

is the whole part remaining to the person of one parcel described in a registered conveyance to him, or unless the consent of the planning board, if any, or where there is a subsidiary planning area, the planning board thereof, or the Minister, is given. Already some 21 municipalities have taken advantage of this section of the Act and over the years much benefit will result therefrom.

Community Planning therefore, as a matter of gradual evolution and based on a general recognition of the

obvious need for such co-ordination of municipal and private development, has emerged as a practical possibility for every community. In the present Planning Act we have available the tools to work with but they will be useful only to the extent that each individual community recognizes its need and makes active and intelligent steps to use them.

We, in the Department of Planning and Development recognize that the Act is not perfect and as we gain experience in its operation, it will be improved.

Housing and Planning in Britain

By D. P. REAY

THERE are roughly four major functions involved in the building of a community or the redevelopment of an old one. Its size, shape, population, location and community facilities have to be defined and the broad land use areas of the community have to be planned. Secondly, standards of domestic accommodation have to be laid down, house plans made, family sizes arranged for in proper proportion and the development laid out in detail; thirdly structural systems have to be selected which will be economical yet function efficiently; and finally the necessary materials, equipment and labour have to be allocated and assembled on the site for construction of the project.

In England today these functions are fulfilled by the Ministries of Town and Country Planning, Health, Works, Supply and Labour respectively.

Before going into the actual quantity and quality of houses built since the war in Britain let us examine the administrative and legal framework which has been erected to ensure that the right buildings are built in the right places at the right

time. The housing and community planning picture can only be seen in the larger perspective of land use planning as a whole.

Land Planning

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 is now the key planning instrument and for the first time enables all the land in Britain to be planned in the public interest. It can best be briefly analysed under two headings, (a) the problem of compensation, and (b) the planning organization.

The Problem of Compensation

In the past, the greatest obstacle to positive planning in the public interest has been the difficulty of paying land-owners adequate compensation for changing the use of their land.

In theory, under previous law, public control of the use of land increased the value of some land and decreased the value of other land, but it did not destroy land values as a whole; if, for instance, part of the land on the fringe of a town is taken out of the market for building development by the prohibition of development upon it, its potential value is merely shifted to other land and aggregate values are not affected at all. The value which one owner loses, another gains.

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This is the phenomenon of shifting value. In theory the local authority could collect funds from the owners who gained and use it to pay compensation to the owners who lost.

Unfortunately in practice this simply did not work.

It proved quite impossible to establish the amount by which one piece of land increased in value as a direct consequence of a restriction imposed on another, and not from other causes. The two factors most involved in this situation were those of "shifting value" and "floating value"¹ which between them frequently inflated the "development value" of a piece of land two to three times more than its actual use value, and made the cost of its acquisition prohibitive.

The result was that planning became governed almost entirely by short term considerations. Because local authorities could not afford to pay heavy compensation for loss of development values, they had to allow building to take place in too haphazard a manner. Housing, schools, clinics, libraries were sited wherever land was cheapest, often at great inconvenience to the people who used them.

The solution to this dilemma put forward under the new Act is as follows:

- (a) No development may take place without permission i.e. the landowner is free to go on using his land for its existing use (and if

for special reasons he is restricted from doing so compensation is payable) but the question whether or not it may be developed will be governed by consideration of the community's interest.

- (b) When permission to develop is refused, no compensation will be payable in future (except in a limited range of special cases).
- (c) When development is permitted, any resulting increase in land value is to be collected in whole or in part by the State, in the form of a Development charge, which must be paid before the development is carried out. (Increase in land value which accrues without development is left with the owner.)
- (d) The effect of (a), and (c) together is that the value of land in the market will in future be reduced broadly to the value attributable to its existing use. Landowners thus lose their development values and the Act enables payments to be made to them on this account.
- (e) The making of such payments and the collection of development charges are to be centralized in a Central Land Board.

The result of these proposals is that the cost to local authorities of good planning will no longer be inflated by the cost of extinguishing development values. These values will have been taken out of private lands, and there will be no question in future of the planning authority paying for their loss. A decision on the proper use of a piece of land will be taken on merits, and will not be distorted by the necessity of avoiding either compensation or the excessive cost of land with high development value.

The Planning Organization

Under the new Act, plans will be prepared by the larger local authorities, i.e. the county councils and the county

1. "Floating value" is defined in the Uthwatt Report as follows: "Potential development value is by nature speculative. The hoped for building may take place on the particular piece of land in question, or it may be twenty-five years or more before the turn of the particular piece of land to be built upon arrives. The present value at any time of the potential value of a piece of land is obtained by estimating whether and when development is likely to take place, including an estimate of the risk that other competing land may secure prior turn. If we assume a town gradually spreading outwards, where the fringe on north, south, east and west is all equally available for development, each of the owners of such fringe land will claim equally that the next development will 'settle' on his land. Yet the average annual rate of development demand of past years may show that the quantum of demand is only enough to absorb the area of one side within such a period of the future as commands a present value. Potential value is necessarily a 'floating value,' and it is impossible to predict with certainty where the 'float' will settle as sites are actually acquired for development purpose."

boroughs or by several combined in a Joint Planning Board. The county councils will of course be under an obligation to consult the smaller authorities in their area (who have been the planning authorities in the past) in the preparation of the county plan—or "development plan" as it is called.

This Plan will be prepared first in broad outline over a wide area, to indicate the general relationship between the main purposes for which land will be allocated. It will show, for example, which towns and villages are suitable for expansion, and which can best be kept to their present size; the direction in which a city will expand; the area to be preserved as an agricultural green belt, and the area to be allotted to industry and to housing. Detail will be filled in over smaller areas when development is about to take place. It is at this later stage that the line of minor roads, the position of the smaller open spaces and allotments, and the siting of such things as schools, churches, shopping centres and cinemas will be indicated.

Planning authorities will keep in close touch with local opinion at all stages. At the same time there will be guidance from the central Government, so that the plan will be a fusion of local and national requirements.

Every planning authority will be under an obligation to carry out a survey of their area and to prepare a plan within three years. The plan will be submitted to the Minister for approval, and, before he approves a public enquiry or other hearing will be held. Planning authorities will also be obliged to review their plans at five yearly intervals.

Specific projects which come up during the three year period before the development plan is produced and approved will have to be treated on merits and considerable judgement exercised to ensure that they will fit in with the final plan.

Implications

Under the new Act therefore the

complete legal and administrative framework has been set up for the planning of all development in the public interest. It is impossible to touch on all the major planning problems that have arisen out of this new instrument of constructive control. Two of the key ones must suffice, both of them concerning housing.

Both the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and the Ministry of Health lay down certain standards for residential development. These standards of net residential density, open space acreage, school sites etc. (built on the neighbourhood unit concept) have the overall effect of reducing the gross residential density of many of Britain's heavily built-up areas and set up a great decentralization movement. For example, under the Greater London Regional Plan one and a quarter million people and their equivalent industry will eventually move out of the central area across a green belt to new and enlarged settlements outside, and similar movements will take place out of the Lancashire industrial towns and other high density Industrial Revolution cities. This movement creates exciting possibilities for the building of completely new towns several of which are now under way, and poses interesting and entirely new problems in the rapid enlarging of old towns.

The planning of the location of population which this "overspill" movement highlights, dovetails to a considerable extent with national policy for the decentralization of industry and the resuscitation of the old single industry depressed areas, now aptly termed "development areas." These have suffered in the past from putting all their industrial eggs in one basket, and industrial diversification is now Government policy largely directed by the Board of Trade, which constructs new factories and Trading Estates in the areas. These industrial changes involve considerable population movement and the establishment of new and the enlarging of old settlements.

So much for two of the larger planning problems which control to a great degree the location of major housing projects and the degree of priority which various projects receive.

Housing

The broad housing picture is somewhat as follows:—in the years 1934-39 the total output of houses exceeded 300,000 a year. In 1939 the number of houses was approximately equal to the number of separate families and a campaign for slum clearance and the abatement of gross overcrowding was in full swing. The proportion of people in unfit or overcrowded houses was reduced to about six per cent.

The war cut all this short. Less than 200,000 houses were built between 1939 and 1945, about 200,000 were entirely destroyed, and a further 250,000 made uninhabitable by enemy action. In addition a very much larger number of houses were damaged but still occupied in varying degrees of repair. Current repair was neglected and dilapidation was rapid.

The first objective was to provide a separate dwelling for every family which desired to have one. For this purpose, it was estimated that some three-quarters of a million dwellings were needed.

The second objective was to provide for the completion of slum clearance and over crowding programs. To remove housing already condemned as unfit and to abate overcrowding condemned since 1935 a further half million houses were needed.

The long range objective was of course to secure a progressive improvement in housing standards and particularly to wipe out Britain's enormous areas of obsolescent houses, a Victorian legacy of Industrial Revolution expansion.

So it can be said that the *urgent* need for new houses at the end of the war amounted to at least one and a quarter million and in addition one quarter of a million had to be rebuilt and an even larger number repaired.

As of February 1947, progress was as follows:

New permanent houses.....	64,271
Temporary prefabricated houses	
houses.....	85,671
Conversion of existing premises.	39,171
Repair of damaged and unoccupied dwellings.....	111,955
Unoccupied houses requisitioned for residential purposes.....	26,179
Temporary huts.....	3,480
Service camps.....	10,380
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Total	341,107

At the end of June 1947 this figure had risen to 410,457.

At the beginning of 1947 the housing program for the year was announced as 240,000 houses, roughly allocated as follows:

Local authorities.....	190,000
War destroyed houses (by local authorities or private builders).....	15,000
Private builders under license.	35,000

The attainment of this target was dependent on the supply of fuel for production and transport and on adequate supplies of timber. As everyone knows both the fuel and timber situations are acute, and consequently there is little likelihood of the 240,000 target being approached this year.

At the end of March 1947 there were 218,783 houses under construction and 130,520 approved but not under construction. The object must be to complete this year year as many as possible of the 218,783 houses already under way.

A brief glance at these figures will show that house production is no where near the pre-war level of 300,000 per year. The reasons for this are of course bound up with the exceedingly awkward post-war economic situation in which Britain finds herself, but also in no small measure to the obsolescent structure of the building industry and the prevalence of many restrictive practices and attitudes

within the building unions. The Ministry of Works has done valuable work in sponsoring and developing several very good permanent pre-fabricated types of construction with a view to cutting down costs and man hours but these have so far only scratched the problem.

In conclusion it can be said that in Britain, at long last, we have a complete framework set up to ensure that comprehensive land use planning is carried out over the whole country. Whether or not this machine will work effectively depends largely on the quality of the personnel who will operate it; well trained planners are at present in short supply.

The actual construction of houses and buildings is very much part of the general economic situation, and is not likely to improve greatly until that improves. The building instrument—the construction industry—in spite of considerable

standardization enforced by wartime shortages is still very much a conglomeration of trades whose overall efficiency by industrial standards, is low. This problem remains to be solved.

It is possible that the slowness of the rehousing program may turn out to be a blessing in disguise. In three years outline plans for all the towns in England should be either approved or in process of approval, and the housing areas in them will be properly designed and laid out. There is a definite danger now that in the post war rush, housing is sited without adequate forethought and laid out in undue haste. In three or four years not only should we have good outline plans to work to but also the layouts of the New Towns, which will be models of their kind, will give a lead to the rest of the country.

Housing in the United States

By ROBERT BURKHARDT

IN Washington this autumn all three branches of this U.S. government are busy with what is becoming known bitterly as "our perennial housing crisis."

The legislative branch, shortly before it recessed in July, appointed a joint committee of Senators and Representatives to investigate the current shortage of housing and report on possible remedial legislation.

Shortly thereafter the judicial branch sought, and obtained, criminal indictments against the nation's two largest real estate and home building trade associations for alleged price-fixing and other collusive action.

And the President—as anxious as anyone to find a way to cut the country's Gordian knot of housing—in August

completed his reorganization of the executive agencies concerned with housing.

Still, a lay observer would be quite safe in predicting that these laudable actions will result in little or no relief for the harrassed veteran whose family is uncomfortably and unwillingly doubled up with his in-laws for lack of housing.

This even though as early as 1944 a few persons in government foresaw the present plight of the ex-serviceman and the displaced war-worker. On April 11, 1944, for example, John B. Blanford, Jr., then Administrator of the National Housing Agency, (N.H.A.) now the Housing and Home Finance Agency) appeared before a subcommittee of the Senate Military Affairs Committee to warn that the post-hostilities problem in housing was going to be one of increasing production, rather than cutting it back. The NHA's Annual Report for the same year made this point again.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Robert Burkhardt is a Washington journalist and author of numerous articles on housing in the United States. An article of his, entitled "The United States Congress on Housing" appeared in the June, 1947, issue of PUBLIC AFFAIRS.