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INDUSTRIALISED HOUSING: precast concrete cladding components

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precast concrete cladding components

The four schemes illustrated in this article form a postscript to the November 1967 article establishing the work of Le Corbusier at the Marseille Unite as the main originating influence on the development of precast concrete cladding components.

phase one: st mary's redevelopment area, oldham

Architects: Ministry of Housing Research and Development Group in collaboration with Max Lock and Partners and T Cartledge, Borough Architect, Oldham

Structural Engineers: Ove Arup and Partners

General Contractor: John Laing Construction Ltd

Method of Construction: 12M Jespersion System

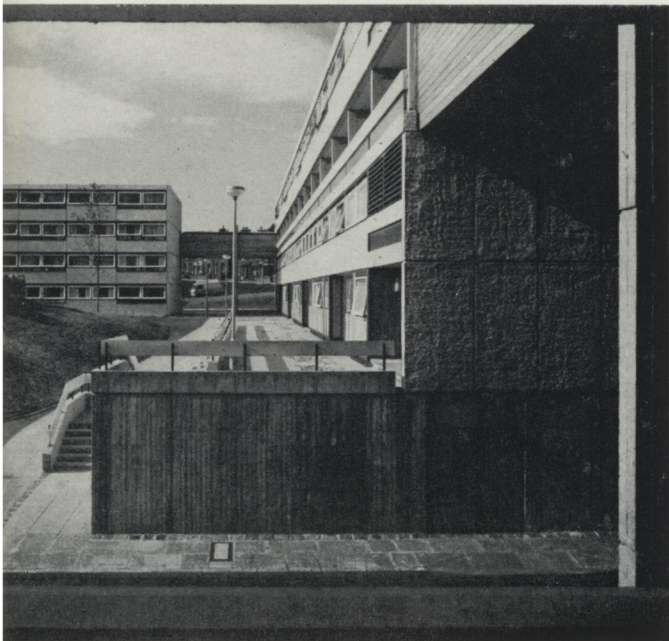
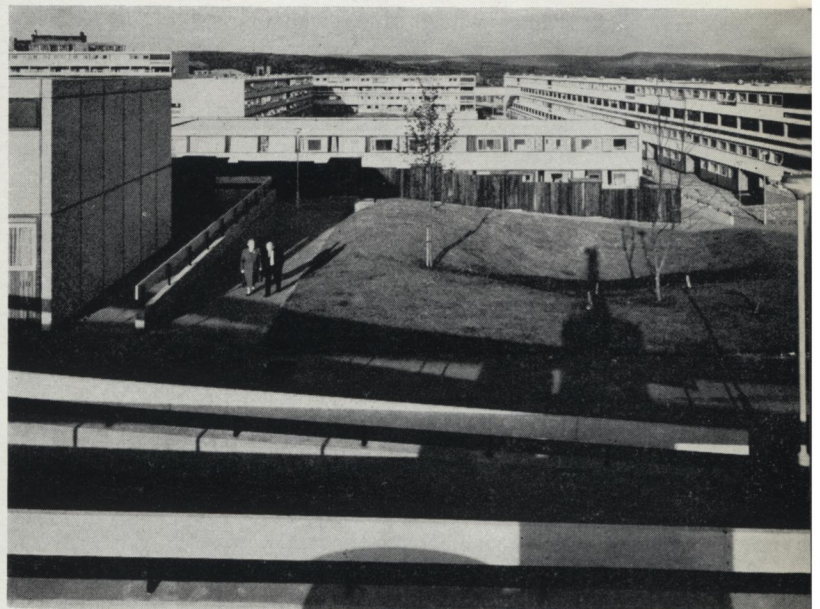
This 16-acre site, which forms the first stage of a long-term plan to rebuild the older parts of the town, provides 520 dwellings in two-storey houses and deck-access flats which vary from three to five storeys in height. The houses account for 182 of the dwellings, accommodating 51 per cent. of the 865 people provided for, in terraces which run north-south, generally with the contours. The remaining 338 dwellings are the flats which are planned in long blocks across the contours, stepping down the slopes. At the five-storey section, access to the flats is from ground level; first floor deck, also serving the second floor; and third floor deck, also serving the fourth floor.

The planning background to the scheme was very fully described in *OAP* in May 1965, and it is intended to illustrate it at greater length

as part of an early 1968 issue in the current Residential Environment Design Criteria series. The superstructure work was completed in one year between January 1966 and January 1967.

the components

Two main types of component are used: undercill panels of two different heights, and storey-height blank and wall panels. Other smaller, visually compatible components are used for the fascias of all blocks and for balcony fronts, both to the south-facing private balconies and the pedestrian decks on the northern sides of the flats blocks. The formation of the panel arrises is excellent, with crisp lines at the joints and junctions with the timber panels. The finish is a white-spar aggregate facing which is pleasing



Above left: St Mary's Redevelopment Scheme, Oldham; view looking past a terrace of the larger houses towards one of the blocks of flats. *Above right:* General view of the St Mary's Redevelopment Area, Phase 1. *Left:* Detail view of the end of one of the flats blocks, showing the in situ concrete retaining wall treatment. *Right:* Detail view, showing the junction of two blocks of flats



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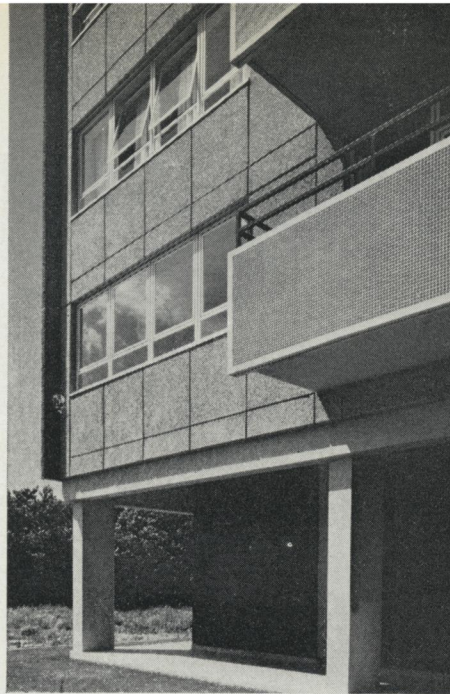
at a distance but on closer inspection reveals an irregularity of surface resulting from the "pebble-dash" method of application. Many of the pieces of aggregate have already fallen off and it is unduly easy to remove others with finger pressures.

the buildings

The cladding components are used to create horizontal emphasis blocks, with bands of horizontal pivot windows in between, with two windows to each panel bay. Timber-boarded panels are used for the ground floors of all blocks, and the retaining walls and other substructure work required by the slope of the site is of in situ concrete with a good quality board marked surface. The pedestrian deck bridges are enclosed for a storey-height, within boarded panels, with a plastic roof and supported by precast concrete "A" frames. These frames and the timber boarding, by their unsympathetic outline and the unnecessarily stressed contrast between materials, detract from the otherwise neatly organised and assembled blocks of flats. The houses follow the design of the flats very closely, but the two-bedroom, four-person types, which front on to the main pedestrian ways through the site from north to south, have little entrance lobby "box" additions which look an afterthought and have resulted in unattractive expediency detailing where their felted roofs meet the first floor concrete components.

the urbanism

The scheme has an area of 16 acres, just large enough for the new white buildings to make some sense in an otherwise Lancashire brick context, examples of which are retained around the edges of the site. It is this aspect of the scheme which we are planning to appraise in a future issue of *OAP*. Unfortunately, however, Phase 2 immediately to the



Left: Parlaunt Park Flats, Slough; close-up view of a corner of one of the blocks showing the effective contrast between the smooth, strongly coloured mosaic finish on the balcony fronts and the softer tones of the grey Cornish granite faced general wall cladding panels. *Top:* General view of the four 13-storey blocks of flats. The end walls are clad with green Criggion granite faced panels; the general wall cladding is faced with grey Cornish granite, and the balcony fronts are finished in a number of contrasting mosaic colours. *Centre:* Detail view of the balconies and window wall cladding. *Bottom:* General view of the Parlaunt Park towers, showing the end wall cladding

north is well advanced to a totally foreign style, based on a different brick from the surviving examples, and with a fashionable black-boarded fascia over the windows and the wall in between. In the northern corner of the Phase 1 site there is now an unorganised clash between three main forms of housing—12M Jespersion, the retained original terraces, and now the latest brick housing.



parlaunt park flats, slough, bucks

Architects: Slough Borough Council Engineer and Surveyor's Department; J A King, Borough Engineer and Surveyor, W Wakefield, ARIBA, Assistant Borough Architect

Consulting Architects: William Ryder and Associates

Structural Engineers: W V Zinn and Associates.

General Contractor: Tersons Ltd

Method of Construction: In situ concrete structure clad with purpose made concrete components supplied by Mono Concrete Ltd

This scheme, which was completed in late 1966, consists of four 13-storey blocks of flats forming a striking addition to the skyline as seen from the nearby M4 motorway. In particular the attractive green colouring of the Criggion granite aggregate facing to the end wall panels is visible for a considerable distance.

The significance of this design is that it uses high quality purpose made cladding components with a sufficient degree of repetition of unit types to give near maximum economies in production. There are already signs that Government "encouragement" is being given to the specialist precast concrete manufacturers to organise the industry along the lines of producing a catalogue range of cladding components.



south island place, lambeth

Client: London Borough of Lambeth
Architects: Edward Hollamby, ARIBA, Borough Architect and Planning Officer, in collaboration with Wates Ltd
Structural Engineers: Ove Arup and Partners
General Contractors: Wates Ltd
Method of Construction: The Wates System

This distinctively modelled 22-storey tower block of flats is the first of a total of seven uses of the design on four different sites in the Borough of Lambeth.

The remainder of the programme consists of two more blocks at Grantham Road, a fourth at Binfield Road and the last three at Hurley Road. When completed it is intended that this programme will be the subject of a special appraisal in *OAP* towards the end of 1968. Each block contains 72 two-bedroom maisonettes, and 8 one-bedroom penthouse maisonettes. Each of the four sites is too small to enable any positive environmental grouping of new buildings to be achieved. These blocks have therefore been regarded as focal points around which the retained and rebuilt housing areas can be developed. It was essential that as free-standing towers, dominating their immediate vicinities and prominently sited relative to several main traffic routes, the design should represent an improvement on the squared-off profiles of basic precast concrete industrialised housing. In this the design team, led by George Finch, has been notably successful

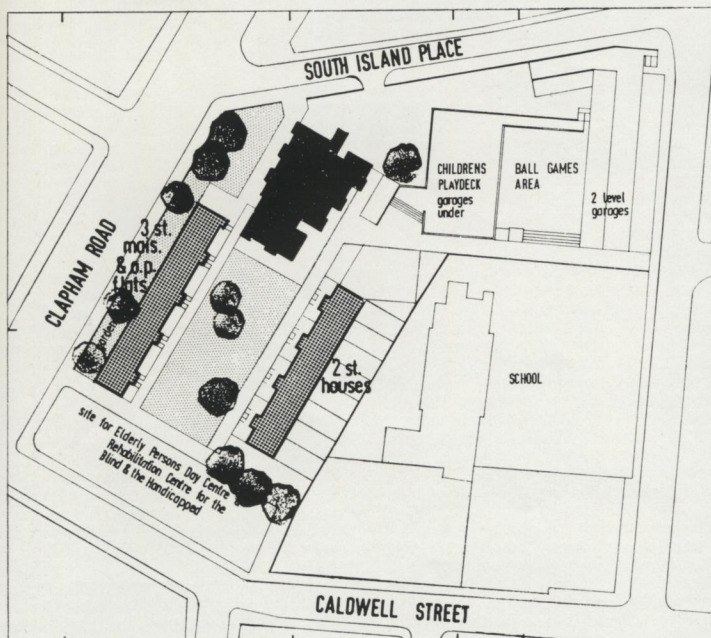


Left: The South Island Place; detail view of the tower showing the distinctive broken verticle profile and the interesting detailing at the top of the building. Below: Tower seen from the middle distance



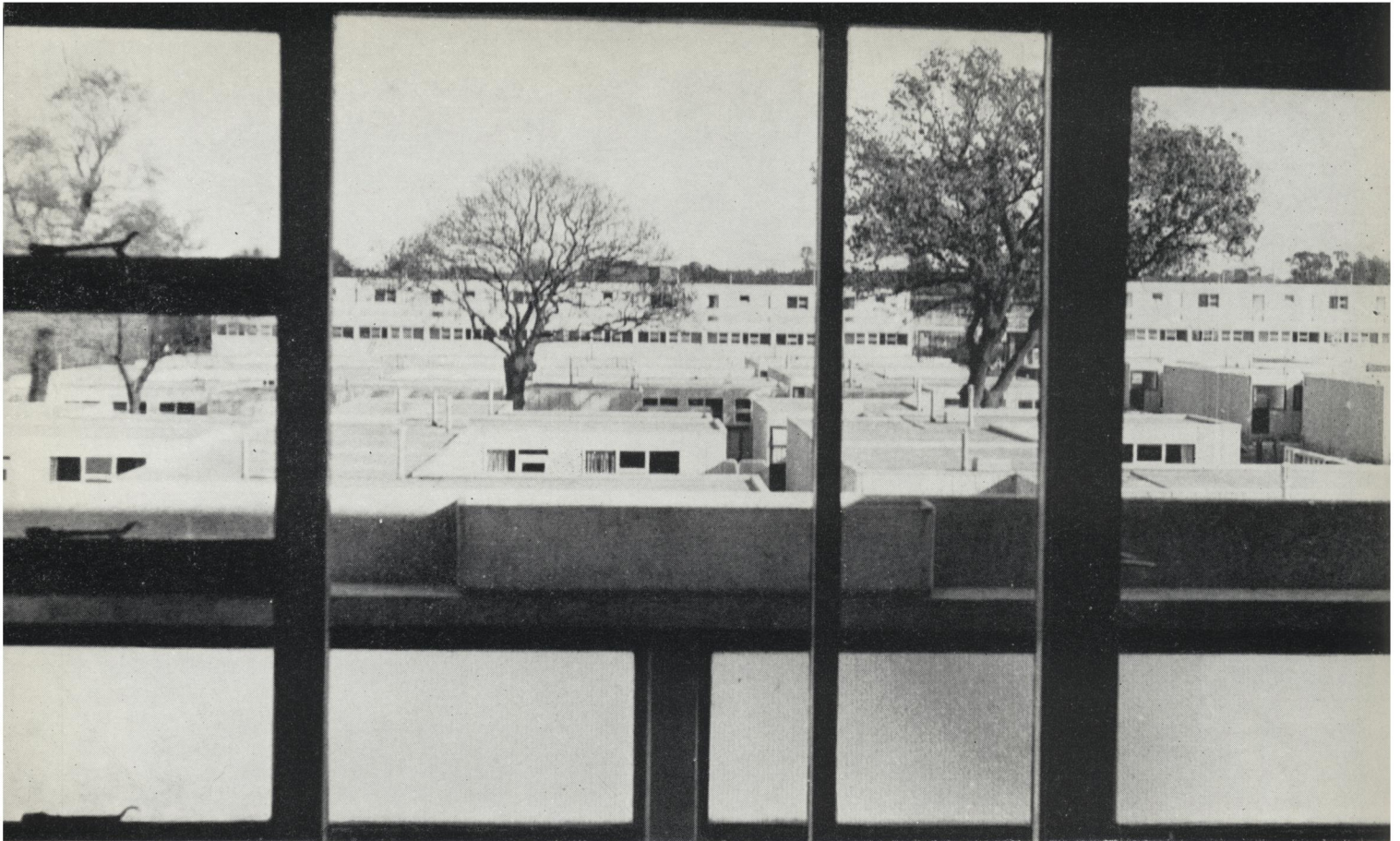
and the first towers are already forming attractive additions. These buildings can in fact be regarded as environmental design components. It is to be doubted whether they would be possible within the cost-yardstick as currently for-

mulated but on the evidence of a total environmental cost-benefit analysis, an overwhelming case can be made out for more money for this kind of "urban-nuclear" building, to ensure that they are of the highest quality.



Above: Site plan of South Island Place, Lambeth. Right: The tower seen related to the earlier LCC precast components flats, based on the Roehampton detailing





clarkhill area, great parndon, harlow, essex

Client: Harlow Development Corporation
Architects: Bickerdike, Allen, Rich and Partners
General Contractors: Trollope and Colls Limited
Method of Construction: Maisonettes—PAC System; Houses—Dorran System

This 22-acre scheme is now at an advanced stage of construction and it is intended to illustrate it fully during 1968. The philosophy of the design team—Peter Rich, Birkin Haward and Martyn Haxworth—which formed the basis of the design approach, was described in the March 1967 issue of *OAP* in 'Courtyard Housing: Clarkhill, Harlow'. The scheme provides for 251 walled-garden houses, and 230 maisonettes and flats in three-storey blocks. It is one of the most significant housing developments in the country at this time.



Above: View across the roofs of the Clarkhill courtyard houses from the maisonette blocks. *Left:* The view along one of the vehicle service *culs de sac*. *Bottom left:* The view along one of the pedestrian "greenways" which run parallel to the vehicle routes. *Bottom right:* Detail view within the wider pedestrian "greenway" which contains a formal children's play area

