

'Garden Village', Barton on Humber.

This small development of 30+ houses west of upper Tofts Road forms an interesting and attractive housing area, although today easily passed-by in the sprawl of more modern housing alongside all of Tofts Road and upper Ferriby Road (see Fig. 1). In fact 'Garden Village' is not only important in the history of housing locally but also reflects national trends which defined the provision of housing across much of the 20th century.

Ebenezer Howard's concept of 'Garden Cities' (planned new towns rather than haphazard urban expansion) was heralded at a conference at Bournville (itself a worker's village funded by an enlightened employer) in 1901. The 'Garden City Idea' incorporated principles such as zoning, well built and well designed houses and a variety of housing types. The first new town built to the principals of the Garden City Movement was Letchworth, Hertfordshire. Here the housing density was 12 to the acre and, to maintain quality, strict rules had to be followed by tenants.¹ Lay-out plans and house designs were produced by the leading architectural partnership of Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, and it was their designs that were to influence house types at 'Garden Village', Barton 30 years later (see Fig. 1).²

Fig. 1 View from the north-east of Garden Village today.



¹ Later pre-Second World War examples were Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire in the 1920s and Wythenshawe satellite city, Manchester, built 1927-1941.

² It must be remembered that in the interim the Great War and the post-War recession of the early 1920s had halted progress in improved house-building, the latter bringing a premature end to the 'Homes for Heroes' initiative 1918-1921. Also very few local authorities built 'council housing' before 1914 and there was slow take-up of incentives presented by the national housing legislation of the 1920s. For a summary of this legislation see Clarke, 1992.

In Britain the extent of national reconstruction planning that preceded the outcome of the Great War was remarkable. A primary thrust of this reconstruction planning was to build large numbers of good quality houses, this to be achieved by 'a partnership of responsibility' (Seebohm Rowntree), that being state aid in the form of preferential funding and local responsibility in terms of building and ownership. In 1917 the Local Government Board³ established the Tudor-Walters Committee to propose future housing strategies.⁴ Its 'Recommendations', published in 1918, included family homes of three ground floor rooms and three bedrooms (of which two should be able to accommodate two beds), larder and bathroom. A density of 12 houses/acre in towns and eight in rural areas was recommended and lay-out plans that incorporated cul-de sacs⁵ and the minimum of through traffic. A minimum distance of 70 feet between opposing houses (across the road and front gardens) was recommended to maximise access to sunlight and fresh air.⁶ The Local Government Board accepted the Tudor-Walters Report and in turn issued its 'Housing Manual' in 1919, which included advice on the planning and lay-out plans for estates as well as detailed plans and elevations of preferred house types.

In the inter-war years the 'Housing Manual' remained important despite the fact that 'housing had been a political football kicked backwards and forwards between opposing parties (political)' (Burnett 1986, 249).

The first council houses in Barton were built in the late 1920s off Castledyke West. Following these the Urban District Council agreed a plan to build 20 further houses on two acres of land. Plots were offered by local landowners off Waterside Road, Dam Road and Tofts Road, the last being chosen as it was the cheapest at 1s/6d per square yard. In March 1931 a Hull based architect, Mr. Clark of Alderidge and Clark, 101 Alfred Gelder Street, was appointed to oversee the development. Later the following month the lay-out plan and the house plans were submitted and in June a Broughton based builder was appointed, the signed contract requiring completion within six months.

The 1-2500 Ordnance Survey map published in 1932 does not show 'Garden Village', this explained by the fact that the surveying for the map was done in 1930. Only three houses are shown on Tofts Road, 'Summerdale' with its orchards and greenhouses and a pair of semis, with long rear extensions, in the north-western corner of Summerdale's land. Otherwise, on each side of Tofts Road were many

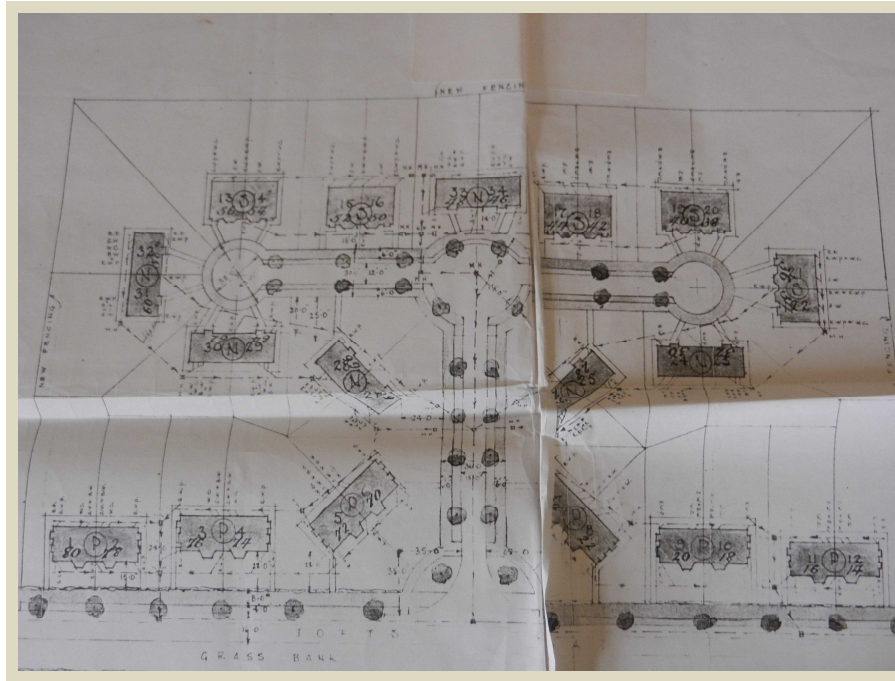
³ The L.G.B. was, at that time, the government department responsible for housing policy.

⁴ Chairman was Sir John Tudor-Walters M.P., membership included Raymond Unwin.

⁵ Cul-de-sacs enabled an 'efficient' use of rectangular plots of land and houses of various aspects. Garden Village, Barton is a good example of this sort of lay-out plan.

⁶ Raymond Unwin disliked narrow-fronted 'by-law' housing, particularly when accommodation was increased by a two-storey rear extension as this restricted sunlight and air-flow.

post-enclosure fields stretching away to the west and to Brigg Road to the east, with field 520 of nine and one third acres being the one on part of which 'Garden Village' was soon to be built. Clearly, once built, 'Garden Village' was to be an island of housing well out of the built-up urban area.



hall with an indoor coal store below the stairs. Entry was by a side door (not front) and rear door.⁸ Room sizes were less than those recommended by Tudor-Walters, this to comply with economies of scale required by Greenwood's Housing Act of 1930 (and earlier housing acts of the 1920s), the parlour being 10 feet by 11 although the living room was 14 feet by 11. The living room had a narrow 'yorkist range' set into the chimney flue, this for cooking and heating. The small scullery did not therefore have a gas cooker but did have a gas copper, sink and walk-in larder. On the first floor were three bedrooms, a landing and a bathroom, the latter containing a fixed bath, sink, w.c. and an enclosed cylinder/cistern (presumably gas-fired).⁹ The end-stack and shared central chimney stack did not allow for a fireplace in the third, and smallest, bedroom.

Greenwood's Housing Act, 1930, provided additional subsidies from central government to pay for homes for slum-clearance families and, for the first time, the new houses could be built before the 'unfit' ones were demolished. Given this scenario, and assuming that the 41 tenancy applicants for the 34 houses were from such properties, the new tenants would have faced the problem of affording the rents – seven shillings per week for parlour houses, six shillings and 'five and three' respectively for the non-parlour houses. Often, in dilapidated early 19th century properties such as those soon to be demolished the rent might be no more than a few pence per week. Despite generous government finance rates for subsidies, the problem of rent affordability recurred nationally in the inter-war and post-war years.

The two types of non-parlour houses built at 'Garden Village' achieved economies largely by having just three ground-floor rooms – living room, scullery and bathroom, and three bedrooms only on the first floor. However internally and externally there were many differences.

⁸ This arrangement of entry doors reminiscent of many earlier 'estate cottages'. For example, at Sledmere in the Yorkshire Wolds where the Sykes family disapproved of housewives gossiping at adjacent front doors.

⁹ This would have required tenants to be customers of Barton's gas works (coal gas) on Dam Road.

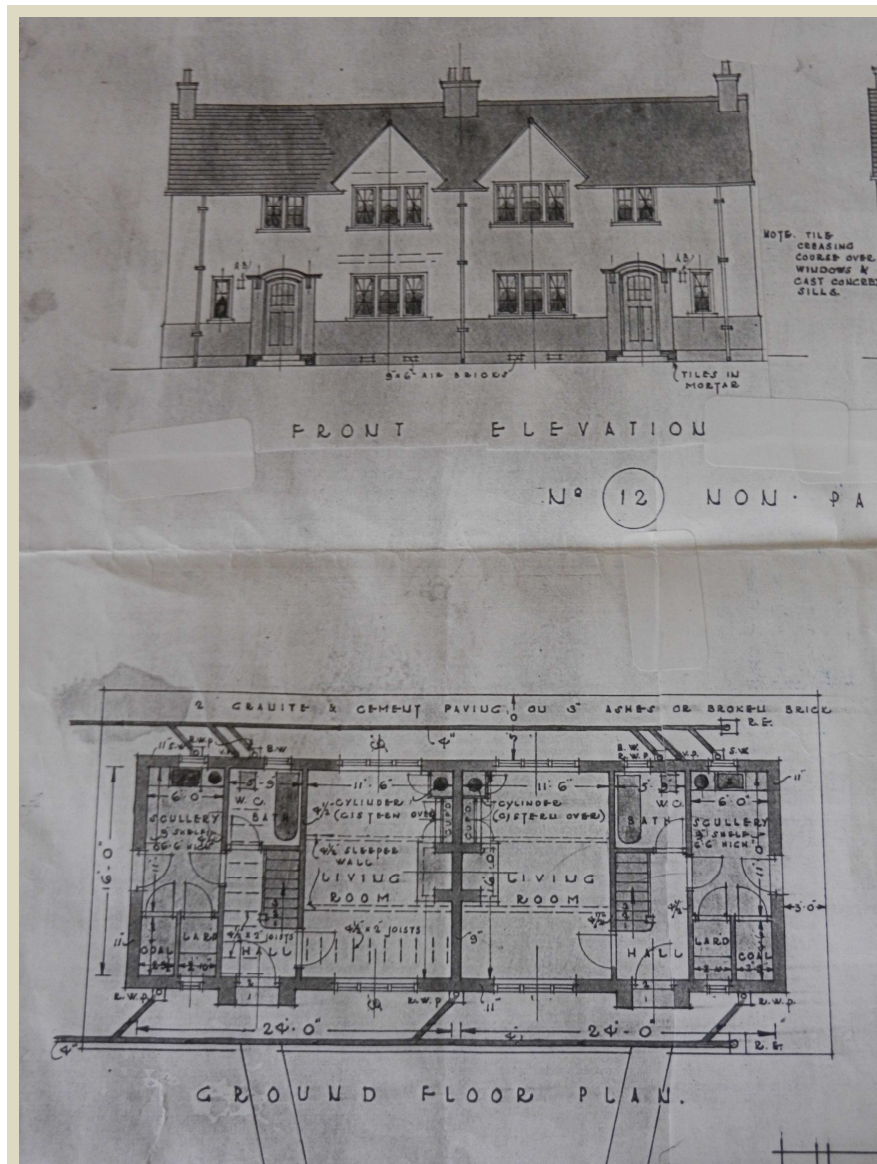


Fig. 3 'Front elevation' and 'ground floor plan' of the 'north aspect' houses.

Externally the 'south aspect' houses had front and rear external doors while a shallow bay window lit the living room. With just the one shared central chimney stack, on the ground floor only the living room was heated by the cooking range while on the first floor the 'master bedroom' (at the rear) was heated by an angled grate in the corner of the room, the brick flue channelled, in the loft, to the central stack. The 'north aspect' houses had an end as well as a shared central chimney stack. They had a front and side entrance (no rear door), but no bay window. Like the 'parlour houses' the 'north aspect' houses had a front roof gable above the window of the second bedroom, a feature not incorporated into the 'south aspect' houses (see Fig. 3). Clearly, Clark designed the 'Garden Village' houses to have modest variety of external features, again a Tudor-Walters principal.

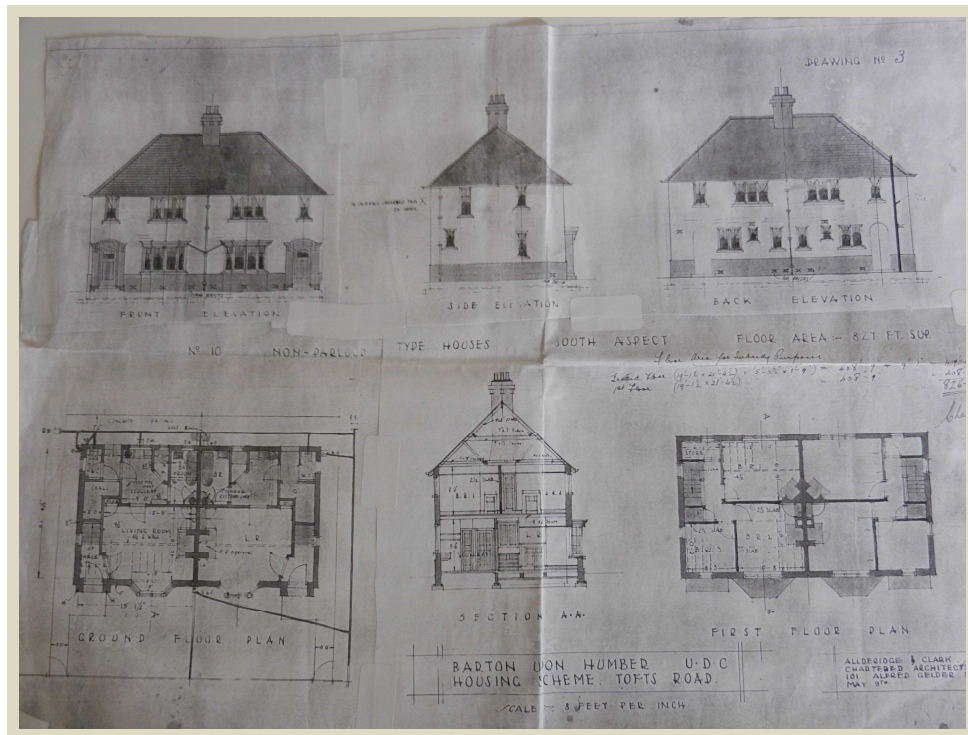


Fig. 4 Plans and elevations for the 'south aspect' houses – 'Front elevation', 'Side elevation', 'Back elevation', 'Ground floor plan', 'Side plan' and 'First floor plan'.

However it was the internal arrangement that varied greatly between the two non-parlour house types. On the ground floor of the 'north aspect' houses the living room spanned the property with the cylinder ('cistern over') installed alongside the 'range'. Alongside the living room was the hall and staircase and a small bathroom containing only a fixed bath and w.c. Immediately next to the side entrance was a small hall off which a coal store, larder and scullery were accessed, the latter having a copper and sink. With slightly over half the ground floor area given over to the living room the other areas were all very small. In the 'south aspect' houses, however, the living room was wide but not deep, to the rear on the ground floor was the bathroom (with fixed bath, sink and cylinder), scullery (with copper, sink and walk-in larder off), a tiny hall behind the rear entrance, w.c. in the corner and coal store under the stairs (see Fig. 4).

On the first floor both the 'south aspect' and 'north aspect' houses had three bedrooms and a small landing but the arrangement of the rooms was quite different. In the 'north aspect' houses the bedroom dimensions are about the same as those in the 'south aspect' houses, this partly because they did not include a 'store' off bedroom one as was the case in the 'south aspect' houses.

The later inter-war council houses at the top of, and along, Ramsden Avenue were cleverly designed internally so as to accommodate families of varying sizes from slum-clearance properties, this while keeping standard frontages to the semi-detached and terraced houses. However the previous concern with aspect and open-space was dropped. Post-war public housing in the form of the Bowmandale

Estate (Barton's largest single housing project of the 20th century) was certainly influenced by the principals embodied in Garden Village, but only loosely.

Finally it is interesting to note that the density of housing across Barton's 21st century housing (private) estates is much greater than that at Garden Village or, indeed, the Bowmandale estate.

Further reading;

Clarke, R.S. *Housing for the rural working classes of East Yorkshire in the late 19th century and the development of early rural council housing to 1939* (M. Phil. thesis, unpublished (copy in Beverley Library), 1992)

Burnett, J. *A social history of Housing, 1815-1985* (Methuen, 1986)