WITH REFERENCE TO THE EXPERIENCES OF MILTON KEYNES, DO MELVIN WEBBER’S THEORIES OF ‘NON-PLACE URBAN REALM’ REPRESENT A Viable APPROACH FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY EXPANSION?

Milton Keynes is Britain’s most recent, and largest, post-war new town. Its architects claim that Melvin Webber’s theory of ‘non-place urban realm’ was instrumental in the town’s planning, calling Webber the true ‘father of Milton Keynes’1. Against today’s backdrop of online-social networking, low-cost flights and a rising proportion of one-person households, this essay explores concepts of place and non-place, and, through analysis of the successes and failures of Milton Keynes, seeks to determine how valid a framework of ‘non-place’ is in fostering true urbanity. It examines whether Webber’s theories were misinterpreted at Milton Keynes, some of the wider, pragmatic issues of establishing new towns, and any weaknesses within the theory itself, brief contrasting with the experiences of the new town of Almere in the Netherlands, constructed around a different urban theory. Finally, it identifies some techniques which might be employed to address problems of atomisation resulting from today’s information-rich society.

FRAMING NON-PLACE

Urban theorist Melvin Webber coined the expression ‘non-place urban realm’ in his essay The Urban Place and the Non-place Urban Realm in 19672. The term ‘non-place’ carries, in itself, to many, pejorative connotations - in the same way that the words: ‘entity’ and ‘non-entity’ might. Non-place implies an absence, or even a denial, of physical place, in the phenomenological senses described by Heidegger and a rejection of the methodology human-kind has traditionally employed to establish ‘places’.

Marc Augé frames the opposition: “‘place’... refers to an event (which has taken place), a myth (said to have taken place) or a history (high places)3. If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place”4. Consequently planners’ understanding of towns and cities has been grounded on the principle of ‘urban’ being distinct from the ‘rural’ - a ‘physically separate unit that is visually identifiable from the air’5.

Webber presented the idea of non-place as settlement reliant on communication, transport and information flows. “The history of city growth, in essence, is the story of man’s eager search for ease of human interaction. Our large modern urban nodes are, in their very nature, massive communications systems”6.

He observed how density offered by cities and towns was historically attractive because it afforded its inhabitants ‘economies of urbanisation’ - business was facilitated via face-to-face contact. With the advent of mass-media and technological advances in communication – both physical, in the form of the automobile, and virtual – telephone and fax, Webber believed that urbanity should no longer be defined by the spatial arrangement of buildings, but by the level of information flow. The acceleration of this trend is amplified yet by the seemingly relentless advance of specialisation.

It is now becoming apparent that it is the accessibility rather than the propinquity aspect of “place” that is the necessary condition. As accessibility becomes further freed from propinquity, cohabitation of a territorial place [...] is becoming less important to the maintenance of social communities. [...] Thus, urbanity is no longer the exclusive trait of the city dweller; the suburbanite and the exurbanite are among the most urbane of men; increasingly the farmers themselves are participating in the urban life of the world7.

4 Ibid, p.77-78.
5 Webber, p.81.
6 Ibid, p.86.
7 Ibid,p.85.
10 Augé, p.3.
The Significance Of Non-place & New Towns

Webber’s work is of relevance today for two prime reasons. Firstly, the pressure to increase the supply of new housing, driven by under-supply since the 1980s and by immigration from EU expansion. Secondly, the increase in the volume of non-face-to-face communication. Webber was uncannily prescient — writing back in the late 1960s: ‘Today, the man who does not participate in such spatially extensive communities is the uncommon one’ being an apt summary of the facebook-myspace online social-networking generation. Simultaneously, considering the wider aspects of non-place, we observe that our existing ‘places’ are becoming increasingly ‘anonimised’ and therefore, closer to non-places through the cookie-cutter expansion of the standard template of nationwide, multi-national chain retail stores.

Whilst there is still a focus on increasing densities within Britain’s existing urban fabric, there remains a strong desire, particularly amongst those with families, to move out of city centres. ‘Polls show that 80% of Britons want to live in country towns and villages’, a statistic which appears to approximately tally with the data from a 2002 RICS survey (table 1).

Consequently, the Government is seeking to increase annual house-building from about 160,000 to 200,000 additional homes per year by 2016. Currently 84% of the population of England lives in suburban areas. This suggests that more new towns will be needed, and this presents planners with issues of ‘non-place’, given that the sites of these new towns may not be imbued with historical or geographical significance, and certainly will only have attained limited cultural attributes.

Milton Keynes and the Application of Webber’s Theories

We are fortunate to have a built entity founded on Webber’s theories of a non-place urban realm to analyse: Milton Keynes, a ‘new town’ 75 kilometres North West of London (figures 2 and 3). In 1967, the Ministry of Housing and Local Governments called for a new town to accommodate 150,000 low to middle-income Londoners over a period of 20 years. The site covers 9,000 hectares, and the creation of Milton Keynes combined the existing towns of Bletchley, Wolverton and Stony Stratford and eleven villages. The combined population of the area prior to the instigation of the master plan was c.40,000 people.

Milton Keynes is a strictly-zoned, low-rise (the original guidance stated that no building should be higher than the tallest tree), car-based new town. In a change from UK tradition, the plan is a non-hierarchical, devolved, irregular urban grid of 1 kilometre squares laid over an ostensibly agrarian landscape, rather than the radial pattern found in older settlements. It is greened courtesy of its location, the flood-plains of the River Ouse, giving rise to 1,750 hectares of linear parks, equivalent to almost 20% of the total master plan area.

Similar to the grid system of Los Angeles, but more sinuous (the Milton Keynes Development Corporation - MKDC - believed this to be more organic and naturalistic than LA’s strict rectilinear system) the road network was designed to ‘avoid congestion at focal points (as there are no focal points)’ according to Steer Eiler Rasmussen. Milton Keynes was designed before the oil crisis of 1973 as ‘the city of the car’. The grid roads could be the most enjoyable part of the city—our ‘Venice canals’ suggested Derek Walker, Milton Keynes’s chief architect, seemingly without a trace of irony.

Initially, a housing density of 24-30 houses per hectare was targeted, falling to 15 per hectare at later phases of the planning (table 2). The grid was sized at 1 kilometre squares so that residents would never have to walk too far to minibuses, which the planners envisaged would provide mobility for non-car users.

---

11 Webber, p.109.
15 Walker, p.5.
20 Bishop, p. 9.
21 Bendixson and Platt, p.2.
The Central Business District (CBD) is formed around a more regular, straight grid, in order to facilitate the provision of the higher density building located there, including the acclaimed, naturally-lit 'The Centre MK' shopping mall, which took its inspiration from Milan’s Galleria. Central Milton Keynes was not intended to act as a town centre, but as a business and shopping centre that supplemented local district centres within most grid squares. Nonetheless, the intention was to create a real city, not a dormitory town.\(^2^\)

The Milton Keynes Development Plan calls for residential areas to be designed with a mix of houses built around primary school catchments. Neighbourhoods should offer a choice in size, density, tenure and price of home. The social philosophy is one which believes that a heterogeneous mix of people locally promotes social understanding [...] almost all layouts are deep, meandering, curvilinear arrangements of dwellings grouped around culs-de-sac.\(^2^\)

Each of the neighbourhoods was to accommodate around 5,000 people.\(^2^\) The intention of the planners was for overlapping catchment areas and activity centres, as shown diagrammatically in Figure 5. Milton Keynes had some of the best practises from across Europe working for it, including Norman Foster, Henning Larsen, Ted Cullinan, Colin Lucas and Miller, MacCormac and Jamieson.\(^2^\) Richard Rogers had to pull out owing to the win of the Pompidou Centre commission.

Although the master plan for Milton Keynes was prepared by Llewellyn-Davies in 1970, Melvin Webber was an 'urban society' consultant to their team. Derek Walker said:

Many of us who worked on the architecture and planning of Milton Keynes were educated in the United States at a time when the impact of Webber's work was greatest. ...Webber's ideas of a community based on voluntary association rather than propinquity are fundamental to the thinking behind the Plan – he could claim more than anyone to be the father of Milton Keynes.\(^2^\)

---


26 Walker, p.8.


28 Bendixson & Platt, p.62.
Figure 5: The Plan for Milton Keynes, 1970

32 Bendixson & Platt, p.56.
Milton Keynes & The Misinterpretation of Non-Place

Since its inception, Milton Keynes has been the subject of countless jokes, from snipes at its concrete cows and roundabouts to its inability to secure ‘city’ status. ‘Why does Milton Keynes not feel like a city, even though, on paper, it has everything, a large and successful shopping centre, restaurants, pubs, entertainments, parks, a street market – and nearly 150,000 people?’ asks Bill Hillier in the Architect’s Journal. The two things that Milton Keynes is most often said to lack are a local sense of place and the sense of the urban whole.

In assessing some of the problems that have affected Milton Keynes in attempting to create a non-place urban realm, we can identify a number of factors which are not directly linked to Webber’s theories. Namely:

1. The misapplication or misinterpretation of Webber’s thinking in the design of the overall plan for Milton Keynes;
2. Build quality / technical issues, associated both with the speed of construction and the unfamiliarity with new building techniques and materials; and
3. A see-sawing between stark modernism and neo-vernacular romanticism in both typologies and materials, again linked to the speed of development.

Addressing these points consecutively, the most noticeable rejection of Webber’s theory is the overall plan of Milton Keynes – it appears as a sharply delineated town built in a green belt, on a wavy grid system, heavily zoned between retail, office and residential, with token local shops serving each residential community. This is in stark contrast to Webber’s call for blurred boundaries. The network of roads, necessary for rapid automobile communication, carves up the communities (see figure 5).

While paying lip-service to Webber as the “father of Milton Keynes”, Derek Walker, its first chief architect and planner, promptly set out to build a scaled-down version of the sort of city – urban, visual, monumental – that Webber had shown to be both obsolete and irrelevant.

Indeed, when reading Walker’s book on Milton Keynes, you cannot fail to notice the text is littered with images of celebrated European places – from the Royal Crescent in Bath, to Haussmann’s plan of Paris, to Rome, and London. The result is pastiche, such as the central boulevard lined with London plane trees designed to look as though, in days gone by, a tram track once travelled down it (figure 8).

Communications were hampered by the skyrocketing cost of operating the dial-a-bus service owing to the fuel crisis, leaving those without access to, or the funds to run, effectively stranded within their neighbourhood islands. ‘For those with a car and the money to afford to run it, Milton Keynes is certainly an easy place to move about in […] However, for those without a car, life can be very restricted indeed. The public transport system has not only failed to provide the degree of service hoped for, it is virtually non-existent.

It appears that despite Webber’s teachings, Walker and the other architects working at Milton Keynes found it difficult to shake of the burden of precedent and aesthetics.

The visual paradigm is the prevailing condition in city planning from the idealised towns of the Renaissance to the Functionalist principles that reflect the “hygiene of the optical” […] the contemporary city is more and more “the city of the eye”, detached from the body by rapid motorised movement.

---

24 Ibid, p.43.
26 Opher and Bird, p.5.
28 Bendixson & Platt, p.189.
29 Mars, p.25.
Turning to build quality, at the outset, the majority of the architects working for MKDC were fiercely Modern – stark rectilinear volumes, flat roofs, using new materials. An example is Bean Hill, one of Norman Foster’s earliest projects, which was a flat roofed terraced construction. At the time, contractors were still struggling with how to deliver flat roofs that didn’t leak. Consequently, Bean Hill has gone on to be logged as one of Milton Keynes’s ‘heroic failures’. [41] It consists of single-storey terraced houses clad in profiled metal sheets which have suffered the indignity of added pitched roofs following early problems of water penetration 42 (figure 10). Netherfield, with its terraces up to a kilometre long (figure 11), is widely regarded by critics as Milton Keynes’s most significant failure, both socially and architecturally, including by Walker himself 43.

A contributing factor to the low initial build quality was the speed of construction that the planners were tasked with. This necessitated central, top-down planning, with little scope for organic feedback into the model, and thus Walker and his team were obliged to rely upon a cut and paste technique using spatial models from other towns. MKDC called for 3,000 new homes to be produced each year from a standing start 44. Walker himself admitted: ‘Smaller groups of houses, about 120 at a time, is a nicer way to design, but there was no alternative at the start’ 45. As a result of new forms, new materials and low quality delivery, in the mid 1970s there was a sea-change from ultra-modernism to neo-vernacular, a post-modernism typology. Pitched roofs and brick were back.

This reversion to romanticism and more familiar housing typology and materiality reflected:

- the over-riding trend [...] for architects and their patrons to seek refuge in nostalgia. Faced with the public outcry from the last 20 years [1968-88] [...] architects all over the world have now come to believe that a vernacular image is the only viable solution. Gabled roofs, windows with shutters, wood and brick predominate, and the results are tremendously popular. Their gentility and folkiness correspond to the ideal of a house. 46.

An example of such work was Neath Hill, striving for village imagery, complete with clock tower, built between 1975 and 1979 (figure 12). These neo-vernacular houses, within their kilometre square wavy grids, disconnected from other grid elements by the road network, helped entrench a very narrow form of communication. A problem with such pastiche housing is that it serves to ‘pre-announce’ its occupants, the house being, as noted by Thorstein Veblen in The Theory of the Leisure Class, one of the ultimate acts of conspicuous consumption.

Therefore, in analysing the mistakes that the architects and planners made in implementing Webber’s vision of a non-place urban realm in building Milton Keynes, it could be said that the speed and radicalism of the programme was too much for the general public to adopt. The shock of the new was too great. Perhaps acceptance might have been more widespread had new forms and typologies been introduced using familiar material? ‘If [Bean Hill] had been built in brick [instead of profiled metal], as first envisaged, people would not have reacted against it’ 47 said Walker. Alternatively, new materials could have been employed in conjunction with familiar housing shapes, a technique employed by MVRDV in The Hague, for example (figure 14).

Analysis of private housing stock for sale today [in Milton Keynes] shows that they share similar configurations, and their layouts are deep, tree-lined and zoned [...] Milton Keynes houses indicate status and purchasing power. Etiquette demands, where money allows, that circulation be separated from rooms and that groups of rooms be insulated from each other 48 [...] Private houses in Milton Keynes seem designed to insulate family members from one another 49.

41 Owens, p.31.
43 Owens, p.31.
44 Derek Walker interview with Owens, p. 31.
45 Colquhoun and Fauset, p. 18.
46 Walker, p.32.
47 Hanson, p.36.
Above all, it seems that the planners themselves struggled to entirely free themselves of their preconceptions about urbanity and place, and the enshrining of physical objects; in other words - they were unable to fully embrace the notion of non-place. There was a belief that the good things about cities and towns – pedestrian activity, informal use of public spaces, overlapping communities, the sense of local place, aesthetic stimulation, and so on – can be recreated piecemeal [...] that we can have the good things in about cities without the bad.

‘Milton Keynes stands for the idea that towns are assemblages of parts into a whole, rather than wholes in which good parts arise’. It appeared to oscillate from attempting to be a non-place urban realm to being place-schizophrenic, that is, suffering from a form of ‘multiple place disorder’. Julienne Hanson wrote in the Architects’ Journal:

‘Milton Keynes is a futuristic city which goes in for collective nostalgia’.

WEAKNESSES OF WEBBER’S NOTIONS OF NON-PLACE

At times, Webber reads like van Eyck or Hertzberger in his advice for urban planners to not become overly prescriptive through aesthetics or spatial organisation in attempting to influence how people should behave, but instead providing a framework for events, along with his emphasis on creation of opportunities for communication above urban form-making. ‘Spatial distribution is not the crucial determinant [...] but interaction is’.

Ignoring the issues posed by semantics of establishing a ‘non-place’ within a physical geography where place already exists (in Milton Keynes’s case, the River Ouse and the Grand Union Canal being the two most evident physical legacies of ‘place’ – see figure 15) and notwithstanding the problems of the physical ‘delivery’ of Milton Keynes, I believe there are fundamental flaws in Webber’s attitudes towards place and community.

Webber canonised communication and high-level interaction within ‘non-territorially defined interest communities’ as a more valuable activity than place-communities. ‘Place-community represents only a limited and special case of the larger genus of communities, deriving its basis from the common interests that attach to propinquity alone’. Webber was focused on the maximising of output, and within this definition he included information. Information is the raison d’être, information über alles, in the non-place urban realm. As such, the day-to-day, the frivolous, the unexpected events typical of place-communities are accredited little worth. At the extreme end, one could even draw parallels between Webber’s perception of valid interaction and Atelier van Lieshout’s dystopian Slave City.

The key problem is that place communities and non-place communities are mutually exclusive. To illustrate - the time you spend, for example, talking with your friends in Australia via the internet is time that is no longer available to be spent with your next-door neighbours. Webber himself recognised this: ‘for the proportion of his time devoted to place community roles, he is a member of that place-community. For the proportion of his time in which he plays roles in other communities, he is not a member of his place-community’.

In On Reading Heidegger, Kenneth Frampton stated that a loss of ‘nearness’ provoked alienation in contemporary life, distancing people undesirably from a sense of place and belonging [...] architects should be responsible for place creation, in order to recover a sense of meaning amid the decentring urbanism of late capitalism.

52 Hillier, p.42.
53 Ibid, p.43.
54 Hanson, p.37.
55 Webber, p.110.
56 Ibid, p.111.
57 Atelier van Lieshout, Slave City, <www.ateliervanlieshout.com/> [accessed 16 December 2007]
58 Webber, p.114.
59 Owens, p.31.
60 Hanson, p.36.
Experiences of Other New Towns

Concurrent with the development of Milton Keynes, Almere, a new town in the Netherlands, was also being constructed. Comparisons between England and the Netherlands are frequently drawn by UK town planners and architects of mass-housing, and for obvious reasons. Both countries enjoy a similar climate, and have surprising close population densities – around 400 inhabitants per square kilometre [63, 64]. Socially and politically there are close parallels, with a dominant middle-class. The Netherlands has demonstrated a more consistent approach to the provision of new housing – providing 80,000 dwellings a year for a population of 16 million [65].

The speed of delivery in the Netherlands is assisted by the use of concrete tunnelling techniques, which implies a greater volume of terraced housing in the Netherlands than in the UK where the semi-detached and detached house is more prevalent in suburban locations. Clearly this is one factor that gives rise to a greater sense of direct, local community in the Netherlands:

the conspicuous presence of spatial and architectural coherence with the emphasis not on individuality but on collectivity. It has produced a suburbia with an overwhelmingly urban form, but one which, owing to the homeopathic dilution of the mass (low-rise development interspersed with wide streets, avenues and urban canals), never makes an urban impression [66].

The Office for National Statistics [63] and the Britannica Online Encyclopaedia [64] both give the same population density of 400 inhabitants per square kilometre (dwellings per ha) for the Netherlands.

Table 3: Some factors influencing community compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Some factors influencing community compared</th>
<th>Milton Keynes</th>
<th>Almere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modal Split</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Transit</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Travel Distance</td>
<td>7.2km</td>
<td>6.9km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% trips below 3km</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density (dwellings per ha)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proportion who see a car as ‘essential’</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% households with children under 12 years who are always supervised outside home</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% children under 12 who are never supervised outside home</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

References:

[66] Ibid.
I would suggest that the contrast in the methods and speed of communication between Milton Keynes and Almere is a key factor. The open, slower, exposed nature of bicycle travel as opposed to the hermetically sealed automotive life of Milton Keynes may help to ground Almere residents back in their community. Furthermore, there are fewer small and private gardens in Almere, meaning that people are brought together at the bigger parks and recreation facilities. Meanwhile, internal configurations have been open-plan for a far longer period in Almere than in Milton Keynes. ‘Many of the houses are aimed at couples, individuals, or groups of single people, who seek multifunctional, connected spaces rather than a minimal box subdivided into small, sealed compartments’.

**CONCLUSIONS - LEARNING FROM MILTON KEYNES**

UK population growth through immigration, the internet, mobile phones, online social networking means that non-place is a very real issue to be addressed, and the study of Webber’s prescient theories on the subject and the real experiences of Milton Keynes yield many lessons. Milton Keynes suffered from the application of theories of non-place being implemented using a design language of the ocular realm. The first thirty years of Milton Keynes has demonstrated to observers that, given the opportunity, people will opt to disengage from place/local communities and consecrate more time to their non-place, interest-based communities. When combined with some of planning techniques, this provided a template for a dearth of local interaction. ‘Milton Keynes is the first whole-city expression of twentieth century disurbanism disguised as romantic urbanism’.

An initial reaction to the problems that Milton Keynes experienced could be that new towns are not, per se, the avenue to pursue in housing an increasing, and increasingly mobile, population. Peter Hall from the London School of Economics proposes infill urban villages - ‘in-town suburbia’. ‘It is paradoxical: the easiest way to repopulate our depopulated cities would be to develop extensive new suburbs in-town [...] rather than seeking to impose an unfamiliar form of urbanism’.

Alternatively, assuming the other extreme – if it is the rural idyll that people are looking for, in a world where it is hard to ever be out of the reception range of a mobile phone or far from a broadband internet connection, why, if we are to subscribe to the concept of non-place urban realm, do we need settlements resembling towns and villages? I perceive the logical conclusion of Webber’s theory to be a person with a lightweight tent and a laptop – which in itself may be a form of wearable technology as opposed to a distinct object. The attractions of this approach are that it suggests democracy of ‘placeness’, contrary to tradition, built examples, which may be subject to criticisms of ‘place fascism’. Place becomes wherever you pitch your tent, the views, the smells, combined with the memories on your hard drive in the form of photos and music. ‘If the neighbours were not to be friends, why did one need to live so close to them?’

However, it would appear from the survey data in table 1, that despite technological advances and despite Webber’s theorising, people do still yearn for propinquity – they want to live near to other people, in towns and villages, and be close to nature. Therefore, it seems likely that new towns will remain a tool for accommodating an element of the population. It is interesting to note in Milton Keynes that, with wear and tear now necessitating repairs, residents are starting to forge place-based communities through their modifications, customisations and DIY.

Therein lies the biggest weakness in Webber’s belief that all resultant, highbrow interaction derived from the non-place urban realm is something to be celebrated at the expense of the everyday. Given how unlikely it is that society will imminently abandon its love affair with new technology and virtual communities, it would suggest that as we increase the proportion of their daily lives inhabiting non-places, architects and planners need to ensure that they provide the physical infrastructure that will ensure that real, day to day contact, however tedious and unintellectual it may prima facie seem, is maintained.

---

69 Ibid, p.25.
70 Hillier, p.46.
72 ‘Sharr, p.73.
73 Owens, p.30.
Methods of achieving this could include more human-speed modes of physical transport (walking, cycling, as promoted by Jan Gehl), open-plan internal configurations, and blank canvases/unfinished buildings to promote customisation and individuality, even if this is as simple as residents choosing the colour or their front door. The alternative potentially being a neo-vernacular ‘noddy house’ which seeks to announce the occupants status with no input required on their part, allowing them to indulge almost fully in their non-place, ‘interest-activities’ and ignore their locality. This, I would suggest is where Milton Keynes went wrong, and is now, as, 30 years plus on and as the fabric starts to decay, that residents are now starting to get out and adapt and influence their communities future. Looking at Netherfield, a sink-hole estate in Milton Keynes, and generally regarded as its biggest failure, Zoe Blackler of BDOnline observes: ‘while the stone and brick cladding, painted facades and personalised front porches are a sign of the estate’s decay, they are equally a testament to the power of individual expression in the face of so much uniformity’76 (figure 16). It is interesting that Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners’ Oxley Woods affordable housing scheme for Wimpey in Milton Keynes, completed in 2007, allows for some limited customisation of the cladding panels to suit the buyer’s taste (figure 17).

Ultimately, I believe that the denial or suppression of physical, experiential place in favour of non-place communities risks ignoring some of our most primitive needs and confers a ‘drift towards a distancing, a kind of chilling de-sensualisation and de-eroticism of the human relation to reality’77. To quote Adam Sharr on Heidegger: ‘in a post-war era when Westerners seemed to justify their actions with increasing reference to economic and technical statistics, [Heidegger] pleaded that the immediacies of human experience shouldn’t be forgotten. According to him, people make sense first through their inhabitation of their surroundings, and their emotional responses to them. Only then do they attempt to quantify their attitudes and actions through science and technology’78.

(4,154 words excluding tables, footnotes, bibliography and headings)

77 Pallasmaa, p.22.
78 Sharr, p.2.

Figure 17: Rogers, Stirk, Harbour & Partners scheme at Oxley Woods for Wimpey79
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bishop, Jeff, Milton Keynes – The Best Of Both Worlds? Public And Professional Views Of A New City, (Bristol: University of Bristol School For Advanced Urban Studies, 1986)


Britannica Online Encyclopaedia, <www.britannica.com/eb/question‐409956/6/density‐sq‐km‐The‐Netherlands> [accessed 16 December 2007]


Gilbert, John, House Construction In The Netherlands, <www.johngilbert.co.uk/resources/dutch.html> [accessed 2 December 2007]

Hanson, Julienne, ‘Milton Keynes – Selling The Dream’, Architects’ Journal, vol. 195, no. 15, pp.36-37


Issues In Architecture


Kenworthy, Jeff, Techniques Of Urban Sustainability - Urban Villages, hosted by the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, <www.sustainability.murdoch.edu.au/casestudies/Case_Studies_Asia/urbvill/urbvill.htm> [accessed 26 October 2007]


MacCormac, Richard, Housing And The Dilemma Of Style, <www.mjarchitects.co.uk/essay/Housing_and_dilemma_style.pdf?sessionid=16b5db2299517ac3b83ad85afbf1184a4> [accessed 26 October 2007]


Rose, Steve, Urban Outfitters, hosted by Guardian Unlimited, <arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,11710,1261937,00.html> [accessed 15 December 2007]

Sharr, Adam, Heidegger for Architects, (London: Routledge, 2007)


