Helensburgh Study Group

# HELENSBURGH

## The “Garden City of the Clyde”

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# Preface

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The Helensburgh Study Group is delighted to publish Maggie Sheen's study. This is more than just a history. It is an analysis which has considerable relevance to Helensburgh today because it highlights the fundamentals which have made the town and its setting successful in the past.

Helensburgh has been a jewel in the Clydeside region. Its triple functions – as a compact, attractive residential town (especially a commuter quasi-suburb of greater Glasgow), as a tourist destination and as a service / retail centre for the locality – these three remain the basis of its success. This was a theme in the vision statements for the town's future published by the Study Group in 2003 and by the Community Council's Vision Steering Group in 2004. Importantly, Maggie's assessment appears compatible with Argyll and Bute Council's plans and reports published to date, including the Yellow Book study on the town centre and waterfront.

However, the paper presented here has a different origin. Local groups have been working with Argyll and Bute Council on the appraisal of Helensburgh's conservation areas. Her paper does not pre-empt that appraisal, now nearing completion, but offers a context for it and is of considerable interest in its own right.

The appearance of Maggie's work is timely. By examining Helensburgh's essence, Maggie may be pointing the way to the future.

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## Helensburgh: the Garden City of the Clyde?

### Introduction

There is both anecdotal and documentary evidence that in the 1930s Helensburgh was known as the Garden City of the Clyde. Was there, in fact, any connection with the Garden City Movement and what is the significance of this for today, if any?

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the development of Helensburgh within the wider socio-economic context of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and emerging ideas on urban planning and landscape architecture.

This exploration started out as a working paper aiming for a better understanding of the heritage significance of the Conservation Areas in Helensburgh, so that it could be used as a reference document for all stages of the process of appraisal and review and management of these areas. It soon became obvious that the findings from this research might also be relevant for the future development of the whole town.

These notes have been compiled almost entirely from web-based materials.

### Publication of the Garden City concept

The origins of the Garden City Movement are generally reported go back to Ebenezer Howard's books: *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Social Reform (1898)* and the later edition re-titled *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (1902), (www.library.cornell.edu/).

A key question is did the theory, *i.e. the Garden City concept,* follow practice or did practice follow theory? What factors, then, were driving development in the nineteenth century and were such developments planned or unplanned?

### The blight of industrialisation

While the industrial revolution had started in the eighteenth century, it was not until steam power took off in the 1830s that there was an explosion of factory-based technology and technology-driven production. Glasgow, at the very epicentre of industrial innovation, was one of the first to suffer from the blight of industrialisation. By the 1840's living conditions in cities were appalling: heavily polluted air and lack of sewers and clean water were the cause of major epidemics. Between 1831 and 1854 several outbreaks of cholera killed hundreds of thousands; Glasgow suffered a major cholera outbreak in 1848-9.

### Escape from the Cities

As in many cities at that period, clean air and fresh water had became sought-after commodities which could only be found in the country. From the earlier movement of the masses into the cities, escape from the cities began to reverse this trend aided by the new transport systems; particularly the railways. Merchants, entrepreneurs and the professional classes began increasingly to seek residences for their families in healthier places not too distant from their place of work.

Employers, too, anxious to get their workers into a cleaner environment as well as consolidating operations on one site, preferred a "green-field" solution so that the countryside also was becoming industrialised . In Bradford, Yorkshire, Titus Salt moved his mills out of town and in 1854 house-building began for the workforce. (New Lanark, although some 70 years earlier, was not an escape from the city)

**The Parks Movement**

In 1833 a Select Committee on Public Works was appointed "to consider the best means of securing Open Spaces in the vicinity of populous towns… to promote the health and comfort of the inhabitants". By that time Birkenhead had become highly industrialised and conditions were atrocious. Birkenhead Park, officially opened in 1847, was the first publicly-funded park in Britain. Land had been purchased close to the town and the cost recouped by the sale of plots of land for private housing adjacent to the Park. Joseph Paxton was engaged to design the park in 1843 (www.wirral.gov.uk/er/birkpark.htm) and to integrate the park into a new city designed by him (www.shre.umich.edu/ecomgt/ ). This, then, was the start of the "Parks Movement" in relation to cities.

In 1852 the City of Glasgow purchased land for "The West End Park" – or Kelvingrove Park as it is now known. Subsequent land purchases were made adjacent to the park and the expenditure recouped by the feuing of this land for prestigious residential development. Kelvingrove was the first public park in Scotland – two other parks in Glasgow designed by Paxton followed: Queens Park and Alexandra Park (www.glasgow.gov.uk/). This policy of parks development continued all over Glasgow.

Not all parks were funded by public subscription. An entrepreneur might have bought up land adjacent to the park would then be sold off in lots either to cover the costs of the park or for private gain. Houses here would have their own private gardens. In Pollokshields, now a suburb of Glasgow, villa development began in 1851 from land owned by the Maxwell Family (http://www.pollokshields.demon.co.uk/ ). The aim was to be a first class residential district, the eastern part, developed between 1855 and 1910, was planned in a grid pattern. Here also the park was the important feature in attracting new residents.

A similar pattern was emerging in many other industrialising nations. By the 1850s desire for a bigger home, better schools, more greenery and less expensive housing was driving many with private means away from New York City. Beginning in the 1850s, Llewellyn Park was the first planned suburb in the US (Financial Times, p4 House and Home, December 2/3 2006). It was a private community built around a park some 30 miles from Manhattan, New York. As in many places entrepreneurs and speculators bought up land which was then sold off in individual lots.

In 1850, and again in 1859, the landscape architect and designer Frederick Law Olmsted visited Birkenhead Park and made a tour of northern industrial Britain and other European countries in order to examine the layout of parks (www.wirral.gov.uk/er/birkpark.htm) and is said to have been particularly influenced by Paxton, whom he met. While Frederick Law Olmsted (with English architect Calvert Vaux) is chiefly known for the design of Central Park, Manhatten, he is also associated with the design of Riverside, outside Chicago, which was completed in 1869. This was the masterplan for a suburban community with landscaped parkway roads and where the layout was informal with spacious plots for houses. Not only was Olmsted greatly influenced by his experiences in Britain (he was particularly interested in the changes taking around industrialising cities which included a visit to Clydeside) but it is said that it was at Birkenhead that Olmsted realised how public land, when designed in conjunction with private building lots, could pay for itself and he began to pioneer this concept in the United States.

It is, perhaps not without some significance, that Ebenezer Howard arrived in Chicago after the great fire of 1871 and saw the suburban development by Olmsted where the layout was informal with the houses in spacious plots and landscaped parkway roads. Returning to Britain in 1876 as a recorder of parliamentary business he became aware of the difficulty of obtaining the capital to secure land for housing development and the efforts of industrialists to set up healthy well-planned model communities for their workers (www.letchworthgardencity.net/heritage/ ).

Was Howard's Garden City an original concept or were there similar ideas already in the air and solutions to urban squalor already being sought? Possibly the latter, since A R Sennett's classic work *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice* Volumes I and II published in 1905 is reported to give an extensive description of places across Europe and America which could be categorised thus and the author offers his own radical and visionary alternative model (www.riley-smith.com/). Apparently, Howard read widely and credited other philosophers and reformers with nearly discovering the Garden City. He was also much influenced in his thinking by Edward Bellamy's (1888) novel "Looking Backward" (www.letchworthgardencity.net/heritage/ ).

**Growing reaction to uncontrolled industrialisation**

Apart from the social reform movements with interests in promoting the well-being of the working classes, a cultural backlash began to express itself in the form of many intersecting "movements" as the 19th century wore on. The Romantic Movement influenced town planning away from the stark rigidities of the Enlightenment era. The Utopian Movement, originating in France and then Germany, drew on the Middle Ages rejecting uncontrolled industrialisation in favour of a return to community living.

One of the influences on suburban living was the Aesthetics Movement and, mostly in America, the City Beautiful Movement which flourished from the 1870s until the early part of the twentieth century and with which Olmsted was closely connected. These ideas clearly had earlier antecedents. Horace Bushnell, who both influenced and was influenced by Olmsted, in an essay (dated probably between 1850 and 1860) wrote that "every new village, town, city, ought to be contrived as a work of art, ….." (www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/ ).

Bedford Park, mentioned earlier, is an example of a commercial enterprise. It was developed by a merchant with a taste for property speculation who, in 1875, bought up 24 acres near Turnham Green Station on the new district underground into London. As well as "clean air for healthy living" the emphasis on design and aesthetics in a leafy setting and semi-rural environment was to be the "attractor" drawing prospective residents to Bedford Park. E W Godwin, as one of the leading lights of the Aesthetics Movement, provided the design for the very first two houses. Richard Norman Shaw, the leading architect of the day, was then commissioned in 1877 to draw up a range of different designs and imaginary streetscapes. In this first period many of the houses were relatively modest affairs and very closely packed together compared to the next phase of building started in the 1880s which had much larger houses all of an individual style and on plots four times the size of earlier plots (www.bedfordpark.org/ ).

Although Bedford Park claims to be the prototype for later garden cities and garden suburbs, beauty was not part of Howard's original Garden City concept which was more concerned with the social well-being and development of a community ( www.rickmansworthherts.freeserve.co.uk/howard.htm ). It was the growing middle classes looking for expressions of individuality that art as expressed in architecture and landscaping seems to have become the attractor in residential location.

The Parks Movement, as it has now become known, evolved in different directions: the city "lung" offering open green space for those living in close-packed dwellings in the city, in America; the wilderness National Parks and, especially from Edwardian times, the "estates" called "parks" which had houses set in extensive grounds, often with tree-lined winding roads and the private preserve of the very wealthy which were quite unlike the crowded "estates" of later periods, including the present. Garden Cities and Garden Suburbs became a refinement of these earlier developments.

**Garden City and Garden Suburb Movements**

Before examining the ideas of the Garden City, it is worth noting again that a number of documented ideas for Model Towns had been produced during the latter

part of the nineteenth century, particularly in America and, no doubt, as a response to the Utopian Movement originating in France. Many of the promoters of Model Cities had travelled in Europe extensively and would have been familiar with a great many of Europe's major cities. As mentioned earlier, there were even alternative Garden City models (Sennett, 1905).

Ebenezer Howard's main concern, however, was with social issues and this prompted him to publish *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* in 1898. In this he proposed the creation of new towns of limited size, planned in advance, and surrounded by a permanent belt of agricultural land. It was these ideas that attracted sufficient financial backing to begin Letchworth (Letchworth Garden City as it is now known) (www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/howard.htm) and, following this tangible outcome, this then led on to the eventual establishment of the London Greenbelt (and other greenbelts) and the creation of a ring of small towns beyond the London Greenbelt.

The Garden City, however, was more than just a layout for a model town, as others had promoted. Besides promoting towns of a limited size, the model came up with novel principles, though quite clearly drawing on other antecedents (www.rickmansworthherts.freeserve.co.uk/howard1.htm):

i. The "Three Magnets" idea demonstrating that people should have a *choice* between:
   - Town (both advantages and disadvantages of city living)
   - Country (spelling out the different advantages and disadvantages)
   - Town-Country which combined many of the benefits but avoided the disadvantages of the former categories.

ii. An Association responsible for the development of the town. In this model agricultural land would be purchased through mortgage debentures held by four Trustees who would hold the land in trust for the people of the new town. As development proceeded the annual value from the land would increase and, after paying a limited divided to the shareholders, the balance of the profits would be allocated to a Central Council of the new municipality for public works to benefit the town and its inhabitants.

A Garden City would have well-designed houses with gardens set in tree-lined avenues. These ideas very likely originated from the time Howard had worked in America, both earlier and four years in Chicago after the great fire of 1871, where he had come into contact with Olmsted's masterplans for suburban communities with spacious plots for houses with landscaped parkway roads.

In practice the Garden City concept experienced difficulties in raising the necessary capital to purchase land. After the enclosures, both in England and in Scotland, there was little land in common ownership as it had all been privatised. Those who owned land (or like Carr, whose father-in-law owned land) themselves became property developers and the better off and professional middle classes bought the right to build on land.

From 1903-1906 Thomas Adams, a Scot interested in rural regeneration, was appointed secretary to the Garden City Association and first manager of Letchworth Garden City which he then left to become a designer of low density residential developments that were commonly referred to as "Garden Suburbs". As well as becoming a leader in the field of town planning, he worked with Lutyens and others associated with the Arts and Crafts movement and incorporated some of the design ideas into the planning of suburbs. Much of this new suburban housing became "schemes" on large swathes of land taken over by the civic authorities. This was at a period when mass manufacturing was taking off. Typical of such estates are replicated ranges of identical housing units within a landscaped but green urban environment.

Although the financial aspects of Howard's model did not flourish, the establishment of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation in 1913 set in train a worldwide

movement influencing new town and suburbs in much of the Empire and beyond. Closely intertwined with these design concepts was the Arts and Crafts style in Architecture, and these ideas have echoes throughout the twentieth century. Garden City principles became a foundation for the new applied science of urban planning.

The early years of the 20th century after the First World War then saw the development of two kinds of "estate" – the "council estates" financed from the public purse and typifying the mass manufacturing era (many for rent only) and the private (sometimes gated) upper middle class estates of private ownership and individual expression. After the Second World War as Britain began the long road to recovery, and increasingly up to the present time, "estates" have been developed by (often large) commercial builders for the private purchase market. Many of these exhibit much of that same uniformity which had become the mark of council estates yet some have neither been of such good quality nor with the same sense of urban landscape design.

**Claims made on precedence:**

Howard may have taken the name for his concept from Chicago which had become known as the "Garden City". It is unclear whether places now claiming that they were *prototypes* for the Garden City or later Garden Suburbs really can be substantiated. Claims may have been made on the basis that they exhibit key characteristics (partially or totally) of these concepts. However, if they had not *informed* the concept, then they cannot rightly claim to be a *prototype.*

Bedford Park's claim and its timing fits well within Howard's travels and writings but it lacks the social conscience and community financial element that underpinned the model. However, since the Garden City concepts were a fusion of many ideas, it is more than likely that there was no single prototype but a conflation of practices and theories which fed into several models, not only Howard's, some of which were more prescriptive than others.

Pollokshields lays claim to be a prototype first garden suburb because it predates the Garden Suburb Movement (www.pollokshields.demon.co.uk). Villa development began there in 1851 just a year or two after the peak growth period of Helensburgh, yet it coincides in time with the 'Parks Movement' and is really much more typical of that period where private assets were used to catalyse the process.

There are almost certainly other claims of precedence but those made for the west of Glasgow are of particular note because of our specific interest in Helensburgh, 20 miles west of Glasgow on the Clyde Estuary.

**Glasgow's Garden Suburbs**

Perhaps not widely known, the garden city and garden suburb principles of development were hugely influential in Scotland. Craigie in Dundee was developed on Garden City principles but the most extensive application of Garden Suburb ideas took place around Glasgow.

In 1912 Princess Louise planted the first tree in The Vale of Leven Garden Suburb – which has been reported to have been the largest planned Garden Suburb in Scotland and was close by the once famous Argyll works. In 1913 Westerton Garden Suburb was begun but never finished. It was only after the 1914-18 war in 1920 that Glasgow's civic leaders commissioned plans for a large housing scheme, Knightswood, to be built west of Anniesland Toll according to Garden Suburb principles (www.stdavidschurch.freeserve.co.uk/ ) increasing the population to 30,000. There were other such schemes to the south of Glasgow in the Moss Park and Bellahouston area. As in other parts of the country, enthusiasm for Howard's vision of self-contained Garden Cities gave way to the notion of dormitory Garden Suburbs which took hold on a massive scale continuing into the 1930s as part of metropolitan decentralisation, especially around London (www.environment.act.gov.au/ ).

**Positioning Helensburgh in this wider context**

The interesting thing about Helensburgh is that its story is still visible and it can be read and compared with what was happening all around at various stages of the town's development. Although the papers from the Colquhoun Estate, the feudal landlords, were lost in a fire, they aren't crucial.

The first phase of the Town, the three main parallel streets intersected at right angles and Colquhoun Square, are typical of Enlightment era "planning". Several villages and small towns of that period have a similar grid. Helensburgh is said to have been modelled after Edinburgh New Town with its three main streets running parallel. Conceived of as a child of the Enlightenment, it was to have been a place of manufacture but for several reasons this did not happen so the rationale on which the place had been founded faltered.

Yet by becoming a place to escape from the city of Glasgow at the peak of the industrial revolution, Helensburgh found a purpose. This was not as a centre of manufacturing, but first as a watering place and health resort, also a tourist attraction, holiday home and then, with regular transport links with Glasgow, finally a place to settle throughout the year. Records indicate that in its earlier years little was done to make the place attractive to the visitor (Battrum's Guide 1865 – Public Library). But as it became part of the "escape from the cities" described above, the beautiful private gardens became an "exquisite feature of the place".

With urban tenements confined to the centre of the town and few regimented Victorian and Edwardian terraces, it does not resemble other early Victorian wealthy suburbs. Although some similar counterparts of the individually designed houses can be seen in wealthy Glasgow suburbs, what sets the area apart is the generous landscape setting more typical of the later private estates seen particularly around London and fashionable towns. Also one can observe a progression in properties: the early cottage villas used as holiday homes on streets closer to the water are more 'rural' in character but the earlier Victorian mansions often built by speculators are austere and of similar, virtually identical design.

The middle of the 19th century would have seen a remarkable transition from this austerity and conformity. Gardens were becoming mature and blossomed, the Romantic Movement was taking off and private wealth was increasing rapidly. All this happened decades before Glasgow's suburbs began their march westwards.

From then on until the early 20th century Helensburgh became a place of expressed individuality. While most evident is the eclecticism of house designs, even the grid structure of the streets took on a new look as trees were planted along the grass verges and, where the earlier grid "ran out", curves and crescents were introduced. This extraordinary conjunction of conformity to a rigid pattern with unfettered originality and "spontaneous fancy" in house design, of rural setting with urban mansions, is an accident of timing. So, by sheer happenstance the forces of control and freedom were counterpoised. In the absence of an all-embracing architectural plan, individual initiative on each feu was not constrained and so the dangers of "stagnation or dead level" which Ebenezer Howard (later) so deplored, were avoided.

Though one of the most extensive and interesting because of such an extended period of architectural development, Helensburgh is not the only area of Victorian Glasgow to exhibit such an eclectic range of architectural styles. But what makes Helensburgh so different is the settlement pattern; its urban road layout with wide grass verges and the extensive garden setting of the villas and mansions. Surrounded by what is now green-belt it exhibits to a quite a considerable extent those core physical aspects of Howard's three magnets model.

**Helensburgh's Garden Suburbs**

Perhaps also not generally appreciated is that Helensburgh itself built two Garden Suburbs. The nomenclature here becomes a little confusing – Sinclair (2000) stating that the first municipal housing in 1919 in the grounds of Ardencaple Castle was a small Garden City (later on in her account called a "garden village" development). The fact that it was in Scottish vernacular style is of no consequence since Howard's concept permitted a variety of interpretation of style. Again in 1935 after the Second World War, a new idealistic garden city development - the Kirkmichael Estate was developed along similar principles, but with Art Deco embellishments.

**Possible connections: Helensburgh and Garden City**

Helensburgh's development is far too early for it ever to have been developed as a result of the Garden City Movement. Could, then, Helensburgh have been a prototype? This seems unlikely since web searching has failed to throw up any evidence that Ebenezer Howard ever visited Scotland.

Yet Helensburgh certainly has some characteristics very similar to the core Garden City concept:

- Helensburgh was built on former agricultural land;
- Lying 20+ miles west of Glasgow it fulfils the role of a physically self-contained satellite town;
- As a Burgh it had its own municipal buildings and court house; it was also a retailing centre with some minor manufacturing capacity, though most of the commercial activity of the town was concerned with serving the needs of the large villas;
- The centre of the town is urban in character;
- The town centre is surrounded by green suburbs of houses with large gardens;
- Access to the open countryside is within walking distance of the town centre.

Fiona Sinclair has called Helensburgh a "veritable Victorian Letchworth" (Arneil and Walker, 2000) notably, one assumes, for the eclectic nature of the architecture so unlike the uniformity of most "planned towns".

The earliest documentary evidence of Helensburgh being called a Garden City is the 1930s (*Helensburgh and Environs* c.1939, Helensburgh Public Library). By that time the Garden City and Garden Suburb terms would have been widely known not only because of neighbouring Vale of Leven but also due to the later extensive Garden Suburb developments around Glasgow spreading northwest along the Clyde. Given that Helensburgh looked just like a Garden City and the fact that Helensburgh itself had two Garden Suburbs (1919 and 1935) made the connection all the more compelling. That is the simplest explanation and the most likely. It also fits with commentary that the term came into common usage although the carefully-defined concept itself was lost.

It is not, however, totally beyond the realms of possibility that Helensburgh played some small part in the development of Howard's ideas for a Garden City. But not directly, it would seem, as no evidence has been found that Howard ever visited the west of Scotland and Helensburgh in particular. So the links would have to be indirect. Surprisingly perhaps, there is a possible link through Olmsted who visited northern industrial Britain, including Clydeside, and consulted with Paxton who did a significant body of landscape design in Scotland but particularly in Glasgow. Olmsted took these ideas back to Chicago where Howard saw the results. It is through translation via Chicago that the ideas came back to the cities of England and Scotland. It has been remarked upon by visitors that Oak Park near Chicago, built on a grid pattern and famous for the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, has much to compare with Helensburgh.

No doubt there would have been many other links too through the Arts and Crafts Movement and through Glasgow School of Art and Architecture. Baillie Scott, who built the White House in Helensburgh, had close connections with all the movements of that period.

**Atypical characteristics**

As just noted, there is much about the appearance of Helensburgh which quite probably led to it becoming known as the “Garden City of the Clyde”.

Other facets, however, sit ill with Ebenezer’s ideas and concept. While the dynamic of growth triggered by appeal to an urban/rural setting did occur, the financial model was still feudal and resources were not ploughed back into the town itself.

Perhaps even more importantly, Howard’s was a vision for a socially cohesive community. There would be choice of location. In practice, Helensburgh became divided socio-economically between the wealthy folks of upper Helensburgh and the trades people and artisans (most importantly gardeners) serving their needs and living in the lower level of the Town. These were not a single but two interlinked communities (Michael Davis, Hermitage Park and Helensburgh, A Short History: Helensburgh Public Library).

**Legacy of Garden City for Conservation and Planning**

It is not perhaps without some irony that the Garden City solution to urban housing in rural settings started out as a private venture but its major influence was on municipal rented housing which fell further and further short of the standards of the first movers. At Welwyn, the residential area was regarded as elastic and the rural belt unimportant. This rented ”council housing” has come now come full circle back into private ownership. Mass production of housing has moved to the private sector which is constrained by the planning system.

While the Garden City principles have been influential internationally, it is hardly surprising that with all the socio-economic changes of the twentieth century (not least the economic disasters of two world wars), the Arts and Crafts artisanship and individualism has withered. Nor has capital been reinvested back in the community for the benefit of the community. The statutory planning system today is about control, since it has few, but often no, assets to command.

A lasting legacy of the Garden City has been the density consideration; but this too has become eroded and misinterpreted. At Welwyn the *average* density was five dwellings per acre (note this figure was the *absolute* constraint placed by Dumbarton District Council on new build within the Conservation Areas in Helensburgh). The outcome of increase in population and demand for housing is that the density of dwellings on modern estates is now much higher and tends towards standardisation (not part of the original concept). As for many of those private ‘park estates’ set in spacious grounds, these are constant prey for asset strippers.

So, if we wish to understand how best to preserve, enhance and allow for some development in places of singular landscaping and architectural significance such as we find in Helensburgh we may be helped by locating similar places from which to make comparison and to find identify good practice. The most promising parallels for such an inquiry might be residential “park estates” of the type mentioned above and also areas planned under Garden City principles of historical significance.

**Design and Aesthetics**

Ebenezer Howard’s concepts were not primarily about aesthetic design but were social and functional; they were about health and space and light, so it was possible to build under Garden City principles but in a variety of styles. The idea

was to break away from endless rows of houses all the same, as in much Victorian and Edwardian building, where there were tiny front gardens and squalid yard spaces to the rear.

No means were available at Letchworth initially to ensure a "high standard of beauty" (www.rickmansworthherts.freeserve.co.uk/ ). In Letchworth the only constraint was that of roof tiles. In aesthetic terms the unifying aspects were the tree-lined boulevards and roof colour.

Thomas Adams, mentioned above, as did Olmsted beforehand, recognised that importance of landscaping, good buildings pleasant homes and surroundings as fundamental to the happiness of mankind (www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/adams_t.htm ). It is only recently that the link between aesthetics of the built environment and human happiness has become topical again.

It is debateable how much the attraction and aesthetic appeal that is undeniably Helensburgh's lies in its rural location, its architecture or its garden environment. This is a complexity in which these strands seem to play a synergistic role.

**Conclusions**

*Why* Helensburgh was known as the "Garden City of the Clyde" has been examined above. Apart from the obvious similarities there are some intriguing possibilities but no definitive answer. But that is not the only outcome of this inquiry because it naturally leads on to the question as to whether the Town would benefit from reinstating this identity, even if, perhaps, only as a "strap line". Three angles need to be considered: image; historical veracity; and ways of thinking about urban renewal. This study helps to inform each of these aspects.

*Image*

Image and identity are vitally important for any town that is in the business of tourism - which Helensburgh is. "Garden City" for the uninformed offers a vision of a delightful place to visit or to choose to live. For those with some knowledge of Garden City/Suburb principles, the Town and its green-belt setting captures those essential physical features of a Garden City. Also, as a former Burgh with its own town centre and municipal buildings, it conforms to the notion of "satellite" towns in the Garden City principles. But most importantly, the urban-rural character of the Conservation Areas offers that unique combination for which the Garden City is justly renowned.

*Historical veracity*

Should Helensburgh follow the example of Pollokshields and claim to be a *prototype* Garden City? This study has been unable to find any direct links; even indirect links through Olmsted, Paxton, and the Chicago connection would be highly speculative.

Yet the story of Helensburgh within its wider context is well worth the telling. The growth of the Town coincides with the Parks Movement and just predates Pollokshields and so places Helensburgh at an important developmental point in the domestic built environment.

*Design and Urban Planning*

The mere fact of the survival of such a place (Helensburgh) that is both relatively intact and not divorced from its surrounding rural location is also remarkable. The reason why it avoided much of the suburban sprawl that has enveloped so many other communities has been due to the Green Belt. Local Planning has protected the Conservation Areas from the kind of degradation and densification that has occurred in many "park estates".

So, irrespective of whether Helensburgh can identify itself with Garden City ideals, and in spite of the fact that Garden City principles had an impact world-wide and were visionary for their time, is the Garden City a good model for the future? Interestingly concepts quite similar to some of those principles are surfacing once again, a leading example being the Ahwahnee Principles (www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/principles.html ). Sprawling suburbs are discouraged and new small towns with good public transport links to metropolitan areas once more are seen as the way forward.

As in so many of its characteristics, Helensburgh is a paradoxical place. It needs to hold in a creative tension those aspects of a historical nature which give the Town such a strong identity yet recreate itself in its failing aspects. If it can do this then it could produce the inspired innovation and excellence the Town so fervently desires.