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Matemático formado pela universidade de Birmingham e piloto oficial da Royal Air Force britânica até 1953. Em 1954 passa a trabalhar como crítico de arquitetura na *Architectural Review*, que publica a edição especial *Outrage* em junho de 1955.

This section is intended for the man-in-the-street, rather than for architects and planners, to whom the points it makes may seem over simplified, or over obvious. One reason for *Subtopia* is that nobody has bothered to indicate its efforts in terms that the man-in-the-street can see as relevant, and the recommendations below are therefore phrased in terms an architect would use if he were trying to sum up the argument to a layman.

Places are different: *Subtopia* is the annihilation of the differences by attempting to make one type of scenery standard for town, suburb, countryside and wild.

So what has to be done is to maintain and intensify the differences between places, This is the basic principle of visual planning.

It is also the end to which all the other branches of planning _ sociology, traffic circulation, industry, housing hygiene – are means.

They all attempt to make life more rewarding, more healthy, less pointlessly arduous. But if they at the same time destroy our environment they are denying us the end to which they are designed to be means. We get the by-products, lose the end-product.

This happens because everyone is a specialist whose aim is not primarily to achieve the end-product. The planning department which tries to co-ordinate them is using rules which apply nominally to the end-product but these, because they have been divorced from the visual imagination which conceived them, have become ciphers.

What is lacking is someone who stands outside all the specialization and does the visual thinking,

someone with sufficient powers to carry out his visual integration: responsible nationally, not locally, and responsible for topographical entities, not administrative ones.

That is the inside job, a hope for the future.

But the future will be too late. The action is needed *NOW*.

So the attack must come from outside. That is a job for all of us, and the only qualification we need is to have eyes to see.

You *have* eyes to see if you have been exasperated by the lunacies exposed in these pages; if you think they represent a universal levelling down and greying out; if you think that they should be fought, not accepted.

Your armoury is your ability to see and reason; your target is the stuff shown here.

To help your aim, below is a list of precepts, tempering counsels to interpose between indignation and action.

And to make the target clearer, a check list of malpractices for you to correlate in your own home area.

Don't be afraid that you will be just one individual registering dissent. It is *your* country that is being defaced, it belongs to *you*, and as an individual amongst fifty million individuals, not a "set of income groups" or an "electorate".

So use your double birthright – as a free-thinking human being and as a Briton lucky enough to be born into a country where the individual voice can still get a hearing.

Planning decisions and changes in the land surface surround you every day. In each of them a site may be imploring your aid.

The first thing is to be able to see and feel. If you have come with us this far, you can; that is the premise we make in our call to arms.

Then to know your local area inside out, whether it is a Surrey suburb, the middle of Swansea or the Yorkshire Wolds.

Then to reach your decision on a change or projected change. Your *own* decision, not ours; not blurred by sentiment or social pressure or economic pressure. A matter that is purely between you and the site, without any pressure.

Then to act, and to know how to act; whether singly or in concert, to the newspapers or the Ministry; to know what outrage the planning authority can stop and what outrage it is submitting to from lack of support; to know when preservationists will help and when they will be unable to see your point; to know which points from your argument should be put to the borough engineer, and which to the chairman of the council.

Each success makes the next one easier; each failure may by its repercussions prevent a repetition.

But act, if only to write a letter. In trying to keep intact the identity of your environment you will maintain your own as well.

Precepts

This is 1955. You can't put the clock back. More than that, today's complexity is to be welcomed,

not endured. It is not the technology that is wrong, but the false application of it.

Three things have got to be accepted about Britain – it is industrial, overcrowded and small. These all suggest one conclusion, that all our development must be high-density and small area. High-density industrial belts, with buffers of true country in between. High-density towns, with their population neither spreading outwards nor decanted evenly, but put back into the centre. Consequently, there will be high density countryside, i.e., really rural or wild, not eroded by splinter towns and industry. And this conclusion, which is sociological common sense, is part of the visual solution too. If towns and country is country, they have gone a long way towards being allowed to be themselves.

The alternative is blurred edges. Blurred edges may come from standardization. It is not the standardization which is wrong – look at canals – but how it is standardized. Standard fittings are like the nuts and bolts of a Meccano set: the model is put together with them, but they don't dominate the finished product because they are unobtrusive, subordinate and impersonal.

Forget preconceptions. The site's the thing, not a set of rules, and your eye's the thing, not the textbook. Look first, then decide, and only then find a rule to fit your decision.

Checklist of malpractices

City

. Does traffic which has nothing to do with your town steamroller through it?

. Has the town surrendered to it, by driving a boulevard through, or inserting a roundabout in, the old centre. Does the traffic as a result get heavier and faster, and the pedestrian life of the town more and more islanded?

. Or has the town lost its centre to the car park? Or the open square to a wired-in public garden?

. What is the municipal solution to a gap in the main street: rebuilding, or conversion into a small garden or “temporary” car park?

. How many of your town’s traffic roundabouts have rustic planning? Why?

. Is your town in decay? Is the area behind its main streets a waste of cleared old housing, made into car parks or kept as vacant lots; and are there at the same time sprawling estates on the outskirts?

. Could you walk to work if there was a transport strike? Can you walk to the country in an evening, if you want to? Or are you unable to do *either*?

. How about historic buildings? Are they allowed to look old, or they given a “quaint” face-lift under the excuse of preservation?

. And are the best eighteenth-century buildings preserved? Or only those which reflect a travel-poster Merrie England of beams and tracery.

. Are the natural trees respected, or ruthlessly lopped when there is no need for it? Or are they grubbed up altogether, and ornamental trees and flowering shrubs planted instead? The suburb, not the town, is the place for ornamental trees.

. Do wires take a back seat in the view or a front one?

Suburb

. Is it still *rus-in-urbe*? Has the traffic engineer respected the scale, or driven across it and made a mockery of the illusion?

. Has it ever been *rus-in-urbe*? Are you living in a true suburb or just a bit of spec.builders’ quick profit making?

. Is the country farther away than it was in 1939? How far? At that rate when will it disappear and your suburb run into the next one?

. Does your local planning office obey the letter or the spirit of amenity control? Has it allowed further encroachment on the countryside, on the grounds that it is next to “existing development”. And has

it rejected designs for modern houses because they wouldn’t be in conformity with “existing development”

. Can you take a country walk?

. Can your wife pop down to the shops or is it a fag without a car?

. Can you walk round to the local or do you drive there?

. Do the pram-pushers have a bad time when it’s raining; do the streets seem too long and too wide?

. This is the home of ornamental trees and shrubs. Are there so many that it seems like fairyland? There ought to be.

. Are they urbanizing the scene with giant lighting standards?

Country

. How many Things in Fields are there in your parish?

. Are they indispensable? Have you any idea why they are there at all? Has any attempt been made to camouflage them?

. Have you an airfield or military camp? Is it disused, or has it disused sub-sites, and, if so, are they likely to be cleared up?

. Is it your village affected by urban sprawl—are there speculative estates built to serve the nearest town?

. If there is an arterial road, has it brought a trail of cafés and garages strung out from one parish boundary to the other?

. And has it got careless siting and inappropriate planting to cry to cover it up, or was it landscaped from the start?

. How about afforestation? Have you a conifer forest, was it the right type of site for conifers, and has the planting been done well? Or is it the familiar pattern of blanket and swath? Did it eat up open ground you used to walk on? Can you even get into it now?

- . How many types of wire are there in the parish? Standing on the green, how many wires can you see clearly? Could you any be put underground, or sited less obtrusively?
- . How many cottages have fallen down in the last ten years?
- . How many are decaying now? Has the council tried to convert them? And is it building new houses on the site, or away on the edge of the village?
- . If it is building new houses on the outskirts is there any difference between them and the estate in the next village, or the suburbs of your nearest town? Why isn't there, when the villages and the town are markedly different?
- . What does your visual profit-and-loss schedule since 1939 look like?
- . Does the W.D. own any of it? What for, and must it be done here? Has it brought a trail of camps and roads and made it a little Aldershot? Should it have been evacuated after the war, but has been kept instead by a breach of faith?
- . When you stand and listen how many unnatural sounds do you hear? A train? A car? A plane? Distant target practice? A rifle range? The odd bomb?
- . Is the open heath or down being rapidly enclosed by wire fences?
- . Are there notice boards and red flags to warn you off?
- . Are the rights of way kept open?
- . Do you ever feel civilization is a long way off?

Wild

- . How wild is it, how far from a town? Is it the official policy to preserve it entirely, or have a nibble of industry here and a nibble of housing there?
- . Is it being "opened up" for the tourists or are they coming on the landscape's own terms? Is everything made easy for the tepid majority-motels, cafes, motorways-or are the facilities kept simple for those prepared to walk their way around?