual system of drainage in the Fender valley and work on roads, sewers, and drains began in 1946. The first occupants moved into their new homes in 1947, the same year in which Reilly's *Outline plan for Birkenhead* was published. It included his revised layout for Woodchurch, together with an explanation of the expected social benefits as well as reference to the controversy.¹⁰²

Although the 'Reilly greens' did not come to fruition in Birkenhead, the term passed into architectural history as Reilly's friends

¹⁰⁰ Council Minutes, 3 Jan. 1945.

¹⁰¹ *Birkenhead News*, 10 Mar. 1945.

¹⁰² C. H. Reilly and N. J. Aslan, *Outline plan for the county borough of Birkenhead* (Birkenhead, 1947), pp. 93-6.

and colleagues continued to support and publicize the concept. Clough Williams Ellis defended Reilly's conception of communal life in the *Estates Gazette*,¹⁰³ while Lewis Silkin, the minister for Town and Country Planning, was persuaded to allow the model-making unit of the ministry to produce a scale model of three greens which was exhibited 'as propaganda up and down the country'.¹⁰⁴ The *Liverpool Echo* inadvertently, or perhaps intentionally, endowed the model, and thereby the concept, with officially approved status by advertising the exhibition at the School of Architecture in Liverpool as the 'Government's Model of [a] "Reilly Green" Community'.¹⁰⁵ After Reilly's death in 1948 his son-in-law, Derek Bridgewater, designed a layout for Dudley urban district council, based on the 'village greens' scheme, but there was little similarity with Reilly's drawings for Woodchurch.¹⁰⁶ Dudley council had the foresight to engage Professor Charles Simey and Professor Charles Booth of Liverpool University to advise on the social problems which would inevitably arise from a plan based on communal living.

In 1950 the Woodchurch estate was recognized by the Ministry of Health as one of the best designed in the north-west region. By the time of the coronation celebrations in 1953, when the key to the 1,000th house completed was ceremonially handed to the tenant by Percy Collick, M.P. for Birkenhead, housing officials from many parts of the country had visited the area to examine both the layout and the innovative features of house design. Rowse, however, had withdrawn from the contract.¹⁰⁷ It is believed that he was unwilling to revise his plan to include flats and maisonettes in the later phases of the estate as the council required.¹⁰⁸ The relative brevity with which these events were reported by the local papers contrasted sharply with their extensive coverage of the heated debate in 1944.

After the war, changes in local authority policies ensured that by engaging a full-time architect as chief officer, councils not only fulfilled the requirements of the Ministry of Health but enjoyed financial and administrative benefits as well as the compliance of their own employee. By 1952 T. A. Brittain was firmly established as

¹⁰³ *Estates Gazette*, 23 Aug. 1947.

¹⁰⁴ *Building*, Oct. 1945, p. 318; *The Listener*, 15 July 1948, p. 94.

¹⁰⁵ *Liverpool Echo*, 13 May 1948.

¹⁰⁶ *R.I.B.A. Journal*, 29 June 1948.

¹⁰⁷ *Liverpool Daily Post*, 10 July 1953.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with J. Banton, Bradshaw Rowse and Harker, Liverpool.

borough architect in Birkenhead. He prepared his own plans for the remainder of the estate, which became the largest in Birkenhead, intending to include a few blocks of dwellings designed by Rowse in order to 'blur the transition'.¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately the transition is clearly evident as the earlier high standard of building was not maintained. Dwellings were built to a higher density, and cheaper standardized designs were adopted to cope with escalating demands for housing. This accommodation has not proved popular and all the maisonettes and high-rise flats built in the later phases have now been demolished.¹¹⁰

At the time when Rowse withdrew from the contract, his design for Woodchurch would have been considered outmoded by many members of the architectural and planning professions, but residents of the estate, unaffected by professional opinion, were and still are appreciative of their attractive, well built homes. Despite some *ad hoc* improvements, the earlier parts of the estate have survived in their present condition because of the high standard of Rowse's professionalism, his insistence on good quality materials, and his attention to detail at the outset. Events and time have proved that he designed 'good houses in the English tradition until it is known how to build better ones'.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ *Liverpool Daily Post*, 10 July 1953.

¹¹⁰ *Woodchurch: a Wirral schools' project* (copy in Woodchurch library, Birkenhead).

¹¹¹ D. Bradshaw, 'Obituary', *R.I.B.A. Journal*, Oct. 1963, p. 42.

