ENGLISH HERITAGE

Suburban and Country Houses Selection Guide

Domestic Buildings (3)

Heritage Protection Department

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Selection Guide
Suburban and Country Houses (Domestic Buildings 3)

1 INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

Be they suburban or country, houses built outside of town centres share certain characteristics. They can take advantage of more spacious ground plots and be laid out with more freedom than their urban equivalent. Being set in gardens or estates, they have a different relationship with nature and can be part of distinct individual landscapes. And being located sometimes some distance away from normal places of work, they can possess a repose and a detachment that makes for special architectural interest, and has led to some of the finest houses in England. This selection guide focuses on suburban and country houses from the late seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

The term 'country house' now carries a distinct meaning: that of a large residence of some status, set within extensive grounds. Very many are listed already on account of their architectural and historical interest, aspects which have been very ably written about elsewhere. This guide concentrates therefore on smaller, often suburban, houses which are very frequent candidates for listing and on which more guidance and explanation is perhaps required.

The types are distinct, and yet share those characteristics set out above which makes joint consideration appropriate. There are some inevitable overlaps with the other domestic selection guides. Older rural houses are partly covered in that for Vernacular; there is some overlap of suburban houses with that for Town Houses; and later Victorian developments are also treated in the Selection Guide for The Modern House and Housing. Estate buildings may be covered in that for Agricultural Buildings, while garden and landscape structures are covered by the Selection Guide for Garden and Park Buildings.

Suburban houses A suburb (from the Latin, for 'below the town') is an area of built development adjacent to a town. Many medieval towns developed suburbs, usually around the main access points (or gates where they were walled), comprising a mix of commercial, industrial and domestic uses, and in early modern times they started to acquire the identity that defines them to this day: that of being near to the amenities and activities of the town, yet of being set in calmer, greener settings where the qualities of the countryside had not altogether vanished. This Selection Guide focuses on a later period when the characteristics of the modern suburb have emerged, where the residents are largely dependent upon the town for work, shopping and socialising and the character is predominantly residential.

A suburban house can be an isolated building on the edge of a town, or part of a residential development. Although there are a small number of houses that may be defined as suburban dating from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mostly

built along principal roads or in satellite villages, suburban development as we know it today did not begin until the early years of the nineteenth, while the suburb as a large planned area of residential houses did not emerge until the beginning of the twentieth. The early nineteenth-century suburban villa, especially in its semi-detached form, had a huge impact on the subsequent shape of English housing. The smaller English house of the late nineteenth en early twentieth centuries was highly esteemed by foreign observers. Where they form part of a larger planned development such as the celebrated Garden Cities and Garden Suburbs, suburban houses represent an important strand in the history of town planning that proved to be very influential internationally.

Country houses These constitute one of the most respected areas of English architecture, and they survive in impressively large numbers, and in forms which retain much evidence of their evolution from medieval and early modern periods onwards. They ranged widely in scale and extent, from the grandest of set pieces to more modest manor and dower houses, as well as independent residences. One significant category of rural houses of some scale is the vicarage, which shared many characteristics with the smaller country house; similar also is the larger farm house. They have performed numerous functions, from being conscious displays of status and power, to more administrative ones such as being the centres of estate management, to those of retirement and straightforward residence. So complex is the evolution of the country house that no attempt is made here even to outline its salient developments. Architectural distinction, artistic and decorative achievement, ingenuity of planning, historical and social interest, construction techniques, inter-relationship with fine landscapes: these are but some of the grounds for assigning special interest to country houses. Each century witnessed distinct developments in the evolution of the country house, and the story has not stopped yet.

2 HISTORY

Introduction: the suburban phenomenon Suburban building - in the sense of the term as defined in the first paragraph - was initially a London phenomenon, satisfying the requirement of courtiers and wealthy merchants to have a residence convenient for the Court or for the conduct of business, but removed from the stresses of the city. Since Roman times, a value has been placed on the positive virtues of retreat, on the attractions of rural life, and on the restorative properties of fresh air, space, views and calm. During the eighteenth century, extensive migration from rural to urban areas took place: London always exerted a singular pull, and relied on huge internal migration to replace losses from grim mortality rates. Many towns across the country were becoming heavily overcrowded and unhealthy by the second quarter of the nineteenth century, as the demographic impact of enclosure, rural upheaval and industrialisation made itself felt. Increasing pressure on urban centres made the desirability of new residential quarters ever greater, something that improvements in roads and transport greatly facilitated. Consequently a gradual migration in the opposite direction took place, from the centres of towns to their margins.

Early suburban developments were small-scale and piecemeal and usually lay outside the jurisdiction of urban Building Acts. Their survival rate is patchy. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, suburban houses for the middle classes were built in

increasing numbers, the majority by speculative builders rather than by architects. Landowners began to realise the increased value of land for building development and comprehensive housing speculation grew dramatically. Spurred on by an expanding railway network, the process was by the 1860s being described in the building press as a 'building mania'.

The early suburban houses built on the fringes of London in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in settlements like Tottenham, Hackney, Islington and Camberwell were built for wealthy families, 'carriage folk' who had the means to travel to and from the city centre. This phenomenon can be traced, to varying degrees, in other provincial cities too. With the expansion of the railway lines from the mid nineteenth century, middle class suburban development was given a further impetus for growth: picturesque and tranquil areas could be opened up for occupation, and new sorts of housing emerged to meet this demand.

After about 1870, encouraged by more railway networks and lower fares for workers, outer suburbs, or less favoured areas, were developed which took advantage of dwindling agricultural values: finally the worker could live beyond walking distance of the place of work, and another variant of suburban development emerged. Continuing efforts to eradicate slum housing in the inner city led to the building of philanthropic and (after about 1890) local authority working class estates.

The Public Health Act of 1875 made a significant improvement nationally in the quality of house construction, street layouts and sanitation in the developing suburbs, which rapidly replaced fields with streets, hedges with pavements. The sight of a late eighteenth-or early nineteenth-century mansion house, originally built for a wealthy industrialist, merchant or banker, and now stranded in a municipal park surrounded by later suburban houses, is a familiar one in many English towns and cities.

Public transport gradually opened up the suburbs to all but the poorest workers. In London, four million people were housed in the inner and outer suburbs between 1841 and 1901. Other industrial towns expanded similarly: as Liverpool grew to become the nation's second largest port, so its population tripled during the nineteenth century; Manchester showed a similar rate of growth. The annual peaks in house building nationally were 1876, 1898 and 1903. Suburban expansion continued apace in the Edwardian and interwar years, and these residential areas continue to be where most people live. A considerable proportion of the country's building stock still dates from these great surges of later Victorian, Edwardian and interwar suburban development.

The seventeenth century The English Civil War demonstrated the continuing relevance of fortified towns, but generally this century witnessed a loosening of the circumscribed urban form and the rapid expansion of settlement outside older walls. Exceptions can be found in many places, but there is little that can properly be described as consciously suburban development much before the Restoration in 1660. London is a special case because of its scale, prominence and crowded nature: from the early modern period onwards, many substantial dwellings were erected in a ring beyond the outskirts of the capital by courtiers and prosperous merchants who were able to afford residences removed from the town: the great house of Osterley (London Borough of Hounslow) began as a retreat in sylvan Middlesex for the noted financier Sir Thomas Gresham in the mid 1570s. Certain satellite villages acquired a reputation – often because of natural

amenities, such as setting, air, natural springs, as well as transport links - as places of retirement quite early on, such as Hampstead and Hackney in north London. Urban forms were transplanted and adapted: for instance, the three pairs of large semi-detached houses built in the 1680s in Highgate, which was another of the more prosperous satellite villages. Such houses were substantial and set back from the street behind gardens, but clearly followed urban forms in their planning and general arrangement.

The eighteenth century As London's commercial wealth increased, and as the classical ideal of retreat became ever more desired, more suburban seats were built in the countryside round the capital. Some were conspicuous displays of wealth, hardly distinguishable from country houses in form and character, such as the vast and imposing Wanstead House (London Borough of Redbridge; begun 1715; demolished). In London's satellite villages (and to a lesser extent elsewhere) there was a steady increase in the number of houses following urban forms, most commonly the semi-uniform terrace -Church Row in Hampstead built between 1710 and 1730 is a prime example. Similar houses were built along the major roads leading to the capital and can sometimes be traced through relic survivals of garden structures as well as through maps and boundaries. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, semi-detached pairs and short terraces of houses were built to serve Georgian commuters: examples survive in Tottenham, Stoke Newington, Greenwich, Richmond and other places besides. Early commentators like Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe make it clear that other expanding towns across the country were being graced with houses of substance around the peripheries, as prosperity and mercantile expectations grew. Such early survivors are important and eminently likely to be listable, even where they have undergone considerable alterations.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the building of the new turnpike roads set off a fresh bout of linear suburban development. In London this can best be seen in Kennington, Lambeth and Southwark along the new main roads leading south from the Thames, where numbers of large semi-detached houses and terraces built in yellow London stock brick still survive. Road improvements elsewhere in the country produced similar developments, often on the edge of quite minor towns. Many of the new urban-style houses were substantial and intended for prosperous occupants, who could afford to keep a horse and carriage, often in a detached coach house or stable building. Developments on a on a more modest scale sometimes survive. These smaller houses often exhibit a mixture of urban and rural vernacular forms in their plans and fittings: these houses have often passed unnoticed and are now quite rare, and should therefore be carefully considered for designation (even if incomplete) in case they retain interesting evidence of early use (i.e., multiple occupancy, or the presence of workshops) in their fabric.

The Georgian villa became increasingly popular in the second half of the eighteenth century. Renewed interest in classical precedents led to the study of Roman houses (Robert Castell's *The Villas of the Ancients Illustrated* was published in 1728), and the exploration of the Italian villa form in England: Lord Burlington's Chiswick House (London Borough of Hounslow; 1727-29) was among the first such buildings to explore the possibilities of Palladianism. Its principal characteristics were compact form and relatively modest size, set within private grounds. Such houses were built in increasing numbers from the 1730s. Robert Taylor's Barlaston Hall (Staffs.) of the mid 1750s or his

riverside Asgill House (London Borough of Richmond, 1761-4), both modest in size, are each classic examples of the Palladian villa which became the *beau ideal* of the type of compact suburban detached villa which was to proliferate in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Distinctive features like canted bays, broad eaves, ingeniously planned interiors laid out around a top-lit staircase were to recur frequently thereafter. Georgian suburban houses were normally built of brick or local stone with tile roof coverings. By the end of the eighteenth century the use of stucco, or more rarely Roman Cement, as an external covering was becoming common, often over poor quality brick or rubble stone. In the same period the use of Welsh slate for roof coverings became almost universal, partly because it was well suited to the wide shallow-pitched roofs that were then fashionable, but principally because canal transport greatly reduced its cost.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century there was an explosion in the number of architectural pattern books exhibiting designs for villas and cottages. Typical of the type were John Plaw's *Rural Architecture* of 1784, Charles Middleton's *Country Villas* of 1795 and Robert Lugar's *Architectural Sketches in the Grecian, Gothic and Fancy Styles* of 1805. At least sixty such books were published between 1780 and 1840. The designs they contained became steadily more eclectic as the nineteenth century progressed, and eroded the virtual monopoly of Neoclassicism. For example, P.F. Robinson's *Designs for Ornamental Villas* of 1827 contained designs for villas in the Norman, Gothic, Tudor and Swiss Chalet style, as well as more conventional types. This publishing phenomenon was an indicator of the growth of the architectural profession for whom the writing of these books was a kind of advertising, and of the increasing size and wealth of the middle class which was the intended audience, and who were the prospective clients. Such houses were being built in ever-growing numbers. Under the influence of Humphry Repton, detached houses enjoyed an ever closer relationship with the garden: French windows permitted easy passage inside and out, and flowerbeds, trellises and conservatories came right up to the house. Home and garden were increasingly inseparable.

Early nineteenth-century picturesque villas The villa emerged from two directions. Country houses were becoming smaller and less complex as they became more a retreat from urban rural life than the centre of a working agricultural estate; likewise business and professional men in the cities were eschewing the cramped conditions of high-density living in a terraced house for a detached house with small grounds, set (thanks to transport improvements) within easy reach of town.

The smaller detached house is a peculiarly English model and was expressed in a variety of styles. Although the Georgian love of Classical styles - Greek and Roman - survived well into the Victorian period (and were the ones best understood by builders), the first half of the nineteenth century saw Italianate or Picturesque Gothic villas and the vernacular cottage style become increasingly popular, encouraged by Nash's rural group of cottages at Blaise Hamlet on the outskirts of Bristol (1810-1811) and Park Village, built in the 1820s on the edge of Regent's Park in London. The latter comprised detached houses in Italianate and Gothic styles disposed at varying angles along a horseshoe-shaped road. The road, houses, gardens, trees and low gardens walls and railings combined to make an informal, rural ensemble on the edge of town, pastoral and romantic in its inspiration, picturesque in effect. Other examples of picturesque groups of villas built from the 1830s in a range of styles survive around Liverpool

(Everton Ridge, Allerton, Wavertree and Fairfield). Bath enjoyed a new lease of architectural fashionableness as Henry Goodridge designed various Italianate houses around the fringes of the city from the 1820s on.

The principles of Picturesque design and layout were taken up by architects and builders directly from published designs such as J.B. Papworth's *Rural Residences* (1818), Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica* (1832) and J.C. Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (1833). Loudon's publication included numerous designs for cottages and small houses and provided a pattern book for suburban and country builders for many years. T.F. Hunt published *Exemplars of Tudor Architecture adapted to modern habitations* in the 1830s; Richard Brown's *Domestic Architecture*, published in 1842, featured designs for house in a range of particularly exotic styles such as Burmese, Egyptian, Venetian, Moorish Spanish and 'Plantagenet Castle, Edward III style'. Not surprisingly, these styles proved too costly for the average speculative builder, and the more common Italianate and neo-Gothic villas are the main legacy from the first half of the nineteenth century in suburbs like Cheltenham's; Kemp Town and the Brunswick Estates in Brighton; Jesmond in Newcastle; and many other places besides.

The move away from classical prototypes freed up planning. Cottage designs stressed an informality of lay-out which led to asymmetrical designs, derived from an 'inside-out' approach which placed internal room use over external formality as a determinant for the forms of elevations. Later architects like Pugin and Philip Webb in the middle decades of the nineteenth century would become identified with this modern approach to house design, but its origins lay in the Picturesque movement. Appropriately enough, this period saw the rise of the holiday house: the picturesquely sited place of retirement and pleasure, embodied most impressively by Endsleigh Cottage, Devon, built in 1810 for the 6th Duke of Bedford as a fishing retreat to the designs of Sir Jeffry Wyattville. The seaside villa was also emerging as a distinct sort of house at this time too.

The semi-detached house At Gloucester Gate, part of John Nash's early nineteenth-century developments at Regent's Park, what appeared to be a whole villa from the outside was vertically subdivided to form the quintessential English suburban domestic home, the semi-detached house. This had become quite a common sort of suburban house during the eighteenth century. Not as cheap to build as terraced houses, the semi was still an economical form of house, with a party wall, stacks and pitched roof shared by two dwellings. Versatile and adaptable, especially when built close together to line a street, with small front gardens and side passage access to the rear garden, the 'semi' had attained considerable architectural presence in developments such as the Paragon, Blackheath (London Borough of Lewisham, 1794-1807 by Michael Searles), where rows of semis were linked by colonnades to produce an effect of considerable grandeur. The type was enthusiastically taken up from the 1830s by the growing numbers of speculating developers building new suburbs around London and other cities. Good early examples can also be found in fashionable cities such as Cheltenham and Bristol.

The mid nineteenth-century detached and semi-detached villa (1840-70) From the 1840s onwards, good quality substantial detached villas designed by established local architects proliferated on villa estates located on the edge of flourishing cities; stylistic eclecticism was established for good by this time. From being bespoke one-off

commissions, such houses had entered the mainstream of speculative residential building. The suburban house built by speculators after 1840 often emulated the Italianate Renaissance style popularised by architects such as Sir Charles Barry, and exemplified by Queen Victoria's rural palace at Osborne on the Isle of Wight, realised for her in 1845-51 by Prince Albert and the builder-designer Thomas Cubitt, master of the grand London suburb. Suburban villas of this variety typically featured an irregular composition with towers, segmental pediments above windows, cast- iron balconies, rusticated stucco at ground floor level, a shallow pitch roof and stringcourses to delineate floor levels; interiors could be opulent, if standardised, with rich plasterwork, chimneypieces and internal decoration which took advantage of new forms of machine production.

Equally adaptable was the Gothic Revival style, the details of which could provide a degree of ostentation and variety that many builders and their clients deemed missing from earlier, plainer Georgian houses. The detached and semi-detached villa in the Gothic style appeared in many builders' pattern books and were characterised by a broken frontage to emphasise individuality, gable ends (sometimes with bargeboards) small-paned leaded windows, square hood-moulds, arched door openings, decorative chimneystacks, overhanging eaves, and, after around 1860, greater use of polychromatic brickwork replacing stucco. Alongside this essentially decorative adaptation of medieval and Tudor styles was a more full-blooded revival of interest in earlier approaches to house building. Under the influence of architects such as A.N.W. Pugin and William Butterfield, Gothic detail came to be more boldly handled, exploiting the picturesque quality deriving from asymmetrical plan and massing, and making features of the innate qualities of materials, while making references to the domestic architecture of the past. Such houses were to influence later nineteenth century house design both in Britain and elsewhere in the world.

The internal layouts of Victorian villas varied considerably. The most prominent spaces tend to be staircases and the principal reception rooms, which were often designed with inter-connection in mind, so as to create larger spaces for entertaining as the need arose. Larger houses increasingly had separate parlours, smoking and billiard rooms as the emphasis on leisure developed. Conservatories provided links between house and garden, and increasingly specialised service quarters, with pantries, larders, separate kitchens and servants' quarters, emerged. Purpose-built bathrooms were still unusual, although the development of sanitary technology was marked at this time.

Materials Stucco fell out of favour in the 1840s and 1850s, to be replaced by more 'honest' natural facing materials. Good quality rubbed and moulded bricks were used in higher status houses, with bricks laid to form chevron, diaper and polychromatic patterns. Different coloured brick was commonly used in string courses and window arches and decorative wrought and cast iron adorned the exterior on verandahs, gates, and railings. From the mid-nineteenth century, industrial techniques enabled decoration to be realised more cheaply (much to John Ruskin's distaste). Plaster or composite stone and cement were employed in sills, lintels, window arches and porches: Gothic variants could be enriched with runs of nail-head, dogtooth, ballflower or fleuron moulding, and column capitals featuring flora and foliage, animals or human faces. Roofs were still generally of Welsh slate, but from the 1870s clay tiles with terracotta ridge tiles with wrought-iron and cast-iron for ornamental finials and cresting. Barge boards framing gable ends were cut and carved in timber in a variety of patterns. Stone, brick

or timber bay windows were adapted to fit the smallest of front parlours, sometimes with cast-iron colonnettes framing plate glass sash windows. Wooden 'horns' at the sides of the principal horizontal bar of the sash came into widespread use from about 1850 and can be a useful dateable feature. Such varied materials are among the delights of much of the housing of this date and the intact survival of such details might be sufficient to influence the listability of a house where a good level of architectural quality is also present.

The suburban house 1870-1900 Most speculative builders of the 1870s and 1880s copied the designs and advice available in publications such as E.L. Tarbuck's *The Builder's Practical Director* (1855), Robert Kerr's *The Gentleman's House* (1864), and E. L. Blackburne's *Suburban and Rural Architecture* (1869) the aim of which was 'to obtain as much picturesqueness of outline and play of light and shade as is possible in houses of so small a class'. The Venetian forms of the Gothic espoused by Ruskin became ever more popular as applied as decoration to housing, and the two-storey bay window, deployed since eighteenth-century Palladianism, became a norm in suburban house design.

In larger suburban houses the front room (or drawing room) and dining room were opened into each other by means of a sliding or folding door, creating what as been termed the 'bourgeois breakthrough'. A library and a larger staircase might be provided (a luxury not permitted in a tight urban frontage), a servants' stair, multiple bedrooms for the family, attic rooms for the servants, and perhaps a nursery and playroom. In the basement - or increasingly in the back 'extension' - a kitchen, scullery, larder, coal store and store closet and indoor lavatory might be provided, extra accommodation that was far beyond the possibility of an inner city dwelling. (A lavatory and bathroom did not generally become standard amenities until the 1880s until drainage infrastructure had been installed).

Many of the smaller speculative-built semi-detached houses adhered to pattern-book models, with a narrow entrance hall, plain staircase, front parlour with bay window, dining room at the back overlooking the garden, kitchen and scullery. As the building industry became increasingly highly organised in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to meet massive demand, so the plan of the suburban house became more uniform and generally unexceptional. The quantities of such housing which survives is very considerable, and the identification of special interest is sometimes a quest in vain.

The influence of the Aesthetic Movement (1870-90) from the 1870s exerted considerable influence on suburban house building. The Aesthetic Movement and the Arts and Crafts movement, both reactions against the opulence and extravagance of the High Victorian period, had a profound effect of British domestic design and revolutionised the middle class taste.

Taken up by other architects such as George Devey, W.E. Nesfield and Norman Shaw in the 1860s and 1870s, these 'Domestic Revival' houses moved away from historicist and ecclesiastical styles towards accessible cosiness and homeliness, with leaded windows, small tile-hung gables placed at different heights and depth, and tall chimneystacks. The style evolved during the 1880s and 1890s into the 'Queen Anne' style that looked back to the domestic classicism of the late seventeenth century: red brick houses with tall narrow windows with segmental-headed small-paned sash

windows, shaped gables, steeply-pitched roofs with deep coved eaves cornices and prominent chimneys. The pioneering examples of the style are to be found in the houses at Bedford Park in west London (1876-71), an early example of the garden suburb set out in wide tree-lined streets. This style was influential on developing middle class suburban estates of the 1880s and 1890s and publicised through books such as J.J. Stevenson's *House Architecture* (1880). Carefully architect-designed houses will in the main merit listing; the bland and formulaic, speculatively-built copies will probably not. All houses of this date should be assessed with great care since many designs are subtle and undemonstrative.

The influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement (1890- c.1910) inspired by the domestic architecture of Philip Webb, Richard Norman Shaw, Eden Nesfield, E.W. Godwin and others, and the next generation of architects who designed suburban houses such as Charles Voysey were drawn to the Vernacular Revival style that grew out of the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The chief characteristics were: designing from the inside out, with an irregular plan and asymmetrical elevations, often in vernacular styles; using handcrafted materials and skilled builders and workmen; a love of ornament, both naturalistic and patterned, often using colour embedded in the materials. Speculative builders became more adept at providing good-quality developments, as did William Willett, who 'put Norman Shaw on the production line', with housing developments in areas of London (such as Hampstead) characterised by red brick gables, tile hanging, picturesque asymmetry and careful construction in traditional techniques and materials.

The Vernacular Revival could be used to good effect on smaller houses; the simple roughcast type was widely used in the garden suburbs in the early twentieth century and the best-preserved merit listing. After 1900 Lutyens set a more formal tone with large Classical detached houses in Hampstead Garden Suburb. This style was further developed by architects such as Guy Dawber and Louis de Soissons, and was eventually distilled into a stripped down neo-Georgian style for suburban houses by 1914. Most speculative-built suburban houses by the turn of the twentieth century were built without back extensions (or which were so large as to constitute the main part of the house), basements or attic bedrooms for servants, whose numbers were sharply in decline.

The twentieth century: Garden Suburbs and Garden Cities

Note: This section should be read in conjunction with the Selection Guide on Modern Houses and Housing.

The Queen Anne movement and the rediscovery of vernacular styles had a lasting influence on the external appearance of the suburban house, and the arrangement of the houses in relation to their surroundings and gardens influenced the early planners of Garden Cities. The ideals behind, and the basic plans for, a Garden City were set out in Ebenezer Howard's *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898). His idea was to create a series of satellite towns close to a large city but surrounded by parks and countryside, with separate areas for housing, factories and municipal buildings. With an influential group of backers, Howard set up the First Garden City Limited in 1903 with the aim of creating the first Garden City at Letchworth in Hertfordshire. Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker were the architects who gave shape to the principles set out by Howard. They laid out the town according the natural topography of the land, and

recommended a density of no more than twelve houses to the acre. They grouped the houses around cul-de-sacs or facing greens or gardens with a degree of privacy and seclusion for each home. The houses were in a variety of vernacular and Domestic Revival architecture arranged in curved leafy streets without back extensions or basements and with eye catchers at the road junctions. Parker and Unwin developed these ideas further at Hampstead Garden Suburb. When it comes to listing, good examples that show a strong Arts and Crafts influence on a planned estate will merit inclusion. Occasionally, where the overall plan of the estate is exceptional, designation should be more inclusive. Elsewhere area designations might be appropriate. Many of speculative-built suburban developments of the 1920s and 1930s adopted the visual features of the architecture of the Garden City and Garden Suburb but left out the quality of materials and spacious garden plots and tree-lined streets: these are unlikely to warrant listing.

Cottage Estates The Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 was an attempt to address the housing problem, which had become acute in a number of cities. Local authorities were empowered to buy land to re-house people displaced by slum clearance schemes. Liverpool was the first city to build its own council housing, and Manchester and Sheffield built some small suburban cottage estates after the Act but it was the London County Council that rose to the challenge most forcefully, and produced some of the most progressive housing in the country between 1890 and 1914. The best of their cottage estates built in the outer ring of London all adopted the Arts and Crafts vocabulary and planning principles pioneered at Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb, with serpentine road lay-outs offering a picturesque views of vernacular-inspired houses, and the use of a splayed 'butterfly' plan for houses at the corners to create visual accents at key points. As with all planned developments of this sort, a holistic approach to assessment should be adopted and area designations considered in addition to, or instead of, listing as appropriate. Sometimes it will be the feature buildings like libraries or schools which command the most attention. Earliness of date and inclusion within an admired development will be significant factors.

A note on details and fitting Exterior features include original sash, casement or leaded windows with distinctive glazing bar patterns, panelled front doors, fanlights, balconies, gates and railings. Characteristic interior features would include: staircase and newel posts, plain or machine turned and painted balusters with varnished wooden handrails; gas fittings (introduced into houses from the 1830s); electric light fittings (from the 1880s) may survive, and possibly ornate cast-iron radiators and water closet systems (from the 1870s onwards). Rooms may still have some windows, doors and moulded architraves; fitted cupboards and alcoves; chimneypieces and cast-iron grates; dado and picture rails; panelled shutters; ceiling cornices and ceiling roses; decorative plasterwork, tiles and stained glass. Furnishings such as wallpaper, curtains, carpets and original paint colour survive only rarely.

3 SUMMARY OF SELECTION CRITERIA

- **Pre-1700** Recognisable survivors, even when substantially altered, whether individual houses or a group, are likely to be listable.
- **1700-c.1840** Houses surviving without substantial alteration will probably warrant listing, although some discretion may be necessary for later, more

standard designs. The most complete and elaborate houses may be listable in a high grade if they can demonstrate intrinsic merit such as good-quality composition, detailing and a distinctive plan form.

- **c.1840-1914** Because of the increase in the number of houses and estates built and surviving, a greater degree of selection will apply.

4 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SELECTING THE SUBURBAN AND COUNTRY HOUSE FOR DESIGNATION

Selectivity Such houses survive in such large numbers, and they will need to be carefully assessed for listing against the normal selection criteria: age and rarity, intactness, quality of design, materials, craftsmanship, and historic associations.

Alteration Many houses undergo change, and this need not rule out listability: indeed, it can sometimes add to the special interest. Cases will need to be assessed on an individual, case by case, basis.

Grading Listing in the higher grades may be appropriate when architectural interest of a particularly high order is present. Early influential examples of developments in domestic architecture may qualify, as may component parts of particularly significant ensembles. Outstanding decorative elements may sometimes warrant consideration for a higher grade too: the survival of early wall paintings, for instance, may be relevant in this regard.

Integrated assessments Particularly in terms of the larger country house it is desirable to assess house, ancillary and garden buildings together to ensure that a full appraisal is made of the component parts of an ensemble. Stables and other outhouses may need consideration. Designed landscapes may warrant designation in their own right, and garden buildings may also be listable (see the Selection Guide Garden and Park Buildings).

Under-representation on the List It is important to remember that many suburban developments remain under-researched and under-investigated. Some rural houses in particular may have been omitted from earlier listing reviews, and some will still await discovery. Greater respect is now accorded to the suburban house (especially the post-Georgian examples, including those between the wars and post-war examples too), consequently, in some areas, suburban houses also remain under-represented on the statutory lists.

Development pressures Suburban houses in particular are now subject to enormous pressures that include both conversion (into flats or offices), and that of new development in the gardens or grounds, sometimes calling for the demolition of the original house. The latter is particularly significant because, where they remain substantially intact, suburban houses not only show great architectural ingenuity and invention in style, materials, and plan form, they were often carefully designed in relation to their garden, street layout and neighbouring plots. Setting may be an important factor in assessing their special interest. There is undeniable pressure on the larger detached house, set in its own grounds: while assessment for designation must be dispassionate, identifying those examples which possess special interest is all the more important.

Regional variation The design stamp of a local builder or architect, and of peculiarly local vernacular forms or materials, should be represented on the lists.

Planned settlements and estates Like town housing, suburban (and occasionally rural) developments can possess special interest because of their planning. Some of the most interesting examples of suburban housing may be found in planned developments of which Bedford Park, Hampstead Garden Suburb, Letchworth, Brentham Garden Estate, Ealing, and the Bournville Village, Birmingham, are among the most celebrated. While many houses within these developments will be of special interest in their own right, it is important to assess them in context: listing should be inclusive where the quality of the whole is high and forms of area designation may also be appropriate. Similarly, houses on country estates often possess particular interest as a result of paternalistic landlords seeking to improve the accommodation of tenantry, as encountered at Southill (Beds.) on the former Whitbread estate.

Aesthetic judgment Most houses which are unaltered and of interest prior to 1840 will be listable. Because much housing from the middle years of the nineteenth century became more standardised and because there is so much of it, critical faculties can sometimes be numbed: but this is just where greater judgment is required. It is thus important to give the assessment of individual buildings particular care and attention. Quality of elevational design, interest of planning, quality and survival of decorative elements, innovativeness rather than imitation: these considerations will be important. Some excellent designs, especially in the decades to either side of 1900, are subtle and undemonstrative and easily overlooked. While celebrated architects were sometimes involved, elsewhere it is the work of local architects, and the use they make of local materials and finishes (e.g., pargetting or incised plaster work), that is often of great interest. Intactness will not in itself be sufficient. However, the intact survival of decorative features can sometimes justify listing or sway the balance in otherwise marginal examples.

Historic associations Well-documented historic associations of national importance may increase the case for listing but normally a building should be of some architectural merit in itself or it should be preserved in a form that directly illustrates and confirms its historical associations. Commemoration by means of a plaque may sometimes be more appropriate. Sometimes architectural modesty can reveal considerable historical interest (e.g., as in the case of the Chartist settlements of the 1840s). Cases must be judged on individual merits.

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