COMMUNITY ARCHITECTURE

A PUBLIC DESIGN SERVICE?
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Report of the Public Design Group of the New Architecture Movement to the Minister of Housing and Construction into the provision of architectural services to the community.

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INTRODUCTION:

This report is submitted by the Public Design Group of the New Architecture Movement to the Minister for Housing and Construction to assist in the investigation he is currently undertaking into the potential of various forms of Community Architecture.

It is understood that the Royal Institute of British Architects is submitting its own report, prepared by its Community Architecture Working Group. The New Architecture Movement does not support the RIBA's proposals as described from time to time in the architectural press, and is therefore presenting its own arguments lest the impression be gained that the RIBA's view is accepted by the profession as a whole.

The New Architecture Movement (NAM) is a substantial body of mainly salaried architects, working in both the public and private sectors. They share a consensus of views on different aspects of architecture and the profession. In the past these views have differed radically from those advanced by the RIBA.

The Public Design Group of NAM was delegated by the movement as a whole to undertake an enquiry into the public architectural service and to put forward proposals to a special conference in May 1978. These interim proposals, which are included in this report, and the analysis on which they were based were endorsed by the conference and the Group is currently engaged in extending their study and on promoting their views in the public sector.

This report may be summarised as demonstrating that, since an architectural service cannot be considered in isolation from the provision of resources of land and finance, nor from the subsequent construction programme, and if this service is to be both freely available and accountable to the majority of the public, then it
must be a local authority service. Accepting that principle, careful consideration is given to the serious criticisms levelled at the present local council departments of architecture, and proposals for re-organisation are made which would enable the principle of direct accountability to be fulfilled. Finally, the report examines briefly the RIBA proposals for a community architecture as understood from reports in the technical press, and relates these to the current crisis in private architectural practice.

Since it is understood that the Minister's terms of reference relate specifically to the question of architects' services to the community, the report has been confined as far as possible to this subject only. That is not to suggest that the New Architecture Movement believes that the structure and financing of local government, its relationship to central government and the relationships of other council departments to the architects are unrelated or unimportant. These have not been included in the proposals because they fall outside the scope of this report.

The New Architecture Movement trusts that this report will constructively contribute to the sum of material on which the Minister will formulate his decision, and we would confirm our willingness to participate in any further debate which the Minister may wish to pursue.
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

* THAT A COMMUNITY ARCHITECTURAL SERVICE SHOULD BE BASED ON THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND NOT ON PRIVATE PRACTICE.

To achieve this, certain interim changes are proposed to present structures:

* LOCAL AREA CONTROL OVER RESOURCES.

* DESIGN TEAMS SHOULD BE AREA-BASED INSTEAD OF FUNCTION-BASED.

* AREA DESIGN TEAMS SHOULD BE MULTIDISCIPLINARY.

* JOB ARCHITECTS SHOULD REPORT DIRECTLY TO COMMITTEE.

* ABOLISH POSTS BETWEEN GROUP LEADER AND CHIEF ARCHITECT.

* ESTABLISH JOINT WORKING GROUPS WITH DLO's.
COMMUNITY ARCHITECTURE:

A Definition:

Although the term "community architecture" has become common currency amongst at least a section of the architectural profession, five or six years ago the expression did not exist. In that short space of time it has also changed in meaning. The present concept of "community architecture" embodies ideas about designing for poor clients. A paper on the subject presented to the April 1978 RIBA Council Meeting stated,

"...this kind of architecture (community architecture) can only be practised with the knowledge and consent of the user. We must be moving towards an architecture for everyone, not just for those who have the money to pay for it ... so a national fund is needed to help the poor to acquire the skills of an architect." (cited in Architects Journal 19.4.78)

This agreeable sentiment begs the question as to who provides the funds to buy land and pay the builder. The provision of these resources is necessary before the skills of an architect can even become relevant. Control over land and finance is therefore the primary issue.

By discarding this and other features of the community action of the 1960's and early 1970's, the RIBA have at once depoliticised and changed its meaning. The concept of the new "community architecture" is one in which the socially-responsible professional attends to the needs of the individual poor, rather in the way that a doctor helps a sick patient. Because of this the RIBA still find themselves in their perennial difficulty of locating clients:

"The emergence of this new client (the poor) is causing some architectural and some non-architectural teething troubles. The first is that of making contact with the new client and informing him of what the profession can offer."

(RIBA CAWG Report - cited in Building Design 13.1.78)
The "community architecture" of the past was quite different. It, and the community action from which it was generated are by now well documented. Discontent over unacceptable environmental and social conditions following ten years of slum clearance and large scale urban redevelopment were expressed in various forms of direct action, as organisations of tenants and residents demanded a say in the way their surroundings were designed and managed. The students and young salaried architects who were involved in this process worked with local residents in the preparation and presentation of alternative schemes for their own locality. This became known as "community architecture".

It embodied several ideas:

* Local control by local people over their own environment. This entailed control over the way resources were allocated.

* Small scale activity based on a well defined locality.

* Architects working directly with and accountable to users, and more precisely to organisations of working class tenants and residents in urban areas.

* A collective rather than an individual professional relationship.

* It was consequently a political as distinct from a professional matter and it involved at least the potential of conflict with the existing authority i.e. with the established patrons of architecture.
Community architecture so defined was for the architect a part-time, unpaid and temporary assignment. In many cases it resulted in the architect who worked with the tenants being in direct opposition to local authority architects, although the tenants themselves were the intended beneficiaries of the latter's proposals.

Central and Local Government Recognition:

Community architecture thus stemmed from a public need to prevent the worst excesses of urban renewal and in so doing to control the general form of building in the areas in which people lived and worked. Eventually the combined force of tenants demands together with increasing official concern over the new estates relating largely to vandalism, lead to changes in government policy. The new policies took two main forms - changes in built form, and changes in tenant involvement.

Changes in Built Form: Two years after is assumed office the 1964 Labour Government commissioned the Deeplish Study into the possibilities of rehabilitation instead of the clearance and high density urban redevelopment approach, established by the previous Conservative administration, and encouraged by means of subsidies. Under subsequent Labour governments the housing policy gradually changed from high rise/high density to low rise/high density and finally to the current preoccupation with low rise/medium density new build linked to rehabilitation of existing stock.

The built form of council housing was consequently transformed in the space of a few years in response to reactions to the problems caused by previous policies. These changes, which were intended to take account of the users and residents' wishes were directed by ministerial speeches and government reports and circulars; They were enforced by alterations to the subsidies.
The new form of housing however, reflected only the governments technical solutions to the problems experienced in the past. It answered some of the most vigorous complaints and rectified some of the most obvious mistakes. But tenants' and residents' views were as yet voiced through sample surveys. That is to say, the potential of a further mismatch between government policies and users' needs remained.

Changes in Tenant Involvement: The second change tackled this weakness and it is more far reaching in that it sought to extend the democratic process. The 1974 Labour government began to look for ways in which tenants could have more say in the design and management of their estates. The government Working Party into Housing Cooperatives had included in its terms of reference the following:

"(The Working Party is) to report to the Minister,... on ways in which local authority and housing association tenants can be enabled by co-operative management schemes to participate collectively in decisions which affect them ...." and

"..... Where conditions are not suitable for co-operatives, tenants should nevertheless be involved through consultation and participation in the running of their homes ...."

(DOE Circular 8/76)

The need for a degree of local control was thus officially acknowledged. A growing number of local authorities have recognised that this process should be extended. Tenants in these authorities have won the right of veto over council proposals affecting their area; their representatives have been co-opted with voting powers on to Council Committees; and the tenants co-operatives brief the council architects on the design of their new estates.

The idea of local control over resources has therefore begun as a logical progression taken in the light of past experience. The recipients of government policy are beginning to have a say in how their part of the
social wage is allocated. It is the contention of this report that these policies are the basis of the way ahead. An accountable and freely available public design service cannot come in the long term from an architectural fund for "the poor" serviced by private practitioners on an individual basis. It can only come through an extension of collective local control over resources which are channelled through local government and serviced by local authority architects and building workers. The situation is therefore envisaged where representatives of tenants and residents, together with local councillors, and trade unionists control the various components involved in producing the built environment in their area.

Initiatives such as ASSIST and others have already demonstrated this potential for new forms of practice and working relationships. They differ markedly from the current RIBA proposals. But merely to advocate their expansion is to propose a selective programme. Their valuable contribution and conclusions are best generalised and taken forward in a more radical way. It is suggested here that the time has come for their ideas to be implemented within the existing structure of publicly financed design. Only in this way can the experience of a previous community architecture be extended. To suggest otherwise is to avoid the central issue at stake in developing greater community control over services which people already pay for.

* ASSIST - Tenant Involvement Project in Glasgow Initiated by University of Strathclyde.
COMMUNITY ARCHITECTURE - THROUGH THE LOCAL COUNCILS?

The fullest possible democratisation of architectural practice, the development of "community architecture", is an important component of any attempt to give people more control over the environment in which they live. The RIBA believe, and their reasons will be examined later, that small private practices, given public subsidy, are the best way to promote this idea. Contrary to this it is argued here that a real public design service should be developed through a restructuring and democratisation of the many local councils and public architects departments already in existence throughout the country.

Just as community architecture appeared in the second half of the 20th Century because it was necessary, local government emerged in the early 19th Century only because it was socially and economically necessary for the maintenance and continuation of the newly industrialising society. Similarly the various local government services were added only when society had no other acceptable choice, e.g. Council housing legislation in 1919 was passed because 70 years of private philanthropic and other ad hoc provision had failed to alleviate the housing problem. On the other hand it is only through the extension of public control that the vast majority of people are able to secure the resources necessary for their health education and housing.

Local authority departments of architecture now employ nearly one third of all registered architects compared to less than 20% in 1952. Their emergence followed closely after legislation which made housing and schools a statutory local government responsibility. While local government architects carry out a variety of work their growth and continued existence is almost wholly dependent on the provision of schools and housing. These two counted for 8 times the value of all other council building work in 1976.
Thus local authority architects form the "in-house" design teams which local government required in its provision of buildings for various social services.

Many detractors argue that local government provision as a whole, including architects departments, for various reasons will always be insensitive to public demands and needs. It is argued here that this need not be the case. If lessons are learned from the recent past and acted upon, the local authority architectural service can become fully responsive to public requirements.

What has to be acknowledged is that this will call for radical and imaginative new departures and an effort of political will.

The arguments for a "community architecture" through the local authorities may be summarised as follows:

Resources: It has already been argued that access to and control over resources is central to the development of "community architecture". Local councils are in a position to provide all the necessary resources - land, finance, architectural services and in many cases, with direct labour, building services - through their existing, locally based structures. In addition, it is only when these resources are publicly owned that their use can be controlled by people through their elected representatives. Privately owned land and finance, to which only a minority have access are used simply in the most profitable way for shareholders, regardless of social need.

Accountability: Although the internal arrangements of local authorities may need some rigorous re-appraisal, their departments are, at least in theory, accountable at an overall policy level to the locally elected council. Their architects departments, operating as a service and not for private gain, are already indirectly accountable to the local community, and can become directly accountable.
Integration: Community involvement and control relates to more than housing. Social and welfare provision, transportation, industry, the environment and other factors also affect the life of the community. A participatory and democratic local authority is the only existing agency able to co-ordinate and integrate all these services both within and between localities.

Construction: The concept "community architecture" suggests a new and dynamic relationship between architects and the local people. This co-operation should be extended into the construction process itself, into the relationship between designers and building workers. Labour's document "Building Britain's Future" recognises the mistrust and misunderstanding that at present divides these two groups. It also recognises the value of Direct Works departments and calls for their expansion. Through the area-based local authority design and construction teams envisaged by this report, both these objectives could be met, to the advantage of all parties involved - architects, building workers and local people.

Tenant Participation: The Government has already committed itself to encouraging the development of tenant participation and control in housing management, but this type of involvement can only be a part of "enabling tenants to exercise real control over their living conditions" (D.O.E. Circular 8/76 "Housing Co-operatives"). There is obviously an accompanying need for tenants, collectively and individually, to control provision and design of both rehabilitation and new build housing. With its already substantial involvement in this sector and its ability to bring together tenants, prospective tenants, resources, and designs and construction workers, the local authority has a central role to play in developing tenant participation at all levels of housing provision.

For these reasons it is argued in this report that local councils at the lowest tier of local government operate a service which is not motivated primarily by the concern with profitability which is characteristic of the private sector nor with the paternalism of charitable provision. Consequently, they form the most suitable basis for the development of a democratic and accountable "community architecture".
LOCAL COUNCILS - CRITICISMS:

In the following section, the main criticisms of local authority departments of architecture will be examined briefly and changes proposed. It is outside the scope of this report to suggest other radical changes to the structure of local government or to other council departments. However, as Malpass (2) for example pointed out, it is clear that Client as well as Town planning and Valuation departments form policies which already determine land use and, to a large extent, the overall form of development, before the project architect even becomes involved. Nevertheless, it is believed that the proposals contained here not only are substantial improvements in themselves but also incorporate the potential for future change in the same direction. That is, these are not seen as once and for all prescriptions, but as part of a continuing process of democratisation of local government.

General Criticisms:

Despite the fact that local authority architects and local government in general provide a socially useful service both are the subject of much criticism. Nor is the problem of explaining this persistent vilification primarily one of pointing to possible causes. Anyone acquainted with either the architectural profession or with tenants organisations could readily make suggestions.

It appears that these general criticisms are based on two separate arguments. Firstly, because local authority practice is a public and non-profit-making institution it will be regarded in society generally, including within the architectural profession as a threat to the prevailing ideology of individualism and the market place.
The denigration of the local authority architect began with the emergence of modern public practice in the late 19th Century. As Summerson has noted,

"All the glory and much of the profit was associated with the private practitioners."
(J. Summerson - "The London Building World of the 1860's")

By the early 1920's ideas which have continued to the present time were firmly established.

"Employment in the staff of a local authority ... was sought only by those to whom the pay envelope was a very much more urgent consideration than opportunities for the creation of architecture."
(J. Summerson)

The many examples of local authority architecture praised by the public and the profession alike have been, and are still ignored when the image of public practice is being discussed. That is, ideas about public practice are generalised from the worst examples. For private practice the opposite appears to be the case, so that in successive surveys amongst architectural students for example, a large majority consistently put private practice as their first choice of work place.

At the same time however, as local authorities themselves became increasingly important as patrons of architecture, the existence of in-house local authority architects will certainly pose an economic threat to private practice. Thus, it may be thought not surprising that a profession which is dominated by the ethos of private practice but which is dependent on the public sector for work, rather than resolve the contradiction of its own position will conduct a continuous campaign of vilification against local authority departments of architecture.
Criticisms by Tenants and Local Authority Architects:

There is also another and separate concern over local authority departments of architecture. It is to be found amongst the consumers of the service and amongst local authority architects themselves. The tenants' problems have been documented and are still documented in magazines such as 'Community Action'. Malpass (2) has written one of the few serious studies of local authority architects and their problems. Both sources describe authoritarian and hierarchical departments, insensitive to the needs of user and architect alike. Job architects labouring under many external and internal constraints and the consumers of their work never meet because of the 'boundaries' which have grown up in the local government institution.

It is conventional to talk of local government problems in terms of hierarchies, but these are essentially abstracted from other connections and are thus not very helpful. It is more convenient to think of the problem existing between architect and user as one of 'boundaries'. The boundaries themselves exist because of the origins and social role of local government. Two of these boundaries which insulate producer from consumer are function-based teams and office hierarchies.

Tenants and residents in the past have shown that they are able to formulate and achieve their own demands. Local authority architects have not met them halfway. Because of this the proposals contained here will be taken from the point of view of amending structures to increase the accountability of the architect to the user while at the same time increasing democracy within the department.
INTERIM PROPOSALS:

1. LOCAL AREA CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

Since control over design cannot be separated from control over the resources of land and finance, changes are required in the formal council structure to enable control to be exercised at community level.

Although councillors are elected on an area basis they serve on function-based committees (housing, education) which have control over the expenditure of money on the provision of services across the whole local authority area. Real local needs tend to be subordinated to an assumed general interest. The role of a councillor as a committee member therefore may be in conflict with his or her role as a representative of a local interest.

In order that local area interests are safeguarded, it is suggested that a further tier be added below the main functional committees (c.f. neighbourhood councils). These would be area committees consisting of representatives of local tenants and residents organisations, local councillors and trade unionists. The size of the area would obviously be a matter for discussion. These committees should deal with all council matters relating to their area and would consequently relate to several or all of the main function-based committees. They should have powers of recommendation and of veto in their relationship to the main committees. They should brief architects and have power of approval over designs and standards.

2. DESIGN TEAMS SHOULD BE AREA-BASED INSTEAD OF FUNCTION-BASED

So that they can relate to local area committees and the requirements of local people. The present arrangement of function-based architectural teams servicing function-based client committees and departments has two major disadvantages. Firstly, in providing a service within this structure, architects are isolated from the people who will use their buildings. Architects work on a Borough-wide basis, and people's needs and wishes, insofar as they are taken
into account at all, are averaged out and presented to the architect in briefing guides as criteria to be designed for in much the same way as are site constraints. The total constitutes a design problem and the concept of the a-political officer paid to solve technical problems is thus reinforced. Similarly the professional ideology of individual architects expressing themselves in their designs is sustained.

Secondly, this system creates a "closed circuit" method of liaison. For the architect: architect-client department-client committee. It is illogical as well as difficult to break this circle to relate to local residents or even local councillors. The public also find this organisational boundary virtually impregnable. They are vulnerable to official action yet the boundary renders the officers immune to the consequence of that action.

It should be noted that the term "area based team" as distinct from "function based team" does not necessarily mean that the team is located in an area. It merely means that a team is responsible for the work in an area. As such, it would offer the architects a variety of types of project. It would also enable them to initiate action in their area instead of being the recipient of decisions by others.

3. AREA DESIGN TEAMS SHOULD BE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY AND SHOULD HAVE AROUND TWELVE MEMBERS AS A SUGGESTED OPTIMUM

The term multi-disciplinary would in the local authority context include planners and valuers as well as the more usual design team members such as quantity surveyors and engineers.

4. JOB ARCHITECTS (and other team members) SHOULD REPORT DIRECTLY TO COMMITTEE

Each job architect and team member should be responsible directly to the committee for the work he or she carries out. In this way
not only will committee members relate to the person actually producing the work, but job architects will be aware that they work in a political forum as well as a technical one.

5. **ABOLISH POSTS BETWEEN GROUP LEADER AND CHIEF ARCHITECT**

Group leaders should become responsible directly to the area committee and thus to the Council for the collective work of the group. The chief architect would then perform a co-ordinating role amongst the groups, similar to the role performed by the elected leader of the council vis-a-vis committees. Occupants of redundant posts to be found a more useful role in the new structure.

It is envisaged that in the future group leaders should be subject to election by their group and that the chief architect should be elected from amongst group leaders, with periodic change built in.

It should be noted that the present vertical structuring of the architects departments stemmed from the late 19th Century private practice model. That is, from a form of practice comprised of one principal and a small number of apprentices. The largest practices of that time had one partner and around 25 apprentices. As private practices grew so did the number of partners, each being equally responsible under Partnership Law. (A common ratio of partner to staff is 1:15). In public practice the concept of one chief remained so that when the chief architect became responsible to the council for the actions of more than 100 staff, intermediate grades were introduced whose sole function was to control the job architect. Theirs is a non-design function and their status is dependent on increasing the proportion of procedural and managerial matters under their control. They form an effective boundary between job architect and chief architect, let alone between job architect and councillor or job architect and user.
6. **ESTABLISH JOINT WORKING GROUPS WITH DLGB**

To consider how to achieve better designed, constructed and maintained buildings. In the longer term it is envisaged that separate professional teams should disappear in favour of design and build teams within the service of the local authority rather than within the building contractors' organisation.

**Summary:**

It is clear that many if not all, of these proposals could be put into effect fairly readily. It may be noted that in at least two London Boroughs, proposals similar to these are being actively discussed as departments of architecture are re-organised.

These proposals are seen as part of a continuing process of democratisation of local government, without which a lasting community architecture is not possible. They are not seen as a final solution but are offered as practical proposals applicable at this stage. The next stage in the development of these ideas is to widen this discussion to include representatives of tenants, local councils, central government and NALGO and other public sector unions.

In advocating these proposals it is recognised that there are other relevant questions which should be considered but which are outside the scope of this report. e.g.

- Devolution of power from central to local government, particularly in relation to the control over building finance at present exercised by central government departments.
- The relationships between architects and other council departments.
How the RIBA form of building contract dictates the relationship between architect and building worker by separating design and construction, how this is unnecessary in the public sector, and how a new arrangement could be evolved to facilitate the formation of local authority design and build teams.

The role played by architectural education, including further discussion of the Labour Party proposals for overcoming the present sectarian and private practice bias. (3).
THE PROPOSALS OF THE RIBA COMMUNITY ARCHITECTURE WORKING GROUP:

It is significant that the RIBA's proposals for "community architecture" have developed now, when architecture, especially in the private sector, faces an unprecedented crisis. Although there are supporters of CAWG who are genuinely seeking new ways of relating to the community, hard economic logic and self-preservation rather than a new humanitarianism appear to lurk behind the present professional vogue for "community architecture".

Figure 1. shows the serious position faced by private architectural practice. This declining workload is largely a result of economic recession in the economy as a whole. The construction industry, as usual, is affected particularly badly. However, this crisis has been compounded by structural changes in the construction industry which threaten the position of the architect over and above the results of the general recession. The RIBA acknowledge this;

"... community architecture is not a passing trend. Economic and social pressures will ensure that for many architects, the nature of the job will change ...."
(cited in Architects Journal 19.4.78)

The most important of these changes is the increasing division of labour, whereby specialists are taking over more and more of the traditional functions of the architect, and the growth of the package deal and design and build which largely by-pass the architect altogether. The effect of the recession and structural change is made more difficult for the private architect by a falling amount of work commissioned from private practice by the public sector. (See Figure 2.).

The RIBA are naturally anxious to find areas in which private practice can continue to function, both to help to ride out what after all, may only be a relatively short-term crisis in the industry as a whole. They also need to adapt to the longer-term structural changes, Figure 3., which shows both the state of the traditional areas of private practice involvement and the comparatively healthy state of repairs and maintenance gives a clear indication of why private practice needs to move into small scale rehabilitation and renovation work.
Source: The Monopolies Commission Report and RIBA.
FIGURE 2.

Percentage

I 1963 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 75 77 78

Sources: Monopolies Commission Report,
A.J. and National Board for Prices and Incomes.

PROPORTION OF NEW BUILDING WORK FOR PUBLIC AUTHORITIES
CERTIFIED BY PRIVATE PRACTICE.
BRITISH CONSTRUCTION OUTPUT, ACTUAL AND FORECAST BY SECTOR.

Source: A.J. 28.6.78
The problem they now face is to persuade a justifiably sceptical public, given the role of the architect in the concrete jungle and high-rise boom of the '60s and early '70s, that they have really changed their outlook and allegiances. So the new, democratic, humane and caring "community architect" is born.

The RIBA's major proposal is for a community aid fund to be established, with finance from the Government, to enable the setting up of small, area-based architectural advice centres. They see these operating alongside and in a similar way to legal advice centres and, more interestingly, doctors' surgeries. This latter parallel is important as the assumptions underlying it reflect how little the attitude of the profession has changed. The medical profession is not renowned for its openness. Certainly, a more aware public would undermine the professional role of the doctor. Can the public expect anything different from architects, or will mystification continue for the sake of the architect's social and economic standing. "Community architecture" in the past was a dynamic relationship of co-operation, as equals, between architects and local people. The Community Architecture Working Group's proposals seem to contain a paternalism and protection of professional interests inimical to this open and active relationship.

Notwithstanding these professional and paternalistic assumptions which seem likely to characterise any development of "community architecture" as envisaged by CAWG, there is a disturbing narrowness in the actual nature of the proposals which tends to limit any advantages they might otherwise contain. Firstly, they do not address themselves to the problem of the construction industry and the relationship between design and construction. Within their proposals the mistrust between the two sides will remain. The RIBA's response to this question has been to criticise the Labour Party's proposals and to re-assert the professional independence of the architect from the builder. Furthermore the proposals refer only to housing. There appears to be little attempt to see how this will relate to all the other social, political and economic factors which go to make up the environment, and how these can be democratically integrated at the level of the community.
"Community architecture" should not only involve democratic and co-operative relationships between architects, local people and building workers, but should also promote internal office democracy for the architects themselves. In private practice there is a growing awareness of the different interests of the salaried architects who produce the work and the partners who own the practice. We await expectantly to hear how the RIBA, dominated as it is by the owners in private practice, proposes to solve this internal conflict in the new community style, private offices.

CONCLUSION:

While the undoubted sincerity of many of the people involved in the Community Architecture Working Group is beyond question, their overall approach seems to contain more dedication to self-preservation in a period of crisis for the architectural profession than it does to the needs of the community.

There is, however, a need to develop "community architecture" and democratic accountability. It has been suggested in this report that this is most likely to be achieved through Local Councils. The way forward should be seen not through a narrow professional self-defence but through a positive liaison between users, producers and designers arising from a development of the potential for greater democratic involvement and accountability within the existing local government structure.
Select Bibliography:

Some of the issues raised in this Brief Report are dealt with in more detail in:

1. NAM PDS Group papers on -
   
   * The Origins, Evolution and Structure of Local Authority Departments of Architecture.
   * Housing Associations - A Democratic Alternative,
     Both in "Public Design Service Conference Proceedings May 1978".
     Available from NAM, 9 Poland Street, W.1
     Price £1.75 incl. p & p.
   * NAM A National Design Service. Papers 2 & 3 1976 -
     Price 75p. incl. p & p.
