

**Masculinities, Planning Knowledge and
Domestic Space in Britain, c. 1941-1961.**

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of PhD.

I, Kevin Guyan, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.
Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this
has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis examines the significance of masculinities in debates about planning the home in mid-twentieth century Britain, the dissemination of domestic ideals in planning publications and at housing exhibitions, and men's experiences of these ideals in reality.

Emboldened by a historically specific set of challenges that followed the 1941 Blitz and demobilisation after the Second World War, planning experienced a 'golden age' in the 1940s. As the borders of expert knowledge expanded, and quotidian practices became a topic of national significance, planners promoted men's presence within the home as part of Britain's postwar reconstruction.

The first chapter analyses planning publications and films to reveal the proliferation of technocratic, rational and omniscient planning identities and their effect on how experts studied and conceptualised the home. Focus then moves to explore the methods used to disseminate ideal representations of the home and men's domestic actions at major exhibitions such as Britain Can Make It (1946), the Festival of Britain (1951) and the model Lansbury Estate in East London. The final chapter uses oral histories and observational studies to discern how men used their homes to perform masculine identities and assesses whether these lived experiences aligned with planners' domestic ideals.

Historians have overlooked the relationship between the men who planned homes and the men who lived in them, and thus failed to properly attribute agency to *all* actors in the planning process. This study therefore addresses the complex relationship between planners (architects), observers (social investigators) and inhabitants to reveal the effects of class on the efficacy of planning ideas. Regardless of whether men accepted, subverted or rejected planners' domestic ideals, this study brings into focus the pervasive influence of normative masculinities and illustrates connections between men's access to well-planned homes and their ability to perform family-orientated practices.

Acronyms

BCA	British Cartoon Archive
BCMI	Britain Can Make It
CoID	Council of Industrial Design
DCA	Design Council Archive
DHC	Documenting Homes Collection, Geffrye Museum
DIA	Design and Industries Association
LBC	London Brick Company
LCC	London County Council
LCS	London Cooperative Society
LSE	London School of Economics
MO	Mass Observation
NA	National Archive, Kew
NMGC	National Marriage Guidance Council
NUTG	National Union of Townswomen Guilds
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
TA	Tate Archive
TFC	Testimony Films Collection, British Library
THA	Tower Hamlets Archive
UCL	University College London
UEA	University of Edinburgh Archive

List of Illustrations

- Figure 2.1:** Front cover of Ralph Tubbs, *Living in Cities* (1942).
- Figure 2.2:** 'Today – and Tomorrow', advertisement for Gyproc Products from *The Architectural Review* (1941).
- Figure 2.3:** Illustration from CB Purdom, *How Should We Rebuild London?* (1945).
- Figure 2.4:** Advertisement for the London Brick Company, in JM Richards, *An Introduction to Modern Architecture* (1940).
- Figure 2.5:** Front cover of *Your Home Planned by Labour* (1943).
- Figure 2.6:** The 12 'best designed' objects and photographs of 'The Experts', which included housewife Mary Harrison, from *Design Quiz* (1946).
- Figure 2.7:** Arthur Ling (left) and the *County of London Plan* team in *Proud City* (1946).
- Figure 2.8:** Planners (from left to right) Percy Johnson-Marshall, LW Lane and Hubert Bennett examine further plans for the reconstruction of Stepney-Poplar (1955), [UEA 237/PJM/LCC/E/2.3.2](#).
- Figure 2.9:** The planner positioned 'above' his plans and equipped with his triangular ruler, in *The Youngest County: A Description of London as a County and its Public Services* (1951).
- Figure 2.10:** The built environment as part of the natural world, from Tubbs, *Living in Cities*.
- Figure 2.11:** A rational system for work in the kitchen, from Tubbs, *Living in Cities*.
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- Figure 3.1:** Albert Snoddy kisses goodbye to his old home at 6 Yatton Street ahead of moving to the new Lansbury Estate, in *First Citizens of New Estate* (1951).
- Figure 3.2:** The Council of Industrial Design's 'Design Quiz Competition', *Daily Herald Modern Homes Exhibition* (1946), [DCA 474286](#).
- Figure 3.3:** 'Gremlin Grange' (3 May 1951), [NA WORK 25/207](#).
- Figure 3.4:** 'People keep asking me for the name of the architect', cartoon from the *News Chronicle* (4 May 1951), [BCA AH0033](#).
- Figure 3.5:** 'The living room in a family house looking through into the dining room' by Frank Austin and Neville Ward, Ideal Home Exhibition (1949), [DCA 350/11](#).

Figure 3.6: 'Design for the living room in a small house on a new estate' by Elizabeth Denby (1946), [DCA 0829](#).

Figure 3.7: 'The Young Artisan and his family' illustrated by Nicolas Bentley, [DCA 32/2/1/38](#).

Figure 3.8: 'Noise' designed by Ronald Avery, [NA WORK 25/199](#).

Figure 3.9: 'The Site as it was: Nos. 74-79 Upper North Street' (21 June 1950), [NA WORK 25/199](#).

Figure 3.10: Promotional poster for Live Architecture (1951).

Figure 3.11: 'The Site as it was: No. 33 Bygrove Street, a look through the open front door' (29 June 1950), [NA WORK 25/199](#).

Figure 3.12: 'The Site as it was: Sanitary fittings at No. 33 Bygrove Street' (29 June 1950), [NA WORK 25/199](#).

Figure 4.1: 'In time Fathers make Splendid Mothers' from 'How to Be a Father', *Picture Post* (29 July 1939).

Figure 4.2: George Copperwheat spending his evening at home with his family, in Jill Craigie's *The Way We Live* (1946).

Figure 4.3: David Davies plays with his daughters in the parlour of his house on a modern housing estate, in 'What It Means to Live in a Good House', *Picture Post* (1 January 1944).

Figure 4.4: The front cover of *Practical Householder* (July 1959) shows a man covering his bathroom wall as his wife watches.

Contents

Abstract	3
Acronyms	4
List of Illustrations	5
Acknowledgements	9
1. Introduction	11
Why masculinities matter in mid-twentieth century Britain	12
Sources	17
Defining men and masculinities	22
Class and masculinities	27
Planners, observers and inhabitants	31
Chapter outline	37
2. Expert Knowledge and Planning Identities	45
The intellectual landscape of postwar planning	48
Influences on planning identities	56
Masculine planning identities, methods and ideas	75
3. The Exhibition of Ideal Domestic Masculinities	97
The language of exhibitions	102
Pedagogical methods	114
Representations of domestic masculinities on the Lansbury Estate	131
Working class agency and challenges to expert knowledge	148
4. Men's Uses and Experiences of the Home	155
Men's experiences of returning home	158
Men's experiences of class on new estates	165
Men's experiences of past, present and future	172

Inside the home	176
Housework and privacy	177
Living rooms	183
Dining spaces	189
Bedrooms	192
Gardens	198
Sheds, hobbies and Do-It-Yourself	201
Performing masculinities in the home	207
'The new man stays at home'	211
5. Conclusions	216
Future directions for study	220
Homes and masculinities since the mid-twentieth century	222
Contemporary impacts	224
Bibliography	229

Acknowledgements

I first found myself thinking about histories of the home during conversations with my grandparents. Their childhood experiences living in 'but and ben' and tenement housing in the Scottish city of Aberdeen in the 1940s seemed a world away from how we lived today. Stories of large families squeezed into overcrowded conditions, shared wash facilities and gas lighting made me realise how radically domestic life changed for many families in the middle decades of the twentieth century. By the 1950s, my grandparents had moved to spacious homes on new estates and enjoyed many of the domestic appliances and other 'luxuries' discussed in this research. My grandparents' personal stories sparked my curiosity in this subject, and for that I am grateful.

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Chapter One: Introduction

I moved into a council house not long after I got married and it was the best thing that ever happened in my life. To see a house with a bathroom in it and a back garden, I was completely taken in.¹

Sam Watts (1925-2014) worked as a rigger in the Liverpool docks in the 1950s and shared his experience of moving from the city's slums to a council house in Bootle in the 2013 Ken Loach film *The Spirit of '45*. Sam, with his wife Bridie and two children, moved into his new house in 1948 and remained there until his death in 2014. The emotional experience of relocation never left him. He told the *Guardian* in 2013, '[w]e couldn't believe it... we had a kitchen and a bathroom and a backyard'.² This stood in contrast to the domestic experiences of people living in 341,554 overcrowded houses in England and Wales prior to the start of the Second World War.³ Many families lived without access to basic facilities and a minimal amount of privacy. In the Shoreditch area of London, for example, one-fifth of the working class population lived in houses with three or more people per room.⁴ Sam's experience of Liverpool's interwar slums painted an equally desperate picture of Britain's working class housing conditions, 'I was one of eight children and we slept five in a bed, in my bed was three lads and two girls. We got into bed of a night with a bed full of vermin... they were in the building, behind the wallpaper, in the skirting boards and we just got in that bed and lived with them'.⁵

Sam represents one of many whose lives changed after moving into a new home. Between 1945 and 1955, the construction of new housing relocated around 1.5 million families from old communities into new houses.⁶ By 1961, the government calculated that a thousand families moved into a newly furnished home every working day.⁷ As living standards and housing

¹ Sam Watts in Ken Loach, *The Spirit of '45*, 2013.

² Yvonne Roberts, 'The Spirit of '45: Where Did It Go?', *The Guardian* (2 March 2013), <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/mar/02/spirit-45-ken-loach-nhs-history>, accessed 11 January 2016.

³ According to the definition established in the 1935 Housing Act, in Gilbert McAllister and Elizabeth McAllister, *Town and Country Planning* (London: Faber & Faber, 1941), 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Loach, *The Spirit of '45*.

⁶ University of the West of England, 'The History of Council Housing', *The Construction Website* (2008), http://fet.uwe.ac.uk/conweb/house_ages/council_housing/print.htm, accessed 22 April 2015.

⁷ Parker Morris Committee, *Homes for Today & Tomorrow (Department of the Environment)* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961), 1.

conditions improved, men found opportunities to use domestic space in new ways and construct identities as husbands and fathers that differed from previous generations. This thesis investigates how masculinities feature in debates about planning the postwar home, and examines the influence of gendered knowledge on planners and observers, such as architects and sociologists, and the ideal domestic practices imagined for male inhabitants. In doing so, I examine the intended and experienced effects of material circumstances on men in the home, foreground influences of planning ideas on expressions of masculinity in mid-twentieth century Britain and assess whether planners' imagined ideals matched men's practices in reality.

Why masculinities matter in mid-twentieth century Britain

Men's domestic lives faced a unique set of difficulties in the 1940s. Most notably, families experienced demobilisation as a turning point, with 2.25 million married men returning home from service abroad after the end of the Second World War.⁸ For many, this brought to the surface a number of social problems and shattered the image of familial bliss that kept men's morale going while away from home. The altered status of the male breadwinner and weakened link between employment and masculinity further compounded this period of change.⁹ In response to these specific challenges, and building upon an expanded landscape of expert knowledge in which quotidian practices became a topic of national significance, planners promoted alternative ways for men to use and experience the home and its material objects.

Two key developments intersected in 1940s Britain to create an environment fertile for expert intervention in men's everyday domestic lives. Firstly, planning enjoyed a 'golden age' and, as Peter Larkham notes, there emerged a shared belief among politicians and policymakers 'in planning as an overall principle for ordering human affairs'.¹⁰ The Blitz, a German aerial bombing campaign that lasted between September 1940 and May

⁸ Alan Allport, *Demobbed: Coming Home After the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 52.

⁹ Stephen Brooke, 'Gender and Working Class Identity in Britain During the 1950s', *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 4 (Summer 2001): 775.

¹⁰ Peter Larkham, 'Exhibiting Planning in Wartime Britain', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 131.

1941, had razed vast urban areas in London, Liverpool, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Glasgow and several other cities.¹¹ Planners quickly saw beyond the rubble and understood the environmental devastation as an opportunity to bring into reality their visions for modern living.¹² Rosemary Wakeman describes 1940s planning as the 'discipline of the future' that encouraged a generation of young thinkers to assist the state in the construction of 'modern housing, schools, community centres and new towns for a transformed urban society'.¹³ Planning went beyond the field of architecture and also included town planners, demographers, interior designers and statisticians working for local governments, design organisations, exhibition groups and national government. As a way to share ideas with the public, the 1940s witnessed an unprecedented boom in planning exhibitions, peaking around 1945 but continuing to capture the public's attention into the early 1950s.¹⁴ By 1961, optimism among planners and the public for what planning could achieve had dissipated but not fully disappeared. The government-organised Parker Morris Committee published *Homes for Today and Tomorrow*, which set out planning recommendations and space standards for local authorities and private developers.¹⁵ In 1967 the report's space standards became mandatory in all New Towns, a ruling extended to all council housing in 1969.¹⁶

Secondly, men's relationship to the domestic sphere underwent a transformation, particularly among the working classes. Claire Langhamer documents changes in the domestic ideals of the working classes during the interwar period but explains that affluence, coupled with improved social and housing conditions after the Second World War, enabled these values to flourish.¹⁷ Within middle class homes, Alison Light has shown how definitions of Englishness became synonymous with the private home in the interwar period.¹⁸ I use planning sources and personal testimonies to

¹¹ The History Place, 'The Blitz', *The History Place* (1998),

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/about-blitz.htm>, accessed 20 October 2015

¹² For example, Ralph Tubbs, *Living in Cities* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1942), 21; Patrick Abercrombie, *Town and Country Planning*, Second Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 27.

¹³ Rosemary Wakeman, 'Rethinking Postwar Planning History', *Planning Perspectives* 29, no. 2 (3 April 2014): 154.

¹⁴ Larkham, 'Exhibiting Planning in Wartime Britain', 132. Also see Peter Larkham and Keith Lilley, 'Exhibiting the City: Planning Ideas and Public Involvement in Wartime and Early Post-War Britain', *Town Planning Review* 83, no. 6 (January 2012): 647–68.

¹⁵ Parker Morris Committee, *Homes for Today & Tomorrow*, 7.

¹⁶ Ines Newman, *Reclaiming Local Democracy: A Progressive Future for Local Government* (London: Policy Press, 2014), xvi.

¹⁷ Claire Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 1 (March 2007): 179.

¹⁸ Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), 208–21.

show how these developments expanded to working class homes in the 1940s.

At the same time, social investigators grew increasingly worried about the negative effects of the Second World War on men's relationships with their families and looked to studies of everyday life for resolutions.¹⁹ Chris Waters explains how this refocusing of expert knowledge identified a number of social changes 'unleashed by the war'.²⁰ For example, men's wartime absence meant that many boys grew up in female-only households without male role models, an issue that the national press linked to an apparent 'upsurge' of postwar homosexuality.²¹ In reality, as Matt Cook explains, the state's decision to foreground the marital home as a means to remedy the instability of war meant that the activities of queer men appeared more incongruous and, by the 1950s, 'the homosexual was depicted more determinedly outside and in opposition to supposed norms of the home and family'.²² Matt Houlbrook surmises that the war 'seemed to have rendered Britain's stability problematic, destabilizing the critical interpretative categories – of masculinity, youth, and nationhood'.²³ Historians have generally overlooked the gendered experiences of white, 'heterosexual', working class men.²⁴ I therefore examine this collection of 'normative' actors to reveal the centrality of masculinities in how experts imagined the nation's postwar reconstruction.

Although expert interest in men's domestic lives unquestionably increased, I hesitate to label the 1940s a 'crisis of masculinity' and instead focus attention on how these anxieties shaped planners' interest in the home and understanding of men's domestic actions as an essential tenet of the nation's recovery.²⁵ Richard Hornsey argues that homes 'presented [a]

¹⁹ Michael Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain Since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), vii.

²⁰ Chris Waters, 'The Homosexual as a Social Being in Britain, 1945–1968', *The Journal of British Studies* 51, no. 3 (21 December 2012): 685–710.

²¹ Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 237.

²² Matt Cook, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London*, *Gender and Sexualities in History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 144, 146. These fears materialised through a number of government inquiries into children, marriage and family life such as the *Report of the Care of Children Committee* (1946), the *Royal Commission on Population* (1949) and the *Report into Procedure in Matrimonial Causes* (1949).

²³ Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 236–37.

²⁴ Houlbrook writes, '[t]o a remarkable extent, historians have devoted their attentions to 'marginal' and 'dangerous' sexualities – prostitution, cross-dressing, promiscuity, public sex and homosexuality', in Matt Houlbrook, 'Cities', in *The Modern History of Sexuality*, ed. Harry Cocks and Matt Houlbrook (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 148.

²⁵ Stephen Brooke, *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 120. Also see Sonya Rose, *Which People's*

formative space of national citizenship and an important battleground in the attempt to secure social order and psychological stability'.²⁶ I go further with Hornsey's claim and show that planners' masculine identities shaped their conceptualisation of the home as a site of national reconstruction and the importance of men's domestic actions. As a result, the interior activities of the nation's homes became emblematic of the country's postwar reconstruction and well-planned model housing developments, most notably the Lansbury Estate in East London, were understood as templates for the country's future. I use the term 'well-planned' to describe improved houses that became available during this period and provided separate bedrooms for parents and children, hot water and electric power, an indoor washroom and toilet, and (in most cases) a private back garden. These homes not only transformed men's material experiences but, as I intend to demonstrate, also helped reconfigure gender identities in mid-twentieth century Britain.

In bringing together histories of the home and histories of masculinity, this study presents another response to the question posed by John Tosh in *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (1999): '[w]hat does masculinity have to do with domesticity?'²⁷ Tosh's research helped reframe historical studies of men and the home as it focused greater attention on men's domestic activities and departed from past understandings of the home as a 'separate sphere'.²⁸ Since the publication of Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987), histories of the home devoted greater attention to the study of 'separate spheres', which assumed women's presence in the private, domestic world and men's public lives outside.²⁹ Although 'separate spheres' research most often focused on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, its impact upon

War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 73–92, 107–50.

²⁶ Richard Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect: Unruly Life in Postwar London* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 201.

²⁷ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 1.

²⁸ Trev Broughton, 'The Importance of Being Ordinary', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 49 (2000): 254–55.

²⁹ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Discussed in Susie Steinbach, 'Can We Still Use "Separate Spheres"?' *British History 25 Years After Family Fortunes*, *History Compass* 10, no. 11 (November 2012): 827.

scholarship meant that men's historical presence in the home, when discussed at all, remained marginal.³⁰

The discipline has expanded and advanced since the publication of Tosh's seminal work. For example, Julie-Marie Strange identifies a recent turn in scholarship to consider the 'material culture of domestic interiors' and, in her own research of working class fathers in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, examines the home as a 'geographical and imagined space distinct from categories of household, dwelling and house'.³¹

Similarly, Karen Harvey highlights how objects' materialities (their shape, function and decoration) 'have a role to play in creating and shaping experiences, identities and relationships'.³² Megan Doolittle follows a similar approach and shows that, during the period 1840 to 1900, family practices in many working class homes revolved around the father's chair and grandfather clock.³³ My study underlines the home's ability to shape, constrain and define performances of domestic masculinities in the mid-twentieth century. However, unlike Strange, Harvey and Doolittle, I analyse men's lived experiences alongside planning ideals as a means to further examine gender within the home.

I use spatial studies of the home, in which domestic spaces provide the setting for the performance of masculine practices, to build upon Laura King's recent research on the emergence of family-orientated masculinities in Britain between 1914 and 1960.³⁴ King has documented the popularisation of 'the family man' and identifies a list of reconfigured masculine attributes, in particular men's greater emotional interest and involvement in the lives of their children. King importantly notes, 'shifts towards more family-centric or domestic ways of living for the working classes were enabled rather than transformed by the changing living standards and expectations in an era of affluence'.³⁵ This study's analysis of planning ideals and men's domestic experiences draws upon King's

³⁰ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 2; Laura King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, 1914-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4-5.

³¹ Julie-Marie Strange, 'Fatherhood, Furniture and the Inter-Personal Dynamics of Working-Class Homes, c. 1870-1914', *Urban History* 40, no. 2 (May 2013): 271.

³² Karen Harvey, 'Introduction: Practical Matters', in *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey, Routledge Guides to Using Historical Sources (London: Routledge, 2009), 5.

³³ Megan Doolittle, 'Time, Space, and Memories: The Father's Chair and Grandfather Clocks in Victorian Working-Class Domestic Lives', *Home Cultures* 8, no. 3 (1 November 2011): 259.

³⁴ King, *Family Men*, 5, 156.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 122. Also see Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship', 179; Jon Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, 1930-64', *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 2 (1 June 2013): 289.

discussion of family-orientated men but more explicitly connects men's access to new domestic environments and their ability to perform new masculine identities.

Improved living standards and affluence do not fully account for this shift in men's actions and behaviours; a fuller picture only becomes apparent when analysis also examines the planning developments that made these changes possible. This research therefore brings together intellectual threads from histories of planning, gender and the home, alongside an examination of didactic and experiential source materials from the time, to demonstrate the significance of masculinities in the planning of the mid-twentieth century home. Unlike previous histories of men and the home, I focus on the complex exchange of values between men who planned homes and men who lived in them. Analysis of the dialogue and dissonance between planners and inhabitants, as well as observers who reported on these developments, enables us to better understand the influences of class and gender on how historical actors conceptualised and experienced domestic space.

Sources

Movement into new forms of housing affected men's lives across Britain. However, to accommodate regional and national differences, the geographical focus and source base of each chapter varies. This reflects the availability of source material but also the different ways planners and inhabitants thought about the home. For example, the planning publications and films discussed in chapter two generally present ideas that planners imagined could apply to housing in Britain as a whole.³⁶ Likewise, the exhibitions discussed in chapter three present 'national' ideas but all took place in London and mainly attracted a local audience. Chapter four's discussion of men's domestic experiences differs as it focuses on examples from English towns and cities such as London, Coventry, Oxford, Bradford and Sunderland. When viewed as a whole, the chapters present a picture of mid-twentieth century Britain where expert knowledge about the home

³⁶ Publications such as Ralph Tubbs' *Living in Cities* make no reference to specific cities or regions. Even when planners focused on a specific city, such as John Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie's *County of London Plan*, the plans read as a model for other cities to replicate.

developed at a national level, yet did not necessarily align with the everyday experiences of people living across Britain.

Chapter two analyses planning publications such as Ralph Tubbs' *Living in Cities* (1942), Patrick Abercrombie and John Forshaw's *County of London Plan* (1943) and the government report *Design for Dwellings* (1944), as well as planning films such as Ralph Keen's *The Proud City* (1945) and Kay Mander's *A Plan to Work On* (1948), to demonstrate the influence of masculinities on how planners' imagined their role in postwar reconstruction and the ideas they developed. Publications and films showcase technocratic and rational approaches to housing that produced understandings of the home and its male inhabitants that solidified the omniscient knowledge of experts in 1940s Britain. These sources allow us to examine issues of housing, architecture and planning as shaped by ideas about men and masculinities. However, they reveal limited information on the public's reception of planning ideas.

To help remedy this limitation, chapter three examines exhibition material from the Daily Herald Modern Homes Exhibition (1946), Britain Can Make It (1946), the Festival of Britain (1951) and its constituent Live Architecture exhibit in Lansbury, East London, located in the University of Brighton Design Archives, Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex and National Archive at Kew. Organisers documented the planning of national exhibitions in great detail, I therefore use photographs, memos, correspondence, guide books and maps to detail what planners hoped to achieve. I also analyse reports produced by MO in which they investigated how visitors engaged with exhibition material at BCMI and Register Your Choice (1956), a small exhibit held at Charing Cross tube station, and conducted follow-up interviews to gauge visitors' opinions on exhibitions and explore any long term effects.

Exhibition materials primarily present didactic representations for how men *should* use domestic space and cannot tell us about how men *experienced* the home. Michael Roper makes this argument in his criticism of cultural histories of masculinities, in which historians identify specific cultural representations of men in the past, such as exhibitions' model masculine lifestyles, but remain unable to explain men's emotional investments in

these images.³⁷ To address Roper's concern and assess how these sources align with men's lived experiences, the final chapter introduces personal testimonies from Steve Humphries and Pamela Gordon's oral history interviews, conducted for the BBC in the early 1990s. Unedited interview rushes, archived in the British Library as part of the Testimony Films Collection, present original recordings of men as they shared their memories with interviewers. King, who uses secondary oral histories in her study of mid-twentieth century fatherhood, notes that although 'archived interviews provide problematic evidence, and have been criticized because of issues of representativeness and reliability' they remain 'valuable in writing the history of the family'.³⁸ Humphries recognises that life stories are 'as subject to distortion as any other form of historical evidence' and, as his interviewees recalled events that went back 50 years or more, 'they can forget, invent and exaggerate what really happened'.³⁹ Humphries does not test the accuracy of life stories against empirical data from the time, such as architectural plans of the men's houses, and instead views testimonies as 'a reconstruction of the past'.⁴⁰ King refers to the oral histories of Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher who view the 'dialogue with the present', that occurs when interviewees recall personal narratives within contemporary public discourses, as a productive means to explore the past.⁴¹ King adds that, whether in the past or present, 'discussions of fatherhood are frequently couched in historically relative terms, on the collective level relating to ideas about family life and social change, and on an individual level across different generations of the same family'.⁴²

I examine Humphries and Gordon's oral histories as a primary source and ask new questions about how men used their homes to perform masculinities, an approach Joanna Bornat describes as 'reanalysing' and common among historians of MO and postwar social surveys, including

³⁷ Michael Roper, 'Slipping Out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal* 59, no. 1 (1 March 2005): 59. Tosh also questions the value of historical analysis that focuses on the interpretation of text and images rather than the reconstruction of events and experiences, in John Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept?', in *What Is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. John Arnold and Sean Brady (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25. Also see Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1997), ix.

³⁸ King, *Family Men*, 13. Also see April Gallwey, 'The Rewards of Using Archived Oral Histories in Research: The Case of the Millennium Memory Bank', *Oral History* 41, no. 1 (1 April 2013): 37–50.

³⁹ Steve Humphries, *A Secret World of Sex. Forbidden Fruit: The British Experience: 1900-1950* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1988), 30–31.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England 1918-1963* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11–13, quoted in King, *Family Men*, 13.

⁴² King, *Family Men*, 13.

Mike Savage, Selina Todd and Claire Langhamer.⁴³ Oral histories present emotive insights into the past that enable us to discover how *some* men experienced the effects of planning. They also allow inhabitants to share domestic experiences in their own words and therefore help address what Mark Clapson describes as a 'major deficit in so many historical debates about popular housing in Britain'.⁴⁴ Yet, unlike works such as David Adams' study of planning discourses in Birmingham between the 1950s to the 1970s, I use oral histories to complement other observational sources that provide a window into men's domestic lives.⁴⁵

The final chapter also analyses the views of MO respondents who wrote about access to private spaces for love-making and men's willingness to help with housework.⁴⁶ The views of social investigators, who studied men's changing experiences of the home from the outside-in, further supplement these experiential sources. These include sociologists Peter Willmott and Michael Young, Ferdynand Zweig, Elizabeth Bott, JM Mogeys and Leo Kuper. Historians have used social studies to examine the identities of experts who conducted them *and* the subjects they claimed to depict.⁴⁷ However, this dual use has presented challenges. Most notably, unlike social surveys of the 1920s and 1930s, which generally adopted a quantitative, empirical and statistical approach, postwar studies did not tend to frame working class lives as inherently problematic. Todd highlights how investigators invoked the 'normality' of the working classes, rather than perpetuate a portrayal of the working classes 'in need of rescue, remedy or reform'.⁴⁸ Savage adds that after 1945 observers grew more interested in 'sampling an ordinary, everyday social world, one no longer cast in overtly moral terms'.⁴⁹ Framing the working classes as 'ordinary' and 'normative' continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s, which meant that studies of men's domestic lives took on a different focus as mundane activities, such

⁴³ Joanna Bornat, 'A Second Take: Revisiting Interviews with a Different Purpose', *Oral History* 31, no. 1 (2003): 47–53, quoted in Gallwey, 'The Rewards of Using Archived Oral Histories', 39.

⁴⁴ Mark Clapson, 'The Suburban Aspiration in England Since 1919', *Contemporary British History* 14, no. 1 (March 2000): 154.

⁴⁵ Adams uses oral history interviews as a counterpoint to official planning discourses and a method to assess 'the way in which the texts and representations of planners interconnected with the imaginations and understandings of everyday life', in David Adams, 'Everyday Experiences of the Modern City: Remembering the Post-war Reconstruction of Birmingham', *Planning Perspectives* 26, no. 2 (April 2011): 242.

⁴⁶ 'Domestic Male', in *Mass-Observation Bulletin No. 18* (1948), 4, [MO SxMOA1/1/13/6/9](#); 'Love-Making in Public' (1949), [MO SxMOA1/1/14/2/2](#) - File Report 3086.

⁴⁷ Bailkin makes this observation in Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, 10.

⁴⁸ Selina Todd, 'Affluence, Class and Crown Street: Reinvestigating the Post-War Working Class', *Contemporary British History* 22, no. 4 (December 2008): 503; Selina Todd, 'Phoenix Rising: Working-Class Life and Urban Reconstruction, c. 1945–1967', *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 3 (July 2015): 679–702.

⁴⁹ Savage, *Identities and Social Change*, 7.

as the eating of meals or enjoyment of hobbies, became more meaningful for observers.⁵⁰

Although oral histories, MO responses and social surveys come close to conveying the direct words of male inhabitants, they also present methodological challenges. Most notably, those who asked the questions often embarked on their projects with the hope of hearing certain answers and, in some instances, prompted respondents to think about identity in ways that did not necessarily reflect their everyday experiences.⁵¹

Langhamer, for example, writes how MO relied on a narrow pool of middle class respondents, which arguably perpetuated rather than destabilised a paternalist approach to the study of the working classes.⁵² Social surveys also fail to offer an insight into families that moved from old accommodation into newly planned homes. Writing in 1957, Bott lamented the oversight of sociologists to examine 'the actual process of transition, beginning with the family in the old area and following them through the move to the new area and the development of a different pattern of external relationships and internal organization'.⁵³

With these limitations in mind, this research does not generally follow the movement of individuals between 'old' and 'new' forms of housing. Furthermore, the uniqueness of people's domestic lives means that analysis primarily focuses on individual experiences of planning *intentions* rather than drawing casual connections between ideas, dissemination and experiences. Yet, sources can document how overarching themes, such as the expansion of a 'technicist class', social problems that followed the Second World War and material improvements that came with better living standards, fostered a postwar context that made it possible for men to perform new role within the home. Instead of causation, the following chapters highlight points of overlap between planners' visions for domestic space, their promotion at housing exhibitions and men's mixed experiences of these ideals in their well-planned homes.

⁵⁰ Selina Todd, 'Class, Experience and Britain's Twentieth Century', *Social History* 39, no. 4 (2 October 2014): 501, quoting G Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil: Remaking the British Working Class, 1939–1945* (Oxford, 2011).

⁵¹ Angela Davis, in particular, discusses the effects of social investigators' false confidence in the future on the findings reached, in Davis, 'A Critical Perspective on British Social Surveys and Community Studies and Their Accounts of Married Life c. 1945-1970', *Cultural and Social History* 6 (2009): 51.

⁵² Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship', 194.

⁵³ Elizabeth Bott, *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms, and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families*, Second Edition (New York: Free Press, 1957), 225.

Defining men and masculinities

Masculinities feature in this study in three ways. Firstly, as technocratic, rational and omniscient planning identities constructed within an expanded landscape of mid-twentieth century expert knowledge. Secondly, as planning prescriptions for how working class male inhabitants *should* use and experience their homes. Thirdly, as experiential accounts of these gender ideals in reality, as reported in oral history testimonies, MO responses and social investigations.

This study's approach originates with gender historians in the late 1980s and early 1990s who expanded their research to include femininities *and* masculinities.⁵⁴ In the process, this created new opportunities to re-examine 'men's histories' as contingent on historical constructions of gender.⁵⁵ Judith Butler was among the first to explore what it meant to understand gender as a verb rather than a noun. For Butler, masculinities and femininities express a form of *doing* rather than *being* that people construct, for example, through the performance of speech, gesture and movement.⁵⁶ Joan Scott, in her foundational work *Gender and the Politics of History* (1988), describes gender not as a reflection of 'fixed and natural physical differences between women and men' but as a form of 'knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily differences'.⁵⁷ My examination of planning sources, exhibition material and men's lived experiences reveals the historical contingency of these gendered forms of knowledge and their impacts on how men designed and experienced the home.

Gender, as an ongoing social construction, does not mean that people consciously choose how to perform or experience identity.⁵⁸ It does, however, indicate the importance of the spatial environments where people

⁵⁴ For example, Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

⁵⁵ Michael Kimmel, 'Invisible Masculinity', *Society* 30, no. 6 (September 1993): 28.

⁵⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), chap. 1.

⁵⁷ Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 2.

⁵⁸ Moya Lloyd identifies this misreading of Butler in works such as David Bell et al., 'All Hyped Up and No Place to Go', *Gender, Place & Culture* 1, no. 1 (1994): 31–47, in Moya Lloyd, 'Performativity, Parody, Politics', *Theory, Culture & Society* 16, no. 2 (1 April 1999): 199. This understanding of gender, as a social construct detached from sexed bodies, also means that both male and female planners can vocalise masculine planning ideas. For example, John Beynon notes that 'women as well as men can step into and inhabit... masculinity as a "cultural space"' in John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, *Issues in Cultural and Media Studies* (Philadelphia: Open University, 2002), 7.

perform gender: as Butler acknowledges, 'we have to think about space as acting on us, even as we act within it'.⁵⁹ Studying masculine identities in the historical setting of the home therefore brings a number of benefits. For sociologist David Morgan, a spatial focus highlights that masculinity is not 'a characteristic that one brings uniformly to each and every encounter' and studies must view gender 'as part of a presentation of self, something which is negotiated, implicitly or explicitly over a whole range of situations... in short, we should think of 'doing masculinities' rather than of 'being masculine'".⁶⁰

RW Connell documents how spatial studies of men's lives flourished between 1985 and 1995 but warned in 2002, 'we are getting an ever-growing library of descriptive studies, which provide important understandings of specific settings and problems. But we do not seem to be getting a corresponding growth of general ideas about men and masculinities'.⁶¹ In the past decade, historians have started to address this lacuna in the scholarship and draw a clearer link between masculine identities and the spatial settings in which they are performed. Strange highlights Deborah Cohen and Jane Hamlett's work on the interplay between gender and space in middle class homes of the nineteenth century, and brings further analysis to the period in her studies of working class fathers and the home between 1865 and 1914, a subject she considers under-researched.⁶² Cook has also explored how queer men made, experienced and described domestic spaces in London between the late nineteenth century and the present day, and how testimonies sit alongside changing discourses of home, homosexuality and family over this period.⁶³

⁵⁹ Judith Butler, 'Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street', *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies* (September 2011), <http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en>, accessed 3 March 2015.

⁶⁰ David Morgan, *Discovering Men* (London: Routledge, 1992), 47.

⁶¹ Examples of locations studied include schools, prisons, military establishments, in business, sport, unemployment and retirement, in RW Connell, *Masculinities*, Second Edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), xvii; Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*. Francis highlights the tendency of ethnographic studies to focus on exclusively elite, male environments that rarely touch on the everyday lives of the working classes and neglect the importance of women in the construction of masculine identities, in Martin Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity', *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (22 November 2002): 639.

⁶² Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations: Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850–1910* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), in Julie-Marie Strange, 'Fathers at Home: Life Writing and Late-Victorian and Edwardian Plebeian Domestic Masculinities', *Gender & History* 27, no. 3, Special Issue Men at Home (November 2015): 703–4.

⁶³ Cook, *Queer Domesticities*, 3.

Yet, historians have thus far overlooked the relationship between planning, 'normative' masculine identities and the twentieth century home.⁶⁴ Using didactic and experiential sources, I build on the scholarship of Strange, Cohen, Hamlett and Cook and explore the effects of well-planned housing on the actions and behaviours of 'heterosexual' men. I also demonstrate how men constructed identities through the repetition of everyday acts, such as playing with children in a private back garden or helping wives with housework without the risk of non-family members witnessing. Over time, practices lost their sense of purposeful performance and appeared as *natural* actions and behaviours.⁶⁵ Pierre Bourdieu defines this process as *le sens pratique*, a form of bodily knowledge that language cannot articulate, and cites the example of a professional tennis player skilled at striking the ball but unable to explain how he performs the action.⁶⁶ The idea of *doing gender* also implies that bodies do not begin life masculine but must actively achieve this identity.⁶⁷ John Beynon notes, 'being a biological male does not confer masculinity'; within the context of the home, this means that bodies actively perform gender in a spatial environment that may *support* or *challenge* the identity they wish to construct.⁶⁸ Trev Broughton adds, 'most men "do" masculinity not by engaging with legal, medical or sexual-political discourses, but by negotiating . . . the constraints and opportunities presented by their material and familial circumstances'.⁶⁹ This malleable definition of masculinity made it seem possible for external agents, such as planners, to engineer men's domestic practices so that they matched their vision for postwar reconstruction. However, when presented with the right type of material opportunities, many men also actively engaged with the 'the constraints and opportunities' found in their new homes and altered domestic practices in ways that did not fully align with what planners had in mind.

⁶⁴ I use the term 'normative' as a contrast to 'queer'. However, as Cook notes, '[t]he lines between queer and normal and gay and straight in the way homes and families were formed and experienced have always been rather blurred', in *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁵ Butler notes that gendered actions coalesce in 'a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter', in Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 9. Also see Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 33, 145.

⁶⁶ Discussed in Lois McNay, 'Gender, Habitus and the Field Pierre Bourdieu and the Limits of Reflexivity', *Theory, Culture & Society* 16, no. 1 (1 February 1999): 101.

⁶⁷ Roper and Tosh explain that masculinity is never fully possessed and is forever achieved, asserted and renegotiated, in Michael Roper and John Tosh, 'Introduction', in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, ed. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), 18.

⁶⁸ Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, 77.

⁶⁹ Broughton, 'The Importance of Being Ordinary', 259.

However, locating masculinities in historical sources remains problematic as some forms of masculine identity (for example, white, 'heterosexual', able-bodied men) went 'unmarked' - defined by what they are not - and therefore seemed normative or commonsensical to actors at the time.⁷⁰ As Michael Kimmel writes, the normalcy of non-marginal masculinities rendered men's gendered actions 'invisible to themselves'.⁷¹ When historical actors discussed 'masculinities' they tended to frame these characteristics as aspects of personhood rather than a gendered identity. Sonya Rose writes that during the Second World War people tended to conflate stoic and composed masculine identities with constructions of national identity and citizenship.⁷² As a method to locate masculinities, Houlbrook argues that in the first half of the twentieth century British men understood their identity and the identities of others according to gender, rather than sex or sexuality, and highlights the need for historians 'to explore what terms actually meant to actors at the time and what the term meant to other people at the time'.⁷³ Hornsey adopts a similar approach in his study of 'self-identified queer men' such as the artist Francis Bacon and the government codebreaker Alan Turing. For Hornsey, the very fact that these men self-defined as queer meant that all sources relating to them were in some way 'structurally informed by the homosexual subject positioning of their producer'.⁷⁴ This allows him to consider sources outside 'the traditional concerns of gay scholars' that do not explicitly reference sexuality but can 'speak' about queer concerns'.⁷⁵

Unlike Hornsey and Houlbrook, my work seeks to locate non-queer masculinities. This objective brings different challenges that stem not from the alterity of the masculinities researched but from their pervasiveness as identities hidden in plain sight. However, Hornsey and Houlbrook's methodologies for locating queer masculinities helpfully pays attention to

⁷⁰ Connell, *Masculinities*, 70.

⁷¹ Kimmel, 'Invisible Masculinity', 5.

⁷² Rose, *Which People's War?*, 152.

⁷³ Houlbrook makes this point in relation to homosexuality, in which men were judged as 'normal' or 'effeminate' rather than 'heterosexual' or 'homosexual', in Matt Houlbrook, "'Lady Austin's Camp Boys': Constituting the Queer Subject in 1930s London', *Gender & History* 14, no. 1 (April 2002): 41; Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 6, 141, 167.

⁷⁴ Richard Hornsey, 'Homosexuality and Everyday Life in Post-War London' (University of Sussex, 2004), 19–20. This approach multiplies the number of characters in queer histories but risks creating categories of gender, sex and sexuality that do not exist historically. Laura Doan further warns that locating gender in the past can link actions and identities that misread meaning. In her study of same-sex relations between women in early twentieth century England, Doan discredits attempts to locate 'lesbianism' due to the historical contingency of same-sex acts. Doan argues that the need to classify is a product of our time and that the 'fissures of the classificatory apparatus close down intellectual inquiry', in Laura Doan, *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War* (London: Chicago University Press, 2013), 131–33, 138.

⁷⁵ Hornsey, 'Homosexuality and Everyday Life in Post-War London', 19–20.

how men spoke about identity at the time and illuminates the influences of gender, sex and sexuality in areas of everyday life not always easily apparent. It only becomes possible to understand gender's influence on planning and domestic space when one looks beyond the vocabulary of 'men', 'manliness' and 'masculinities' and instead explore how planners, observers and inhabitants understood and discussed gender using identities such as 'expert' and categories such as 'fathers' and 'husbands'.⁷⁶

Masculinities also become visible in this study in opposition to other forms of identity, such as femininities *and* other masculinities. Connell explains that men's construction of hegemonic masculinity, an identity that promotes men's social position, relied on 'practices that exclude and include'.⁷⁷ Furthermore, there exists 'a gender politics within masculinity', in which men establish distance from 'negative examples' as a way to define themselves.⁷⁸ Among the men discussed in this study, age presents a significant point of demarcation; in particular, detachment between fathers and sons.⁷⁹ Lynn Segal writes that this gulf created two opposing faces of 1950s masculinity: the younger, forward-looking 'family man', content with home and garden, and the older 'wartime hero' who put freedom before family.⁸⁰ Martin Francis similarly contests the postwar universality of domesticity, 'companionate marriage' and the 'family man'.⁸¹ His research uses cultural sources, such as the Ealing Studios' film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948), to document men's fantasies for 'restlessness and a yearning for the all-male camaraderie of service life'.⁸² Planners' ideal visions for domestic space and men's lived experiences equally demonstrate the diversity of mid-twentieth century masculine identities. However, these identities more often sat between the extremes of 'family man' and 'wartime hero', complicating Segal's neat binary. Also, in

⁷⁶ This point is also made in Victor Jeleniewski Seidler, 'Masculinities, Histories and Memories', in *What Is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. John Arnold and Sean Brady (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 436.

⁷⁷ Connell, *Masculinities*, 37.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 37, 44, 167.

⁷⁹ This motif is reflected in cultural works of the 1940s and 1950s, for example, Arthur Seton in Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. (Paladin, 1990). Brooke also notes that the loss of traditional gender roles created confusion and anger for characters associated with the Angry Young Men movement, most notably Jimmy Porter in John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* (Dramatic Publishing Company, 1959), in Brooke, 'Gender and Working Class Identity', 788–89. Frank Mort also discusses the strained relationship with his father in the 1950s and 1960s, in Frank Mort, 'Social and Symbolic Fathers and Sons in Postwar Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 3 (1 July 1999): 353–84.

⁸⁰ Lynn Segal, 'Look Back in Anger: Men in the Fifties', in *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, ed. Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988), 88.

⁸¹ Martin Francis, 'A Flight from Commitment? Domesticity, Adventure and the Masculine Imaginary in Britain after the Second World War', *Gender & History* 19, no. 1 (1 April 2007): 164.

⁸² *Ibid.*

response to Francis, I argue that men found ways to continue homosocial traditions through everyday life in well-planned homes rather than in the worlds of fantasy and imagination.

Class and masculinities

Class impacted planners' and observers' understanding of the working class home, as well as inhabitants' domestic experiences. For inhabitants, class affected their lives in two ways. Firstly, in terms of social and economic factors, many middle class families experienced a comparative drop in living standards in the first half of the twentieth century, as the maintenance of domestic help became economically unfeasible and fell by around 50 per cent during the 1940s.⁸³ At the same time, the increased number of working class families with a home of their own, improvements in housing conditions and a reduction in men's working hours coalesced to enable some working class men to reinterpret their domestic environment as a positive location for happiness, prosperity and self-improvement.⁸⁴

Material improvements in living standards led some sociologists to enthuse over the apparent convergence of working and middle class domestic lifestyles.⁸⁵ Ferdynand Zweig announced, 'working-class life finds itself on the move towards new middle-class values and middle-class existence'; Graham Turner, following his investigation of car workers in the late 1950s, proclaimed 'the death of the traditionally fast-rooted working class'.⁸⁶ Historian Jon Lawrence also shares the story of his parents' families who defined themselves as working class but saved enough money in the 1930s to buy their own homes.⁸⁷ He questions historians who frame his parents' experiences as 'marginal' and the view that home ownership made families less 'working class'.⁸⁸ Lawrence astutely draws a distinction between

⁸³ Paul Addison, 'You Rang m'lord? Review of Lucy Lethbridge, *Servants: A Downstairs View of Twentieth-Century Britain*', *Times Literary Supplement* (8 May 2013), <http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article1256287.ece>, accessed 9 November 2015. David Coleman and Duncan Gallie also note that in 1951 only 1 per cent of houses employed a residential servant, and the proportion of the occupied population employed in 'personal services' declined from 11.6 per cent in 1921 to 7.6 per cent in 1951 in David Coleman and Duncan Gallie, 'Population and Family', in *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends*, ed. AH Halsey, Third Edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 76.

⁸⁴ King, *Family Men*, 122.

⁸⁵ For a thorough assessment of this debate see Davis, 'A Critical Perspective on British Social Surveys', 50.

⁸⁶ Ferdynand Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London: Heinemann, 1961), ix; Graham Turner, *The Car Makers* (London, 1963), 12, 97, 234.

⁸⁷ Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life', 273.

⁸⁸ In particular, Lawrence contests the view of John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), 116-20, 124-29; Judy Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life*

material improvements in working class living conditions and the idea that working class cultures had become more middle class. Writing in 1950, TH Marshall also described planners' intention to stabilise rather than erase class distinctions through the built environment and experimentation with mixed class postwar developments,

Their aim is not a classless society, but a society in which class differences are legitimate in terms of social justice, and in which, therefore, the classes cooperate more closely than at present to the common benefit of all.⁸⁹

Planning ideas discussed in the following chapters show that planners did not imagine well-planned housing as a way to encourage working class families to emulate middle class lifestyles. Housing would instead raise living standards, placate class inequalities and encourage a new set of masculine working class values that stood outside traditional class rules.⁹⁰ Planners publicly conveyed the view that social class did not predetermine a person's use or experience of the home and promoted housing with universal appeal that would foster an appreciation, among the working classes, for good design.⁹¹ Yet, although some estates would accommodate families from working and middle class backgrounds, planners continued to imagine different housing designs for different classes. Nicholas Merthyr Day provides examples in his study of London County Council's Sheerwater Estate, built from 1948 in the Borough of Woking to accommodate London's overspill. He identifies how dwelling entrances and roofs differed in working and middle class homes and thus articulated 'a society that is divided into two distinct social groups' with little interest in 'break[ing] down pre-war class divisions'.⁹² Hornsey makes the assessment that, for planners, 'the poverty and misery of life in the pre-war

in Britain, 1900-50 (Palgrave Macmillan, 1995); Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England 1920-60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). In support of his argument, Lawrence cites Charles Madge's 1940 economic study of working class families in Bristol, defined in the study as families with per capita income above 30 shillings per week, which showed that 39 per cent owned their homes (Charles Madge, 'The Propensity to Save in Blackburn and Bristol', *Economic Journal* 50 (1940): 446.). Even among those who earned less than 30 shillings per week, 21 per cent owned their homes. Lawrence concludes that for many working class people in the 1930s, particularly in the south of England, 'falling prices' and 'cheap money' allowed them to follow domestic lifestyles that became widespread in the 1950s, in Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life', 274.

⁸⁹ TH Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1992), 36.

⁹⁰ A similar story is found in Ines Perez's study of domestic masculinities in Argentina between 1940 and 1970: although home-centred masculinities were traditionally associated with the middle classes, in practice working class people appropriated these customs and performed them in distinct ways according to social and material context, Ines Perez, 'Masculine Ways of Being at Home: Hobbies, Do-It-Yourself and Home Improvement in Argentina (1940-70)', *Gender & History* 27, no. 3, Special Issue Men at Home (November 2015): 824-25.

⁹¹ As an example, I discuss the educational efforts of the Council of Industrial Design in chap. 3, 107-08.

⁹² Nicholas Merthyr Day, 'The Role of the Architect in Postwar State Housing. A Case Study of the Housing Work of the London County Council 1939-1956' (University of Warwick, 1988), 243.

slums had always been a potential source of political unrest' and 'at the heart of post-war planning was a desire to preclude the possibility of class conflict by pre-empting it and diffusing it within a range of economic and social reforms'.⁹³

Secondly, regardless of physical conditions, many working class people felt energised to pursue previously unachievable aspirations. Against the backdrop of the 1946 Education Act, which guaranteed all young people secondary level education, and the 1948 creation of the National Health Service, Carolyn Steedman, born in 1947, describes the emergence of a state-fostered sense of entitlement among her South London peers, who thought they were 'worth something' and deserved a better life than their parents.⁹⁴ Steedman's experience fits with Marshall's assessment that early postwar governments could only stimulate the *belief* among citizens that living standards were improving, with the promise that everyone would feel the effects of change in the future.⁹⁵ Marshall drew a distinction between the state's promotion of an egalitarian society, 'equality of status', and the achievement of this ideal in reality, 'equality of income'.⁹⁶ This division between ideals and lived realities echoed planners' promotion of model homes. At a time of financial austerity and material shortages in the housing industry, most people would not experience planners' domestic ideals first-hand. As an example, in December 1949 the LCC had only built 19,171 permanent houses – nowhere near the 47,314 houses required to replace those lost during the war.⁹⁷ However, the idealistic promises of the 1940s were extremely meaningful for many families as the promise of a well-planned house on a new estate represented the material embodiment of postwar aspiration. The public's confidence in the state to bring into reality its promises also helps explain the enthusiastic interest in articulations of Britain's future in planning publications and housing exhibitions in the 1940s and early 1950s.

⁹³ Hornsey, 'Homosexuality and Everyday Life in Post-War London', 8. Also see Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect*, 10.

⁹⁴ Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives* (London: Virago Press, 1986), 122.

⁹⁵ TH Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 33.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁹⁷ This figure does not include the thousands of dilapidated houses in need of replacement before the start of the war. Nicholas Bullock, 'Ideals, Priorities and Harsh Realities: Reconstruction and the LCC, 1945–51', *Planning Perspectives* 9, no. 1 (January 1994): 89; Peter Larkham, 'Replanning London After the Second World War', Lecture at Gresham College (7 July 2015), <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/replanning-london-after-the-second-world-war>, accessed 2 April 2016.

Class also had a major influence on planners and observers, as it shaped the lens through which they made sense of their working class subjects. Szreter and Fisher note that around 20 per cent of the population during the period 1921 to 1961 could be classified as middle class.⁹⁸ Yet, their prevalence in the civil service, architecture, journalism and academia meant the middle and upper classes held an inflated power over cultural and social institutions, such as the Council of Industrial Design and the Royal Institute of British Architects, and shaped debates about domestic design and planning.⁹⁹ Depictions of men at home in planning publications, public information films and at housing exhibitions mainly represent middle class ideas about the working class home and its inhabitants. The official understandings of social class found in planning and exhibition sources often differed from the vernacular understandings reported by working class people. Lawrence also makes this assessment and explains that working class respondents to social studies in the 1950s tended to self-define their class in 'mutable' and 'fuzzy' language that helped 'make sense of inequalities in power relations' rather than 'assert powerful claims about self-identity'.¹⁰⁰ The influences of class on how men conceptualised domestic space meant that middle class experts, such as planners and sociologists, were more likely to view the relationship between working class men and the home as something predetermined and in need of repair.¹⁰¹

By the late 1950s and 1960s, the paternalist and deferential relationship between investigators and their subjects had diminished further. Todd compares social surveys of housing conditions conducted in Liverpool in 1955 and 1963 and highlights how investigators increasingly made respondents feel that their views and experiences mattered.¹⁰² Stephen Brooke makes a similar claim in his study of photographer Roger Mayne, who documented life on Southam Street, North Kensington, London

⁹⁸ 'Middle class' is defined as economically active male professionals, employers, proprietors, administrators and managers, in Table 2.1 in AH Halsey, *Change in British Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), cited in Szreter and Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution*, 21.

⁹⁹ King, *Family Men*, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life', 275.

¹⁰¹ Lawrence is equally critical of John Goldthorpe and David Lockwood's sociological study of Luton car workers in the early 1960s and argues that both middle class interviewers and working class respondents wished to distance themselves from traditional, bourgeois stereotypes. For Lawrence, this presents an inaccurate account of the period and hides the important influences of class on both interviewers and interviewees, in Jon Lawrence, 'Social-Science Encounters and the Negotiation of Difference in Early 1960s England', *History Workshop Journal* 77, no. 1 (1 April 2014): 215–39.

¹⁰² The 1955 survey focused on budgets, rent and housing tenure whereas the follow-up 1963 survey asked about respondents' hopes for the future, in Todd, 'Class, Experience and Britain's Twentieth Century', 494.

between 1956 and 1961 prior to its demolition. Brooke highlights the interplay between class and gender identities and the transformation of urban space, with Mayne's photographs offering an insight into a working class community before all 'was lost, literally, to the bulldozers, and, metaphorically, to the effects of postwar rehousing, immigration, and affluence'.¹⁰³ For Brooke, Mayne's representation of the working class residents of Southam Street presents a critique of middle class emotional life and celebration of working class community and connection.

Like Brooke and Todd, my study shows how encounters between planning experts, social investigators and their subjects became increasingly multi-directional in the second half of the twentieth century. However, during the 1940s, planners' rhetoric of engagement often failed to match their practices and experts continued to develop ideas inside expanded, technocratic bubbles. I argue that this period witnessed a readjustment of class values, best reflected in the work of sociologist Robert Millar.¹⁰⁴ Writing in 1966, Millar described the postwar decades as a coming-together of 'the lower stratum of the old middle class' and 'the most prosperous section of the old working class' to form a new '[t]echnicist class' – the 'key class in an affluent society'.¹⁰⁵ Jack Saunders, in his study of social organisation and workplace culture in British factories in the 1950s and 1960s, foregrounds changes within working class cultures and argues that influential cultural criticisms of the postwar decades, such as Richard Hoggart's, undermined the idea that working class people in this period 'formed new values and solidarities'.¹⁰⁶ In agreement with Saunders, I argue that the 1940s provided opportunities for middle class planners and working class inhabitants to construct new identities that differed from the past yet remained within pre-existing class structures.

Planners, observers and inhabitants

Mark Llewelyn criticises previous historical studies of the relationship between domestic design and people's experiences for failing to properly

¹⁰³ Stephen Brooke, 'Revisiting Southam Street: Class, Generation, Gender, and Race in the Photography of Roger Mayne', *Journal of British Studies* 53, no. 2 (April 2014): 457.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Millar, *The New Classes* (London: Longmans, 1966).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰⁶ Jack Saunders, 'The Untraditional Worker: Class Re-Formation in Britain 1945-65', *Twentieth Century British History* 26, no. 2 (1 June 2015): 227.

attribute agency to *all* actors in the planning process.¹⁰⁷ Llewellyn discounts the view that planners and inhabitants engaged in an 'oppositional relationship' as 'too simplistic an analysis' as the 'malleable terrains of everyday life refute such dualistic thinking'.¹⁰⁸ My study reveals a similarly complex relationship between planners, observers and inhabitants but, unlike Llewellyn, orientates analysis around the exchange of knowledge between men from different social classes about how to use and experience the home. Biographical information about the planners and observers discussed in later chapters highlights an overlap of actors' class, education and employment backgrounds and key locations, such as the LCC and University College London, where actors developed their ideas. The remainder of this introductory chapter introduces the three clusters of historical actors that form the focus of my analysis - planners, observers and inhabitants – and then outlines how these actors feature in subsequent chapters.

Planners

A technical middle class rapidly expanded in mid-twentieth century Britain, at a far higher rate than traditional middle class roles such as doctors, lawyer and civil servants.¹⁰⁹ I position the planner - by which I mean architects, town planners, interior designers and others involved in the design of domestic space - among this collection of technical experts. This differentiates planners from the people for whom they planned and also reveals how definitions of expertise changed in the mid-twentieth century. Planners expanded their powers using pedagogical approaches developed during the Second World War. This meant that planning recommendations seemed progressive even when they resembled traditional, middle-class customs of the interwar period.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Llewellyn particularly highlights Elizabeth Darling, 'What the Tenants Think of Kensal House: Experts' Assumptions versus Inhabitants' Realities in the Modern Home', *Journal of Architectural Education* 53, no. 3 (1 February 2000): 167–77, in Mark Llewellyn, "Urban Village" or "White House": Envisioned Spaces, Experienced Places, and Everyday Life at Kensal House, London in the 1930s', *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 22, no. 2 (2004): 246.

¹⁰⁸ Llewellyn, "Urban Village" or "White House", 246.

¹⁰⁹ David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 172–73.

¹¹⁰ Marco Amati describes how peacetime exhibitions borrowed several display techniques first used in the Second World War such as model making methods and demountable screens in Marco Amati, 'Engagement and Exhibitionism in the Era of High Modernism: Otto Neurath and the Example of 1940s Bilston', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 151.

Among the figures discussed in this thesis, Patrick Abercrombie (1879-1957) stands out as the most eminent planner of the mid-twentieth century.¹¹¹ Born in Altrincham, Greater Manchester, he began his career with a local architectural firm while studying evening classes at Manchester School of Art.¹¹² He became professor of civic design at the University of Liverpool in 1915 before moving to the chair of town planning at UCL in 1936. Between 1937 and 1939, he also served as president of the RIBA. Abercrombie most prominently co-authored the influential blueprint for London's postwar reconstruction, the *County of London Plan*, with John Forshaw (1895-1973), another Lancastrian educated at the University of Liverpool.

A younger generation of architects also emerged from London in the 1930s. One of the most prominent was Ralph Tubbs (1912-1996), born in the North London suburb of Hadley Wood and educated at the Architectural Association. Following a year's work with architect Erno Goldfinger (1902-1987) in 1936, Tubbs was appointed co-ordinating architect for the Festival of Britain in 1949.¹¹³ He was a member of the Modern Architecture Research Group, alongside other architects discussed in this study, and possessed a keen interest in entomology, serving as vice president of the Royal Entomological Society of London between 1982 and 1984 - an interest that most likely shaped how he understood the relationship between the built environment and the natural world. Walter Bor (1916-1999) fled persecution in Austria and arrived in London in 1938 to study at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. He joined Forshaw at the LCC in 1947 and then moved to Liverpool City Council in 1962 as chief planning officer. At the LCC he also met Arthur Ling (1913-1995), who worked as a research assistant on the *County of London Plan* and later became LCC's director of town planning between 1945 and 1955. In Bor's obituary, architectural journalist Jonathan Glancey describes him as, 'one of those humane, leftwing architects whose mission was to help build a clean, rational and democratic world for everyman in the aftermath of the second

¹¹¹ Peter Larkham and John Pendlebury describe Abercrombie as the 'most eminent' planning consultant in Britain in the early postwar period, in Peter Larkham and John Pendlebury, 'Reconstruction Planning and the Small Town in Early Post-war Britain', *Planning Perspectives* 23, no. 3 (July 2008): 295.

¹¹² Mervyn Miller, 'Abercrombie, Sir (Leslie) Patrick (1879-1957)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30322>, accessed 2 September 2014.

¹¹³ Elain Harwood, 'Tubbs, Ralph Sydney (1912-1996)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2012), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64071>, accessed 2 September 2014.

world war'.¹¹⁴ These principles encapsulate the ethos of the postwar planner and their desire to use objective, technical expertise to construct a New Britain from the rubble of war.

Observers

Observational research into men's everyday lives also informed planning knowledge from the late 1930s. In particular, the surrealist poet and sociologist, Charles Madge (1912-1996); ornithologist, anthropologist and museum curator, Tom Harrisson (1911-1976); and filmmaker, painter and writer, Humphrey Jennings (1907-1950) founded MO in 1936 as a vehicle to better examine people's experiences of everyday life.¹¹⁵ The men wished to depart from prior 'social survey' approaches and instead pursue an 'anthropology at home' that blended methods from the arts and emergent social sciences.¹¹⁶ Topics investigated often focused on gendered activities such as how people spent their Sundays, pub going, what people thought of their homes and men's contributions to domestic chores.¹¹⁷ In terms of planning, MO research would inform policymakers but, more importantly, feed back into public discussions through regular bulletins, easy-to-read publications and articles in the mainstream press. MO described itself as a 'link between expert and amateur, planner and planned-for, the democratic leader of the democrat', with the desire to raise people's consciousness of their everyday environments and foster an anthropology of the self that empowered the public to 'see themselves', then make positive changes in their actions and behaviours.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Jonathan Glancey, 'Walter Bor', *The Guardian* (12 October 1999), <http://www.theguardian.com/news/1999/oct/12/guardianobituaries.jonathanglancey>, accessed 8 April 2016. Ward offers a similar description of the 1940s planning ethos, in Stephen Ward, 'Gordon Stephenson and the "Galaxy of Talent": Planning for Post-War Reconstruction in Britain 1942-1947', *Town Planning Review* 83, no. 3 (January 2012): 295.

¹¹⁵ Madge, Harrisson and Jennings questioned the media coverage of the 1936 Abdication Crisis and wanted to better examine the public's views, in Humphrey Jennings and Charles Madge, *May the Twelfth: Mass-Observation Day-Surveys 1937 by Over Two Hundred Observers* (London: Faber, 1987). Biographical information from AH Halsey, 'Madge, Charles Henry (1912-1996)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57883>, accessed 2 September 2014; Judith Heimann, 'Harrisson, Tom Harnett (1911-1976)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31205>, accessed 2 September 2014; Kevin Jackson, 'Jennings, (Frank) Humphrey Sinkler(1907-1950)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37600>, 2 September 2014.

¹¹⁶ Ben Jones and Rebecca Searle, 'Humphrey Jennings, the Left and the Experience of Modernity in Mid Twentieth-Century Britain', *History Workshop Journal* 75, no. 1 (24 January 2013): 194.

¹¹⁷ For example, Mass Observation, *An Enquiry into People's Homes* (London: John Murray, 1943), xii; 'Domestic Male', *MO SxMOA1/1/13/6/9*; 'Meet Yourself on Sundays' (1949), *MO SxMOA1/2/81/1 - File Report 3142*.

¹¹⁸ Charles Madge, Tom Harrisson, and Humphrey Jennings, 'Anthropology at Home', *The New Statesman and Nation* (30 January 1937); 'Some Psychological Factors in Home Building', *Town and Country Planning* (10 March 1943), 6, *MO SxMOA1/1/8/3/3 - File Report 1622*.

MO's didactic intimations grew more evident in the late 1940s as the discipline of sociology expanded and more experts began to examine the relationship between housing, urban space and people's actions and behaviours. Sociologist Ruth Glass (1912-1990) was among the first to explore these themes and, with her husband John Westergaard (1927-2014), conducted research on inhabitants' experiences of the Lansbury Estate. Glass studied at the London School of Economics in the mid-1930s before heading the research section at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in the late 1940s and then, like Abercrombie and Bor, moved to UCL in 1951 to become director of the university's social research unit and founder of the Centre for Urban Studies.¹¹⁹ Sociologist Dennis Chapman (1911-2003) described experts' interest in the home as a 'sociology of housing... concerned with the influences of housing and the urban and rural environment upon behaviour and the modification of the environment by human activity'.¹²⁰ Chapman also graduated from the LSE before he co-edited the *Wartime Social Survey* and conducted social fieldwork for MO's Worktown project, he became a senior lecturer in sociology at the University of Liverpool in 1946 where he worked until 1977.¹²¹

Also writing on the changing social conditions of the 1950s, Zweig (1896-1988) was born in Poland and, like Glass and Bor, fled to Britain in the 1930s. His works *The British Worker* (1952) and *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (1961) discuss men's roles as breadwinners, fathers and husbands and therefore present an account of postwar social change that addresses issues of class and gender. Willmott (1923-2000) and Young (1915-2002) also explored inhabitants' domestic experiences on old and new housing estates. They worked as researchers for Clement Attlee's Labour governments, then went on to found the Institute of Community Studies in Bethnal Green in 1953 and undertook major studies of slum clearance schemes and family life.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Anne Baker, 'Glass, Ruth Adele (1912–1990)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39973>, accessed 2 September 2014.

¹²⁰ Dennis Chapman, *The Home and Social Status* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), 1.

¹²¹ Trevor Keeble, 'An Unknown Radical: Dennis Chapman and The Home and Social Status', *Design and Culture* 1, no. 3 (1 November 2009): 332.

¹²² Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957); Peter Willmott and Michael Young, *Family and Class in a London Suburb* (London: New English Library, 1976). Jordanna Bailkin explains that although 'expertise was never monopolized by a single political party, Labour advocated strong funding for the social sciences, positing that the scientific method could be usefully applied to social and political issues and eliminate Britain's problems in a planned society', in Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 8.

Observational studies predominantly address issues of class, rather than gender. And, as previously noted, observers may have conceptualised class in ways that satisfied their own professional investments in the salience of this category of analysis but did not reflect how their subjects thought about their own class identities. However, as Brooke argues, class and gender existed as interlinked identities in postwar Britain.¹²³

Observational reports and sociological investigations therefore feature in this study as a bridge between planners' didacticism and inhabitants' reception of ideas, and provide a window into men's gendered lives.

Inhabitants

People's experience of home differed for a number of reasons. In order to map how domestic practices changed among working class men, this study focuses on the experiences of married men born in the 1910s and 1920s. Most of the men moved with their wives and young children into well-planned council housing in their mid-20s to early-30s, a period also punctuated by service in the Second World War.

As previously noted, class impacted people's material housing conditions as well as their aspirations to strive for a way of life that differed from previous generations. Many middle class men experienced the interwar home as a space to interact with children, spend time with wives and enjoy leisure activities, and this continued in the decades after 1945.¹²⁴ For many working class men, a different chronology existed. Tosh explains that with '[i]mprovements in housing, shorter working hours and improved urban transport' skilled working men in the first half of the twentieth century enjoyed greater opportunities to spend quality time at home, a position analogous to middle class men fifty years earlier.¹²⁵

National and regional differences also had an impact. Lynn Abrams' investigation of working class fathers in Stirling in the 1930s and 1940s presents a rare example of men's paternal experiences in Scotland.

¹²³ Brooke, 'Revisiting Southam Street', 457.

¹²⁴ Langhamer notes continuities in people's domestic experiences between the interwar and postwar periods, in Claire Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (1 April 2005): 362.

¹²⁵ John Tosh, 'Home and Away: The Flight from Domesticity in Late-Nineteenth-Century England Re-Visited', *Gender & History* 27, no. 3, Special Issue Men at Home (November 2015): 568, discussing Wally Secombe, *Weathering the Storm: Working-Class Families from the Industrial Revolution to the Fertility Decline* (London: Verso, 1993), 205.

Abrams contests that 'despite the intensity of Scotland's experience of industrialisation and urbanisation, the country's experience of working-class fatherhood has been broadly similar to trends in the rest of Britain'.¹²⁶ Although Abrams argues that masculine identities in mid-twentieth century Scotland mirrored those found across the rest of Britain, she outlines an alternative chronology in which men's interest in a 'home-based family life' lagged a decade or so behind changes in the south.¹²⁷ Whereas Elizabeth Roberts and Joanne Bourke observe some degree of domestic change among working class English men in the 1930s, Abrams writes that, in Scotland, [i]t was not until the post Second World War era that working-class men began to engage more fully with family life, and to feel comfortable in the domestic sphere'.¹²⁸ Unlike Abrams, my study focuses on the domestic experiences of men who lived in urban areas of England, and therefore likely omits differences experienced in other parts of the British Isles. Even among the English towns and cities discussed, my study views these practices in tandem with improvements in domestic environments and uncovers a number of ways that men performed the role of father and husband.

My analysis of planners, observers and the experiences of inhabitants raises questions over the intended and unintended effects of exhibition materials on men's lives. Furthermore, I underline the effect of class identities on the type of planning ideas developed and the receptiveness of male inhabitants towards these ideas. Many men, regardless of social class, possessed the agency to accept, subvert or reject the domestic ideals presented at exhibitions. When analysed alongside other source types, didactic representations of masculine lives help establish the exchange of knowledge between different types of men and the similarities and differences between prescriptive ideals and lived realities.

Chapter outline

Expert knowledge

¹²⁶ Lynn Abrams, "'There Was Nobody like My Daddy': Fathers, the Family and the Marginalisation of Men in Modern Scotland", *The Scottish Historical Review* 78, no. 206 (1 October 1999): 219.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

The following research chapters examine these actors from three different perspectives. Chapter two explores the context of mid-twentieth expert knowledge and establishes how themes such as welfare, reconstruction, science and technology impacted planners' conceptualisation of the home and its male inhabitants. Planners imagined the home in a number of different ways, from an environment analogous to the natural world to 'a machine for living in'. However, a specifically British interpretation of 1940s modernism emerged from this assortment of planning ideas, which balanced tradition and progress in an attempt to appeal to both savvy design professionals and future inhabitants suspicious of change. Although many of these ideas first found life in interwar housing projects, such as Maxwell Fry's Kensal House in West London, the improved social conditions and political climate of the late 1940s enabled these ideas to flourish and reshape mainstream planning debates.

This chapter specifically identifies the influence of gender on planners' conceptualisation of the home, a subject thus far only discussed in reference to women's domestic lives. Caitríona Beaumont's research examines the contributions of the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds and Women's Institute to housing debates between 1928 and 1945.¹²⁹ Beaumont argues that women's organisations understood that men and women had different demands of domestic space and brought *feminine* knowledge of the home into planning debates. Planners acknowledged the contributions from women's organisations and included some recommendations in published plans, such as the inclusion of a space to park the pram in the Dudley Committee's *Design of Dwellings* report.

Beaumont's valuable research also highlights a failure within existing scholarship to study the influence of masculinities in planning debates. This oversight reflects planners' assumption that they knew the domestic demands of male inhabitants, and therefore made minimal effort to ask men what they wanted from their home. I redress this historiographical blind spot and focus on how masculinities feature in planning publications and films of the 1940s. The figure of the planner recurs in these sources and their representation - in text, photograph and film - allows us to

¹²⁹ Caitríona Beaumont, "Where to Park the Pram"? Voluntary Women's Organisations, Citizenship and the Campaign for Better Housing in England, 1928–1945', *Women's History Review* 22, no. 1 (February 2013): 75–96; Caitríona Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

understand how planners' perceived themselves at the time and the image they wished to present to those for whom they planned.¹³⁰ This chapter will highlight the persistence of some paternalist traditions, as planners continued to see it as their duty to emancipate the working classes from 'slum' environments, alongside efforts among some planners to distance themselves from stereotypical associations of expert knowledge with the upper classes and a classical education. Planners instead used the language of rationalism, science and technology to convey their expertise, with domestic space and men's actions with the home foregrounded as central tenets of postwar reconstruction.

Exhibiting ideal domestic masculinities

The exchange of ideas between middle and working class men about how to use domestic space in mid-twentieth century Britain has received little attention in historical scholarship.¹³¹ The third chapter therefore focuses on the imagined trickle-down of planning knowledge, which promoted ideal representations of the home and men's domestic actions, at housing exhibitions and in planning publications between 1941 and 1951. I identify four pedagogical methods – the quiz, walk-through, anti-model and model masculine lifestyle - planners used to encourage male visitors to utilise the privacy available in their home, participate in hobbies such as Do-It-Yourself and adopt family-orientated ways of living.

This chapter draws particular attention to the example of the Snoddy family and the Lansbury Estate in East London. Lansbury opened in 1951 as a model community created for the Live Architecture strand of the Festival of Britain and continued as LCC public housing in the decades that followed. The first family arrived on 14 February 1951 and the man of the house, Albert Snoddy (1915-1971), unexpectedly found himself in a high-profile position that attracted the attention of newspapers, magazines and news broadcasters.¹³² My research frames Albert as a living representation of

¹³⁰ Gold and Ward identify planners' use of four strategies to convey their ideas with the public in housing documentaries: planning as the application of science, as social medicine, as revelation and as wizardry, in John Gold and Stephen Ward, 'Of Plans and Planners. Documentary Films and the Challenge of the Urban Future, 1935-1952', in *The Cinematic City*, ed. David Clarke (London: Routledge, 1997), 68.

¹³¹ Francis identifies the particular need for historians to question the embrace or repudiation of middle-class masculinities by working class men, in Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male?', 649.

¹³² Coverage included the newsreel British Pathé, *First Citizens of New Estate* (1951) and local newspapers 'First Tenants of Lansbury', *East End News* (16 February 1951); Albert Richman, 'Lansbury, E. 14, Gets a Family: London's New District', *Daily Herald* (14 February 1951).

how planners wanted men to act and behave in their new homes, not only in Lansbury but across the nation's working class communities. Albert and his family also symbolised planners' linear vision of change, with the postwar period seen as a turning point in which families literally waved farewell to old accommodation and traditions that planners deemed 'unsuitable' for a modern way of life. However, a fissure between planning ideals and lived realities quickly emerged as Lansbury residents subverted the expectations of their planned homes and found ways to continue customs from the past. Even the Snoddy family expressed dissatisfaction with their new living arrangements and claimed they never wished to leave their old property.¹³³ The Lansbury Estate's East London location made it indicative of the nation's postwar reconstruction; however, it also highlighted challenges planners faced when their ideas for modern living came into contact with working class inhabitants.¹³⁴

Todd presents an optimistic account of the exchange of knowledge between town planners and the public between 1945 and 1967 and counters existing scholarship that positions the working classes as passive or unwelcome recipients of change.¹³⁵ For instance, Peter Larkham and Keith Lilley's comprehensive study of wartime and postwar exhibitions questions planners' motivations in staging large-scale events as they neither wished to consult the public or gather feedback.¹³⁶ My analysis of cross-class engagement at BCMI, the Festival of Britain and Live Architecture concurs with the findings of Larkham and Lilley. Even though improved socio-economic conditions meant that working class inhabitants possessed more agency over how to use and experience their home, their engagement with planners in the 1940s and early 1950s remained limited. This chapter further demonstrates the effect of planners' technocratic and omniscient identities on their use of exhibitions as a means to prescribe and promote how inhabitants *should* use domestic space. The public's optimism in planners' ability to continue the planning successes of the

¹³³ Jessica Allen, 'Contested Understandings: The Lansbury Estate in the Post-War Period' (Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1994), 130.

¹³⁴ Ceci Flinn argues that Whitehall policymakers had little interest in the micromanagement of rebuilding schemes outside of London, in Ceci Flinn, "'The City of Our Dreams'? The Political and Economic Realities of Rebuilding Britain's Blitzed Cities, 1945-54', *Twentieth Century British History* 23, no. 2 (1 June 2012): 233. Mort also highlights policymakers' postwar repositioning of London as the centre of the nation, in Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of the Permissive Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 8, 21.

¹³⁵ Todd's assessment more accurately reflects the late 1950s and 1960s, in which communication between planners and their subjects became less paternal and opportunities for two-way discussions increased, in Todd, 'Phoenix Rising', 680–81.

¹³⁶ Larkham and Lilley, 'Exhibiting the City', 651.

Second World War and remedy anxieties around men's domestic lives dissipated in the early 1950s, as the domestic ideals projected in the mid-1940s failed to materialise and people began to question the legitimacy of the 'planned' society.¹³⁷

Men's uses and experiences of the home

Finally, the concluding chapter considers men's experiences of the home and uses of domestic space to perform new ideas about masculinity. Adrian Forty notes, '[t]he attempt to give some kind of historical account of the experiences provided by architecture has not been a popular subject for research in Britain', as architectural historians feel most comfortable when 'discussing architecture in the terms of the stated intentions of the architects and their clients, where architectural forms can be verified against documentary evidence'.¹³⁸ This chapter uses oral histories and observational studies to assess whether men's lived experiences aligned with the planning ideals found in exhibitions and publications of the time.

Men's domestic experiences shine further light on three historiographical debates: domestic problems in the late 1940s; the 'classlessness' of new estates; and the 'newness' of men's postwar experiences of masculinity and domesticity. The social unrest and domestic upheaval that followed the end of the Second World War brought into focus the physical features of housing for planners, observers and inhabitants.¹³⁹ Chapter four therefore examines men's uses and experiences of living rooms, dining spaces, bedrooms, gardens and sheds. Like Strange, I analyse the home as a collection of distinct areas and objects.¹⁴⁰ The Victorian and Edwardian authors of the working class autobiographies, discussed in Strange's work, located fathers with specific material objects such as in their chair or at the dining table and remember these objects as symbols of 'paternal authority and privilege'.¹⁴¹ Oral histories and observational reports from the 1940s and 1950s similarly identify men's use of objects such as

¹³⁷ Mort, *Capital Affairs*, 92.

¹³⁸ Adrian Forty, 'Being or Nothingness: Private Experience and Public Architecture in Post-War Britain', *Architectural History* 38 (1995): 33–34.

¹³⁹ For example, Chapman's work examines the effects of domestic layout, planning, design and furniture on inhabitants in Chapman, *The Home and Social Status*.

¹⁴⁰ Strange, 'Fathers at Home'.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 705. King shares an extract from Jim Bullock's autobiography who discusses his father's chair and role as head of the dinner table, he explains, '[n]o one would ever have dreamed of sitting in my father's chair, whether he was in the house or not', in Jim Bullock, *Bowers Row: Recollections of a Mining Village* (Wakefield, 1976), 6, 16, in King, *Family Men*, 134–35.

armchairs, DIY projects and garden sheds to perform masculinities in the well-planned home.¹⁴² For a number of the men in this chapter, access to a home of their own and the opportunity to purchase items and arrange them as they wish became a way to express masculine identities that differed from previous generations.

In these homes, working class men found private space to adopt new hobbies such as DIY and gardening, popular among middle class men in the interwar period.¹⁴³ Working class men also encountered a number of difficulties as they attempted to continue traditional hobbies and customs in their new homes: testimonies express men's discontent over the lack of local pub, restrictions for keeping animals and housing managers' petty rules.¹⁴⁴ Some families developed strategies to maintain agency over their domestic lives, which could include physical alterations to their home or using rooms in ways that contrasted planners' expectations. This chapter argues that, contrary to the anxieties about men's home-centredness and its potential to lessen men's participation in public life noted by Wendy Webster, the movement of working class families to new estates did not necessarily mark the decline of working class cultures.¹⁴⁵ Rather, inhabitants often found ways to develop new identities as fathers and husbands that maintained links to pre-existing traditions and homosocial customs, both inside and outside the home. In bringing masculinities to the foreground we see that a number of different continuities stretched between the 1930s and 1960s that call into question the significance of 1945 as a historical turning point. This study more accurately demonstrates how, within the context of the Second World War and immediate postwar period, the parameters of planning discourse changed and fed into new ideas about housing design and men's domestic roles.

¹⁴² Perez highlights a similar experience in Argentina, as 'domestic masculinities relied on the inclusion of new technologies and activities within the home, related to hobbies, do-it-yourself and home improvement projects, which were regarded as signs of family respectability', in Perez, 'Masculine Ways of Being', 812.

¹⁴³ 'Notes on a Pilot Survey on Home Decorating and Repairing' (December 1948), 2, [MO SxMOA1/1/13/12/1- File Report 3065](#).

¹⁴⁴ For example, keeping racing pigeons could prove problematic on new council estates, discussed in Martin Johnes, 'Pigeon Racing and Working-Class Culture in Britain, 1870–1950', *Cultural and Social History* 4, no. 3 (1 September 2007): 375–76. Willmott and Young also discuss men's unhappiness with the provision of local pubs on new estates, in Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 85.

¹⁴⁵ Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race', and National Identity, 1945-64* (London: UCL Press, 1998), 74.

Conclusion

Martin Francis's historiographical review of masculinities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries identifies the late 1940s and 1950s as 'a period regularly presented as the apex of domesticity in modern Britain', in which male domestication re-emerges as a central theme in historical scholarship.¹⁴⁶ Planners, observers and inhabitants expressed different ways of thinking about domestic space, yet all three groups viewed the home as the centre of family life.¹⁴⁷

Class shaped mid-twentieth century planning discourses as it influenced planning identities, their vision for men's domestic actions and behaviours, their dissemination of these ideas at housing exhibitions and in planning publications, and men's reception of these ideas in reality. Working and middle class men rarely possessed the skills, resources or opportunity to design their own homes and therefore relied on the expertise of others. This meant that inhabitants, regardless of whether they owned or rented their property, consumed material spaces designed by planners as ideal environments for modern living.¹⁴⁸ However, planners' technical and middle class backgrounds problematically positioned them at a distance from the working class inhabitants for whom they designed.

Jeff Hearn writes, 'studying men is in itself neither new nor necessarily radical. It all depends on how this is done'.¹⁴⁹ Men's descriptions of their homes bring more voices to histories of the twentieth century home, which often focus on the experiences of women as mothers or marginal groups for whom 'home' presented more conspicuous challenges.¹⁵⁰ But historians of men must do more than simply locate men in the past – they must also examine the wider intellectual context and offer an explanation for men's performances of particular actions and behaviours.

¹⁴⁶ Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male?', 644.

¹⁴⁷ For further discussion, see James Obelkevich, 'Consumption', in *Understanding Post-War British Society*, ed. Peter Catterall and James Obelkevich (London: Routledge, 1994), 144; Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', 341–62.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Miller writes, any theory of housing therefore is 'largely a theory of consumption', in Daniel Miller, 'Appropriating the State on the Council Estate', *Man* 23, no. 2 (1988): 354.

¹⁴⁹ Jeff Hearn, 'From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men', *Feminist Theory* 5, no. 1 (1 April 2004): 49.

¹⁵⁰ For further discussion, see, Claire Langhamer, 'Review of Laura King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, 1914–1960*', *Journal of British Studies* 55, no. 2 (April 2016): 436.

Above all, historians have an obligation to translate these debates so that they can inform, educate, entertain and challenge audiences in the present. Everyone, regardless of their academic background, possesses an emotive connection to the concept of 'home' and the men who occupy these spaces. By making visible the gendered approaches of planners and their mixed effect on the experiences of male inhabitants in the past, the role of space and material objects in the performance of masculinities in the present becomes more apparent. The well-planned home offered more than a backdrop for family events. It enabled men to perform new ideas about fatherhood, marriage and domesticity – ideals popularised in the interwar period became an achievable reality for many more men as they moved into the postwar home. For these reasons, the following chapters will examine sources ranging from architectural publications to working class oral histories and bring together a number of historiographical threads on the subjects of gender, domesticity and planning knowledge. My focus on the complex exchange of values between men who planned homes and men who lived in them will reveal the pervasive influence of masculinities on planning debates and national exhibitions, as well as men's experiences of these domestic ideals in reality. Many men enjoyed their new homes and changed domestic practices in ways that aligned with planners' vision of a modern Britain. However, for many others, the well-planned home became a location to subvert planners' original intentions and blend masculine practices from the past and present.

Chapter Two: Expert Knowledge and Planning Identities

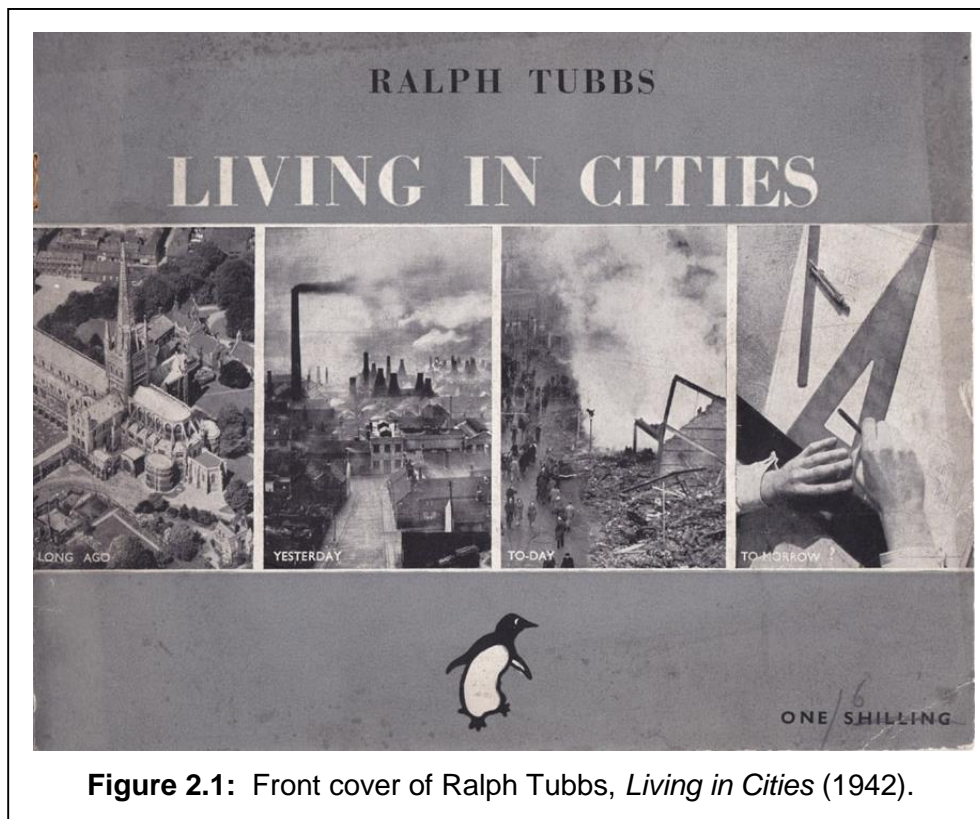


Figure 2.1: Front cover of Ralph Tubbs, *Living in Cities* (1942).

Planning successes during the Second World War, in military campaigns and management of the Home Front, produced an inflated confidence among planners in what they could achieve through a rational approach to space and human behaviour.¹ The future prime minister Clement Attlee predicted this new age of planning in 1940. In a meeting of the War Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction of Town and Country, he noted, 'the war itself would create an atmosphere in which there would be general acceptance of the principle of planning, and after the war there would be much less hostility than would have been found before the war'.² At the same time, politicians and the public increasingly positioned housing as the issue in most need of attention: at the 1945 general election, 97 per cent of Labour candidates and 94 per cent of Conservative candidates cited the housing question in their election address.³ Attlee predicted correctly, and

¹ Edward Hulton captured the public's mood in 1942 when he wrote, '[i]n war time, with all its faults, we have such a plan. Firms do not suddenly go and produce a few odd tanks, in the hope that the Government will take a fancy to them and buy them. The Government makes detailed plans; and orders the tanks, planes and guns from the various firms. We require something of this sort in peace', in Edward Hulton, 'Planning Is Essential', *Picture Post* (12 December 1942), 20.

² Clement Attlee, speaking at the first meeting of the War Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction of Town and Country (December 1940), cited in Jessica Allen, 'Contested Understandings: The Lansbury Estate in the Post-War Period' (Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1994), 105.

³ RB McCallum and Alison Readman, *The British General Election of 1945* (London: Nuffield Studies, 1947), 96.

throughout the 1940s a radical change in the public's receptiveness towards a 'planned society' emerged, an opportunity planners determinedly seized.⁴ Publications such as Ralph Tubbs' *Living in Cities* (1942) helped present the intellectual case for planning to a general, non-technical audience. The book charts the linear development of Britain's built environment over the past 500 years and defines planning as the discipline of the future. *Living in Cities*' front cover (figure 2.1) presents a chronology that begins with the religious buildings of 'Long ago', the industrial scars of 'Yesterday', the destruction of the Blitz 'To-day' and concludes with a planned and rational vision of 'To-morrow?', signified by a triangular ruler and assumedly male hands of an architect.⁵ Filmmaker Paul Rotha agreed that technicians would 'draw up the blue prints for our new way of living', but stressed the need to prepare the public for change and that 'the most logical way of doing this is to show people simply and personally what was, and in most cases still is, wrong with the old; and, moreover, how it came to be wrong'.⁶ For Tubbs, Rotha and other advocates of planning in the 1940s, the 'postwar moment' presented the next stage in a long history of planning, with knowledge of the past necessary in order to identify, explain and ultimately resolve family troubles and housing problems that afflicted the present day. Against the backdrop of Britain's blitzed cities, planners found opportunities to vocalise their visions for a planned society and present new ways to think about the home and men's domestic roles.

This chapter examines the social and intellectual landscape of Britain between the 1941 Blitz and the 1951 Festival of Britain, its effect on planners' masculine identities and ways of thinking about the nation's homes and its male inhabitants. I position planners within a wider culture of expertise, in which citizens' interior lives became objects of public scrutiny and the working class home was understood as a foundation of postwar reconstruction.⁷ This chapter will analyse planning publications and films, newspapers and magazine articles, advertisements and personal testimonies to show how planners conceptualised ideal homes and

⁴ The public's enthusiasm for planning exhibitions in the 1940s and early 1950s supports this point, see Peter Larkham, 'Exhibiting Planning in Wartime Britain', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 132; Selina Todd, 'Phoenix Rising: Working-Class Life and Urban Reconstruction, c. 1945–1967', *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 3 (July 2015): 687.

⁵ *Land of Promise* also discusses homes 'as they were', 'as they are' and 'as they might be' in Paul Rotha, *Land of Promise* (Paul Rotha Productions, 1946).

⁶ Paul Rotha, 'Films for Planning', ed. Gilbert McAllister, *Town and Country Planning* 9, no. 35 (Autumn 1941): 87.

⁷ Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters, *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain, 1945–1964* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1999), 11.

represented themselves and their activities, rather than inhabitants' encounters with new domestic spaces in reality. I will specifically focus on planners' masculinities and the impact of gender upon how planners imagined their role in Britain's reconstruction and the planning of postwar homes.

Frank Mort calls on historians not to judge urban plans 'against their enactment as actual schemes for the redevelopment of the city' and instead focus attention on 'the cultural origins and effects of programs for the redevelopment of the city'.⁸ To assess the 'cultural origins' of mid-twentieth century projects, this chapter positions the 1940s within a longer history of planning that dates back to the late nineteenth century and the radical exhibitions of polymath Patrick Geddes (1854-1932), the privately-built Garden Cities of the early twentieth century and modernist interwar projects such as Kensal House in West London. Historians of British planning have thus far ignored the masculine characteristics of planners and the effect of gender on the planning of domestic space.⁹ As discussed in the introduction, regardless of how imperceptible masculinities may at first seem in the source materials, historians such as John Tosh, Matt Houlbrook and Richard Hornsey have utilised methods to reveal the influence of masculine identities, both queer and non-queer, on historical events.¹⁰ By focussing on masculinities, this chapter reveals the influences of technocratic, rational and omniscient identities on approaches to planning the postwar home.

The chapter begins with an overview of planning in Britain prior to the 1940s and the influences of science and technology, sociology, the welfare state, reconstruction and 'women's knowledge' on how planners conceptualised the home. The chapter then turns its focus to consider how these themes shaped planners' representation of themselves and their understanding of the home and its male inhabitants. Planners' experimentation with people's domestic environments brought them into uncharted territory that made it possible to change inhabitants' everyday

⁸ Frank Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s', *The Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 1 (January 2004): 122–23.

⁹ For further discussion, see Joel Sanders, 'Introduction', in *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity*, ed. Joel Sanders (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 12–13.

¹⁰ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 1-2; Richard Hornsey, 'Homosexuality and Everyday Life in Post-War London' (University of Sussex, 2004), 19–20; Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 6, 141, 167.

lives but extremely difficult to predict the exact nature of this change. Planners' visions for how people would use their homes did not necessarily translate into realities and by the 1960s government-built housing of the 1940s had become synonymous with urine-soaked lifts and vandalised stairwells, which critics blamed on misguided designs and financial cuts to services that supported the projects.¹¹ Regardless of the long term successes or failures of postwar planning projects, this chapter highlights the historical specificities of planning masculinities in 1940s Britain and their effect on conceptualisations of the postwar home and, ultimately, the nation's reconstruction.

The intellectual landscape of postwar planning

The relationship between human behaviour and the built environment has a long history, which makes it difficult to select a date to begin a contextual account of mid-twentieth century planning in Britain. However, planning began to crystallise as a discipline in the late nineteenth century with the formation of the Garden City Association in 1899, which later became the Town and Country Planning Association. Raymond Unwin (1863-1940), the planner behind London's Hampstead Garden Suburbs, organised the first significant exhibition of modern urban planning at the Royal Academy in London in 1910 as part of the Royal Institute of British Architects' Town Planning Conference.¹² The exhibition featured a number of contemporary planning approaches but most notably included a special room that showcased Geddes' civic survey of Edinburgh.¹³ Geddes was a Scottish polymath, best known for his promotion of an 'ecology' of human action and behaviour, in which planners studied subjects within their natural, built and social environments.¹⁴ Patrick Abercrombie attended the 1910 exhibition and described Geddes' Edinburgh room as 'the merest hotch-potch... unworthy of the Royal Academy' and left baffled by Geddes' decision to remain present in the room during the exhibition's run 'talking, talking, talking about anything and everything'.¹⁵ Geddes articulated an awareness

¹¹ Joe Moran, 'Housing, Memory and Everyday Life in Contemporary Britain', *Cultural Studies* 18, no. 4 (July 2004): 615.

¹² Robert Freestone and Marco Amati, 'Town Planning Exhibitions', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ National Library of Scotland, 'Patrick Geddes (1854-1932)', *Learning Zone* (2016), <http://www.nls.uk/learning-zone/politics-and-society/patrick-geddes>, accessed 3 April 2016.

¹⁵ Patrick Abercrombie, *Town and Country Planning*, Second Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 128.

of the didactic possibilities of planning exhibitions and Abercrombie later admitted, 'there was something more in town planning than met the eye!'¹⁶ Abercrombie's encounter with Geddes had an enduring influence on his planning ideas of the 1940s, with both men in agreement over the need to examine people's actions within specific environments and share planning ideas with the public as a way to nurture 'active citizenship'.¹⁷

Like Geddes, Ebenezer Howard's *To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898) followed the hope of social reform movements that new urban forms could foster social and spiritual progress.¹⁸ This culminated in the Garden City movement, with aspects of these ideas realised in the privately built Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities in the 1910s and 1920s. The architects of Garden Cities hoped to positively reshape the social and cultural practices of the town's inhabitants (for example, the projects included art galleries and museums rather than cinemas).¹⁹ They offered idyllic surrounds compared to the squalor of most urban centres yet presented a number of issues for commentators writing in the 1940s, such as planners' failure to bring together domestic spaces with the wider community and an overly romantic view of pastoral living in the past.²⁰ The cities also developed as private ventures outside state control. This reduced their impact on government policy and made Garden Cities seem more like eccentricities rather than blueprints for the nation's future housing.²¹ Writing in 1963 on the politics of design for the Fabian Society, a leftwing political think tank, Paul Thompson labelled the planning of Garden Cities 'manifestly unscientific' as it focused on 'the small 18th century country town', which 'was a deathspot to a far greater extent than the modern city'.²² Though the planning intentions of Garden Cities differed

¹⁶ Ibid., 129.

¹⁷ Geddes expressed a desire 'for all towns and cities to have permanent expositions' in Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1915). For further information on Geddes' approach see Freestone and Amati, 'Town Planning Exhibitions', 4. For further information on Abercrombie's dissemination of planning ideas see Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life', 128.

¹⁸ Kermit Parsons and David Schuyler, eds., *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), chap. His Life and Times.

¹⁹ Rodney Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945*, Third Edition (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 253–54.

²⁰ Works that discuss criticisms of Garden Cities include Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, *Town Planning*, Architecture Year Book 1 (London: Paul Elek, 1945), 11–23; Paul Thompson, *Architecture and Town Planning. The Politics of Design*, Young Fabian Pamphlet 5 (Fabian Society, 1963), 37.

²¹ Frederic Osborn, *New Towns After the War* (London, 1942), 7–8. Other privately built estates include George Cadbury's model village Bourneville and Raymond Unwin's Hampstead Garden Suburbs, discussed in Adrian Forty, 'Being or Nothingness: Private Experience and Public Architecture in Post-War Britain', *Architectural History* 38 (1995): 33.

²² Thompson, *Architecture and Town Planning*, 37.

from postwar examples, they confirmed that planned environments *could* alter the everyday actions and behaviours of their residents.²³

The end of the First World War brought into focus the poor quality of the nation's housing, with politicians and the public in agreement that returning soldiers should not endure domestic conditions as bad as their conditions in battle.²⁴ Prime minister David Lloyd George promised 'homes fit for heroes' and set in motion an unprecedented level of local authority involvement in housing provision: between 1919 and 1939 local authorities built 1.1 million houses, however 90 per cent of properties were on suburban estates and therefore did not adequately address the problem of inner-city living.²⁵ In terms of planning ideology, one of the most innovative interwar projects was the Gas, Light and Coke Company's semi-public Kensal House Estate in North Kensington, which opened in March 1937 and consisted of two five-storey tower blocks with 68 two-bedroom and three-bedroom flats for working class families.²⁶ Maxwell Fry led a committee of architects, which included Robert Atkinson, Charles James, and George Wornum, while Elizabeth Denby served as the housing consultant and oversaw the scheme's social elements.²⁷ Mark Llewellyn and Elizabeth Darling's research examines Denby's role in the planning of Kensal House and identifies planners' intentional use of interior design to engineer the actions and behaviours of the estates' inhabitants.²⁸ For example, 'the kitchen was purposely designed to be small', eleven feet by seven feet five inches, so that families only had enough space to work and found themselves forced to eat meals in the living room.²⁹ Kensal House showcased a planning approach that took little account of inhabitants' needs or desires as Denby,

²³ For example, Abercrombie commented on the development of Letchworth and that it 'demonstrated the feasibility of advanced ideas', in Abercrombie, *Town and Country Planning*, 99.

²⁴ Ben Jones describes the early period after the First World War 'as a watershed moment in the provision of municipal housing in Britain' as '[a]part from the London County Council (LCC), few English authorities had built to any scale prior to the conflict', in Ben Jones, 'Slum Clearance, Privatization and Residualization: The Practices and Politics of Council Housing in Mid-Twentieth-Century England', *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 4 (1 December 2010): 515.

²⁵ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 188.

²⁶ Elizabeth Darling, 'What the Tenants Think of Kensal House: Experts' Assumptions versus Inhabitants' Realities in the Modern Home', *Journal of Architectural Education* 53, no. 3 (1 February 2000): 168.

²⁷ Mark Llewellyn, "'Urban Village' or 'White House': Envisioned Spaces, Experienced Places, and Everyday Life at Kensal House, London in the 1930s', *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 22, no. 2 (2004): 235.

²⁸ All Kensal House residents received a handbook upon arrival that explained how to use their home, in *Ibid.*, 232, 239.

²⁹ SC Leslie, 'Kensal House', in *Flats: Municipal and Private Enterprise* (London: Ascot Gas Heaters Ltd., 1938), 57, cited in Llewellyn, "'Urban Village' or 'White House'", 232-33.

Fry and his committee of architects took it upon themselves to act on behalf of their working class subjects.³⁰

Denby further noted the gendered effect of badly planned homes on women's lives and designed the kitchen to reduce the burden of housework. She justified her decision stating that excessive housework makes women 'a worse wife, and a worse mother than she could be'.³¹ Denby's approach presents an early attempt to conceptualise the home as a gendered space and an awareness that changes in design may affect relations between men and women. But, as Darling explains, 'a widespread culture of expertise did not yet exist' in 1930s Britain, it took the expansion of the welfare state after 1945 to create 'the circumstances in which such a culture could flourish, dependent as it was on "experts" to dictate and direct policy'.³² Successive changes in government, an uneven distribution of skills across the workforce and lack of state control over the price and availability of materials hampered the aspirations of interwar planners.³³ However, Kensal House does present a foretaste of how the relationship between planning experts and the people for whom they planned would develop in the 1940s.

Debate over the aesthetics, politics and philosophy of housing design proliferated in the early decades of the twentieth century but planners lacked opportunities to put their ideas into practice. Everything changed with the physical devastation of the 1941 Blitz and social upheaval of 'total war'.³⁴ Planners offered their judgement on the situation and extolled the positive possibilities of what the Blitz could produce. Tubbs described the Blitz as 'the new opportunity' and compared the event favourably to the 1666 Fire of London.³⁵ Likewise, Abercrombie noted the immense destruction of 'property that was worn out and ripe for rebuilding' and remarked 'there is not only Blitz but Blight to be made good'.³⁶ Architect Clough Williams-Ellis (1883-1978) highlighted the need for planners to remain detached from the environmental devastation that surrounded them,

³⁰ Darling, 'What the Tenants Think of Kensal House', 174.

³¹ Leslie, 'Kensal House', 279, cited in Elizabeth Darling, "'Enriching and Enlarging the Whole Sphere of Human Activities": The Work of the Voluntary Sector in Housing Reform in Inter-War Britain', in *Regenerating England: Science, Medicine and Culture in Inter-War Britain*, ed. C Lawrence and AK Mayer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 168.

³² Darling, 'What the Tenants Think of Kensal House', 174.

³³ Rotha, *Land of Promise*.

³⁴ Dennis Hardy, 'Utopian Ideas and the Planning of London', *Planning Perspectives* 20, no. 1 (January 2005): 39.

³⁵ Ralph Tubbs, *Living in Cities* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1942), 21.

³⁶ Abercrombie, *Town and Country Planning*, 27.

Inspecting the cold ruins in the light of common day, street map in hand and city architect at my elbow, I had to regard the destruction, not with the excitement of the eyewitness or the indignation of the outraged citizen, but with the cool detachment of the professional town-planner. I tried to be as impersonal as the surgeon called in to give an impartial opinion on an unknown patient in the casualty ward of the hospital.³⁷

Even more forthright in his account, popular science writer Julian Huxley (1887-1975) described the destruction as a 'planner's windfall' and noted that the Blitz demolished blighted properties as well as awakened people, from all walks of life, to the role of planning in the nation's future success.³⁸ For Huxley, the Blitz presented the 'psychological moment' where the value of planning became clear to the public.³⁹ Flora Stephenson and Phoebe Pool's *A Plan for Town and Country* (1944) also noted this development,

The man in the street, the plain British citizen, is now fully aware of the terrific feats of organization which were required to mount the offensive. He is proud of and rather awed by the efforts, the planning, and the co-operation which were the forerunners of our successful landings on the continent of Europe.⁴⁰

The 'man in the street' then 'begins to think that we should be able to plan our work and our environment after the war is over' as 'we shall need planning in those immediate post-war years as we have never needed it before'.⁴¹

A double-page advertisement for Gyproc building products in the *Architectural Review* (1941) similarly conveys the continuation of planning into times of peace (figure 2.2). The left-hand side of the advertisement shows military planners as they oversee the environmental destruction of the Second World War. The right-hand side of the advertisement presents a vision of an urban and rational tomorrow, with military figures replaced by planners. The readership of the *Architectural Review* mainly worked in

³⁷ Clough Williams-Ellis, *Plan for Living, Rebuilding Britain 5* (London: Faber and Faber, 1941), 18.

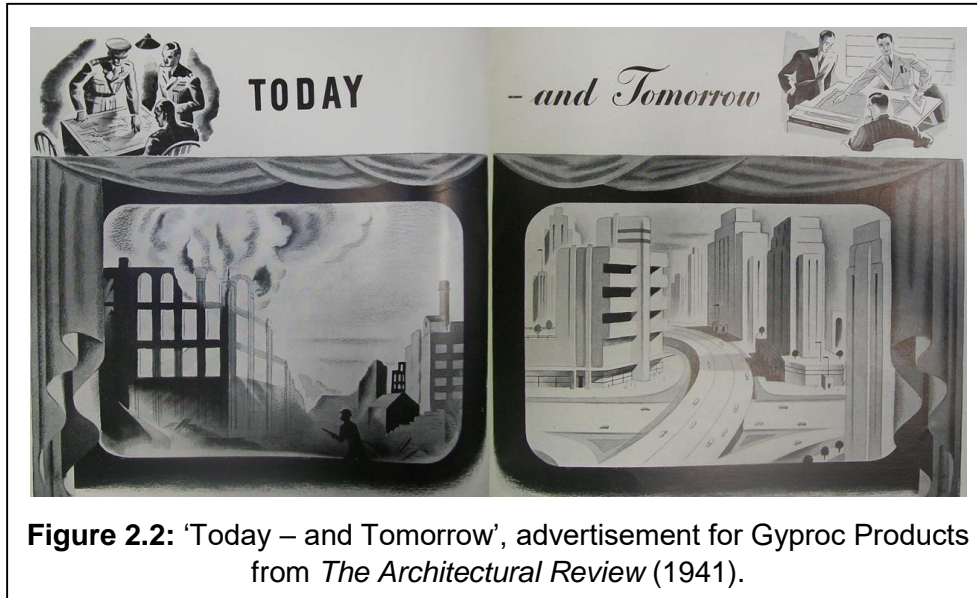
³⁸ Julian Huxley quoted in Flora Stephenson and Phoebe Pool, *A Plan for Town and Country, Target for Tomorrow* (London: The Pilot Press, 1944), 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

fields associated with planning.⁴² The advertisement therefore indicates the proactive role planners imagined for themselves in the nation's recovery and the continuation of planning approaches developed in the Second World War.

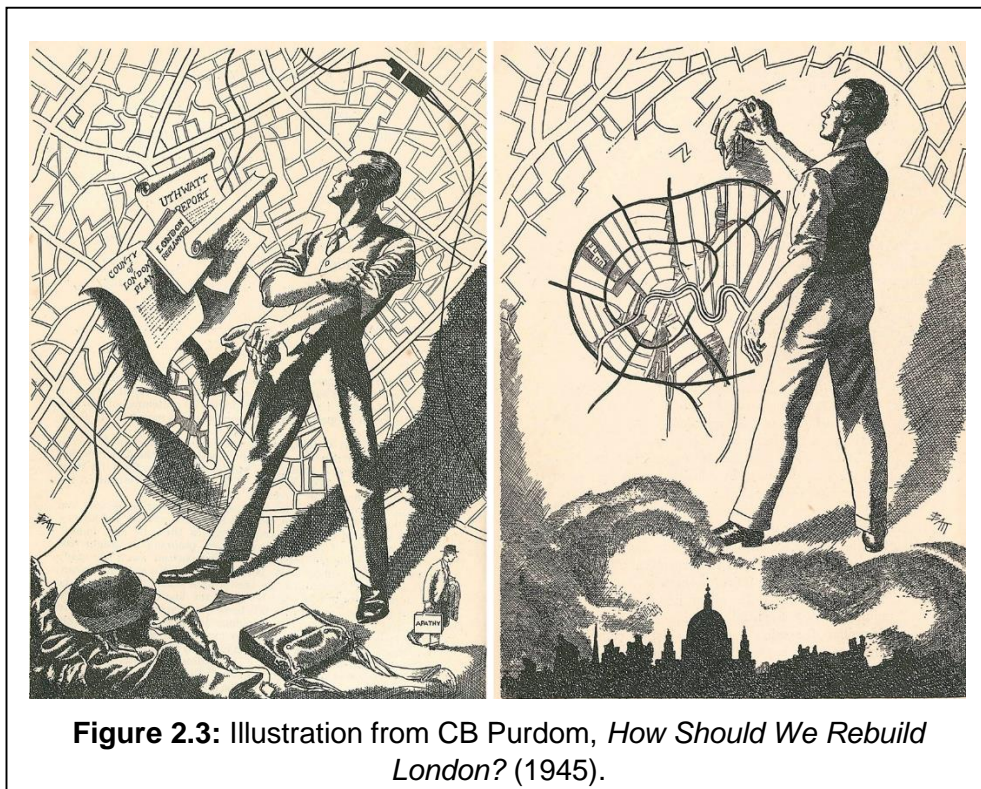


Two illustrations from CB Purdom's *How Should We Plan London?* (1945) offer a similar representation of planners' role in Britain's peacetime recovery (figure 2.3). Purdom (1883-1965) helped establish the early Garden Cities, worked as the finance director of Welwyn Garden City in the 1920s and later served as treasurer of the International Federation for Housing and Planning between 1931 and 1935.⁴³ *How Should We Plan London?* wished to raise awareness among readers of the questions that faced the capital city during the period of reconstruction. In the first image, a muscular young man has thrown-off his military hat, jacket and bag and is literally rolling-up his sleeves to begin the task of London's postwar reconstruction. In front of him, spread across a map of London, are reports and plans that offer guidance on how best to rebuild the city, such as the *County of London Plan*. At the same time, an older man in a business suit walks away from the scene. He carries a briefcase labelled 'apathy' and symbolises the previous generation of experts, predominantly civil servants, who failed to adequately address Britain's urban planning

⁴² Tom Harrisson wrote that the *Architectural Review* 'represents the main currents in planning' and projects into the public mind planners' own questions and interests, in Tom Harrisson, *Human Planning*, First Draft (15 September 1941), 7, [MO SxMOA1/1/16/9/17 - File Report 873](http://www.moxia.org.uk/moxia/1/16/9/17-File-Report-873).

⁴³ Alan Cash, 'CB Purdom, Biographical Notes', *Charles Benjamin Purdom*, <http://cashewnut.me.uk/WGCbooks/Purdom-biographical-details.php#IGCTPA>, accessed 20 January 2016.

problem during the interwar period. The second image shows the planner standing above London's iconic skyline as he erases the capital's old map and replaces it with his vision of an arterial, rational city. Purdom arguably exaggerates planners' willingness to erase pre-existing parts of the city, a planning characteristic discussed in detail in this chapter's final section, but the images clearly convey two distinct expressions of 1940s masculinities: the enthusiastic young man who returned from war and the apathetic civil servant who failed to initiate change. The environmental and social upheaval of the Second World War gave a younger generation of planners an unprecedented opportunity to rewrite their discipline's approach and take control of the nation's reconstruction.⁴⁴ As will become apparent, although this 'new' wave of planners appeared more enthusiastic, idealistic and technically-minded, they also continued to develop plans that favoured traditional forms of paternalist, top-down knowledge.



An enthusiastic 'spirit of postwar planning' peaked around the 1951 Festival of Britain before retreating for a number of interrelated factors. The Conservative Party's return to power in 1951 replaced a Labour government besieged by problems in its final years and extinguished many

⁴⁴ Stephen Ward, 'Gordon Stephenson and the "Galaxy of Talent": Planning for Post-War Reconstruction in Britain 1942-1947', *Town Planning Review* 83, no. 3 (January 2012): 294.

of the idealistic hopes of Attlee, Aneurin Bevan and others.⁴⁵ Both parties now agreed on the need for more housing but disagreed over the type and quality of housing and the role of non-state actors. The Conservatives therefore dismantled regulations introduced under Labour, such as building license restrictions and land use regulations, reduced the role of centralised state powers in housing and more warmly welcomed private firms to design, build and manage new homes.⁴⁶ Nicholas Day argues that as early as 1950 'the concept of Local Authorities providing housing for all sections of the community was becoming an out of date ideal, replaced in 1951 by Macmillan's policy, of 'Homes for the People', and the return of the private builder producing houses for sale to the higher income groups or middle classes'.⁴⁷ Among some Conservatives, there also existed vocal skepticism over the direction of planning. For example, the Young Conservatives organisation in the New Town of Stevenage attacked the fundamental ethos behind their own town and stated in 1949, 'the social structure of towns should not be created artificially but develop naturally'.⁴⁸ As the 1950s progressed, the Labour Party faced accusations of utopianism and overconfidence in the effects of environment upon human development.⁴⁹ Increased unease over planners' accountability added to this strain, so much so that in 1968 planning authorities faced a legal obligation to demonstrate the consideration of public opinion in the process of drafting plans.⁵⁰ That same year a gas explosion at Ronan Point tower block in Newham, East London, which killed four people after the corner of the building collapsed because of design flaws and poor construction, signalled the death of Britain's experimentation with postwar modernism.⁵¹

⁴⁵ For further discussion, see David Kynaston, *Family Britain 1951-1957* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), chap. A Narrow Thing.

⁴⁶ Conservatives built the greatest numbers of council houses between 1952 and 1956, noted in Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945*, 258. As an example, the backbench group of One Nation Conservatives framed social housing in terms of labour mobility and saw that improvements in people's health and quality of life, reduced social services expenditure in Conservative Political Centre, *One Nation* (1950), pp. 30-31.

⁴⁷ Nicholas Merthyr Day, 'The Role of the Architect in Postwar State Housing, A Case Study of the Housing Work of the London County Council 1939-1956' (University of Warwick, 1988), 269.

⁴⁸ Report from the Stevenage Young Conservatives debate 'The House deplores the Minister's decision to establish New Towns at Stevenage and in other areas' held on 7 October 1949, cited in Harold Orlans, *Stevenage: A Sociological Study of a New Town* (London: Routledge, 1952), 163.

⁴⁹ In a 1992 interview with Jennifer Allen, Walter Bor described environmental determinism as 'the sort of Labour party view', due to the belief that 'all you have to do is give [citizens] a good environment and everything will be fine' in Allen, 'Contested Understandings', 107.

⁵⁰ Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945*, 255.

⁵¹ Simon Gunn, 'The Rise and Fall of British Urban Modernism: Planning Bradford, circa 1945-1970', *The Journal of British Studies* 49, no. 4 (October 2010): 868.

Influences on planning identities

This section expands upon the landscape of planning knowledge outlined and examines six themes that specifically shaped planners' masculine identities and their approach to the 1940s home.

Expanded culture of expertise

Chris Waters discusses the expanded culture of postwar expertise and identifies a shift among social investigators from studies of individual, psychological anatomies to the operation of social groups. He explains,

Building a "New Jerusalem" in the wake of the Labour Party's 1945 electoral victory required new expertise; the collectivist current in British society that had been unleashed by the war was now harnessed to securing the peace. A new age required new therapeutic approaches to the problems of modern society and to the relationship between the individual and society.⁵²

Waters specifically examines studies into the 'social production of homosexuality' in the 1940s and 1950s, and highlights experts' increasing association of identity with environment.⁵³ Magazine articles from the mid-1950s convey similar fears over the link between environmental influences and psychological well-being. A 1955 *Picture Post* article entitled 'Happiness Begins at Home' explains that the link between a person's state of mind in adulthood and the behaviours of their parents in their early environment is 'so well recognised nowadays that a new kind of preventative medical service has grown up'.⁵⁴ Mort, Waters and Becky Conekin describe how 'the interior lives of citizens became an object of public scrutiny' in Britain in the 1940s and 1950s.⁵⁵ Nikolas Rose also observes how experts took a greater interest in citizens' mental health and reinterpreted the family after the Second World as a set of 'psychological relations between mothers and fathers, parents and children, brothers and sisters', a definition of family life that attached greater significance to men's

⁵² Chris Waters, 'The Homosexual as a Social Being in Britain, 1945–1968', *The Journal of British Studies* 51, no. 3 (21 December 2012): 690.

⁵³ For example, Michael Schofield, *Society and the Homosexual* (London, 1952), 181; W Calder, 'The Sexual Offender: A Prison Medical Officer's Viewpoint', *British Journal of Criminology* 6, no. 1 (July 1955); SJ Spender, 'Homosexuality Among Oxford Undergraduates', *Journal of Mental Science* 105 (April 1959): 393–405.

⁵⁴ 'Unhappiness Begins at Home', *Picture Post* (31 December 1955), 41.

⁵⁵ Conekin, Mort, and Waters, *Moments of Modernity*, 11.

roles as fathers and husbands.⁵⁶ Experts from other fields also stressed the importance of the home as a factor in physical and psychological health for both adults and children. For example, controversial educational psychologist Sir Cyril Burt explained, 'of all the various social influences that affect the individual's mind, the most important are those [found] within the patient's home'.⁵⁷

These fears, and the influence of developmental and environmental psychology, featured in planning debates as experts approached the home with particular concerns over children's upbringing and their relationship with their parents.⁵⁸ For example, Tubbs observed, 'planning for the child is closely bound up with planning the home' and 'the atmosphere of individual love and care found in a good home will always be better than the impersonal atmosphere of any scheme of collective upbringing designed to release the family from its obligations'.⁵⁹ As part of her research for the Ideal Home Exhibition in the mid-1940s, journalist Millicent Pleydell-Bouverie conducted interviews with families across the country and also found that 'the happy outcome' of the well-planned home would see fathers 'play a much more important part in his children's upbringing and in their pleasures'.⁶⁰

The location of physical and psychological problems within the home provided justification for closer scrutiny of inhabitants' interior lives. It therefore comes as little surprise that an increased body of social research into the planning of the house, housing layout, furniture design and urban studies emerged at the same time as studies that examined the threat of environmental dangers.⁶¹ For the first time, research took an interest in the domestic interactions between husbands and wives and fathers and children, the importance of space for the family to socialise together as well as space for individuals to enjoy activities on their own, the necessity of privacy to foster healthy family relations, and the effect of the movement

⁵⁶ Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Routledge, 1991), 153; Nikolas Rose, *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 33.

⁵⁷ Quoted in JM Mackintosh, *Housing and Family Life* (London: Cassell and Company, 1952), 110.

⁵⁸ Laura King writes, 'in the years that followed [the Second World War] psychological ideas about children's development became mainstream' alongside an 'emphasis on fathers' obligation to provide a more informal education in terms of emotional rather than intellectual development', in Laura King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, 1914-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 57, 91.

⁵⁹ Tubbs, *Living in Cities*, 47.

⁶⁰ Millicent Pleydell-Bouverie, *Daily Mail Book of Post-War Homes* (London: Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition Department, 1944), 103.

⁶¹ Dennis Chapman, *The Home and Social Status* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), 15.

from urban to suburban areas upon people's everyday lives.⁶² These studies show how expert focus shifted to examine the relationship between material environments in the home and inhabitants' relations and experiences, with a particular emphasis on domestic space as a location for gendered interactions. Claire Langhamer describes 'homes' in mid-twentieth century Britain as 'a fluid concept, open to multiple meanings' and writes that 'a house is not necessarily a home'.⁶³ From the 1940s, experts increasingly took an interest in the social, psychological and emotional elements that constituted a 'good home' as well as material factors associated with 'good housing'. As experts devoted more attention to homes as well as houses, and looked beyond the technical aspects of house building, studies more explicitly linked space and identity, thus allowing us to better understand how planners discussed gender within the context of the postwar home.

Science and technology

Planners featured in a number of publications on postwar reconstruction as figureheads of a modern, energised welfare state.⁶⁴ The expansive field of planning had also become increasingly professionalised since the 1930s, as architectural organisations campaigned for equal recognition to long-established professions.⁶⁵ For example, a 1941 RIBA report 'urges upon the Government that just as the importance of the services of the lawyer, the accountant, the doctor and the surveyor is recognised by their holding obligatory appointments, so the importance of the architect should be equally recognised and remunerated'.⁶⁶ However, architects' calls for greater state recognition did not mean that they wished to mirror the status of the traditional elite. Architects, and other planning professionals, instead imagined themselves as members of a technical-minded middle class, which rapidly expanded in the mid-twentieth century. David Edgerton

⁶² For example, Chapman, *The Home and Social Status*; Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957); Ferdynand Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London: Heinemann, 1961); Peter Willmott and Michael Young, *Family and Class in a London Suburb* (London: New English Library, 1976).

⁶³ Claire Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (1 April 2005): 346.

⁶⁴ Day, 'The Role of the Architect', 141; Rosemary Wakeman, 'Rethinking Postwar Planning History', *Planning Perspectives* 29, no. 2 (3 April 2014): 154.

⁶⁵ John Gold and Stephen Ward, 'Of Plans and Planners. Documentary Films and the Challenge of the Urban Future, 1935-1952', in *The Cinematic City*, ed. David Clarke (London: Routledge, 1997), 76; Leah Armstrong, 'Designing a Profession: The Structure, Organisation and Identity of the Design Profession in Britain, 1930-2010' (University of Brighton, 2014), 159.

⁶⁶ 'Reconstruction and the Architectural Profession, Interim Report of the RIBA Reconstruction Committee', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 48 (December 1941): 21, cited in Day, 'The Role of the Architect', 13.

explains that the number of scientists, army officers and engineers increased from around 100,000 in 1931 to almost 250,000 in 1951, which significantly outnumbered professionals in accounting, medicine, law and the church, whose numbers increased from 160,000 to 200,000.⁶⁷

Edgerton observes how state officials continued to promote technology and the sciences after the end of the war, particularly as subjects to study at universities.⁶⁸ By the 1960s, students were more likely to study scientific or technical subjects – making the university campus ‘a more masculine place than it had been before the war’.⁶⁹

The effects of science and technology went beyond laboratories or factory production lines. Planners saw the potential of these fields to change how people used and experienced domestic space across Britain: from soundproofing technologies to arm chair designs, advances in heating to an expanded palette of paint colours, rapid prefabricated production methods to computing machines capable of processing statistical information on the home, the scientific and technical boom redrew the role and possibilities of design and planning.⁷⁰

In 1964, cultural commentator Harry Hopkins identified early postwar planners as ‘builders of a new world’, and described how many started life as children of manual workers and received their education at redbrick universities or technical colleges, rather than a classical education at Oxford or Cambridge.⁷¹ Abercrombie, arguably the most high-profile figure of the period, described himself and other planners in the *County of London Plan* team as ‘technicians’.⁷² The increased value attached to science and

⁶⁷ David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 172–73.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* For many, the proliferation of technical expertise seemed to create a bigger gulf between aesthetic and technical forms of knowledge. This debate culminated in CP Snow’s 1959 Rede Lecture, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, where he noted, ‘the separation between the scientists and non-scientists is much less bridgeable among the young than it was even thirty years ago’, in CP Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution, The Rede Lecture, 1959* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 19. For further analysis of the ‘two cultures’ debate, see Guy Ortolano, ‘Human Science or a Human Face? Social History and the “Two Cultures” Controversy’, *The Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 4 (October 2004): 482–505.

⁷⁰ For example, insufficient heating meant that family activities during the winter were limited to the one or two rooms that housed a fireplace, noted in Alison Ravetz, *The Place of Home: English Domestic Environments, 1914-2000* (London: E & FN Spon, 1995), 167. Furthermore, the expanded choice of paint colours attracted the interest of MO, which published a 1949 guide on using colours to influence how people feel within the home, see Mass Observation, *People and Paint* (Slough: Imperial Chemical Industries Limited, 1949).

⁷¹ Harry Hopkins, *The New Look: A Social History of the Forties and Fifties in Britain* (Secker & Warburg, 1963), 159.

⁷² Peter Larkham, ‘Replanning London After the Second World War’, Lecture at Gresham College (7 July 2015), <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/replanning-london-after-the-second-world-war>, accessed 2 April 2016.

technology also meant that more people felt qualified to contribute to planning debates, which further expanded the traditional borders of expert knowledge. Nick Hubble, in his assessment of the 'stratum of technically-minded workers' involved with Mass Observation, quotes George Orwell's view that the technician – the mechanic, radio expert, industrial chemist, film producer, popular journalist or higher-paid skilled worker – was 'most at home in and most definitely of the modern world'.⁷³ Writing in 1966, sociologist Robert Millar saw the improved status of technicians since the end of the war as evidence of the construction of a 'technicist class', positioned between the traditional class of working class artisans and an administrative elite.⁷⁴ Millar explained,

The former manual worker who now presses the buttons in an automated steel plant is more respected than many who were once his social superiors. The electronic genius has a higher status than professional men. The former apprentice who becomes an industrial tycoon is held in higher esteem, and has much greater economic power, than a member of the hereditary aristocracy.⁷⁵

Although the emergence of a 'technicist class' certainly destabilised traditional class hierarchies, Millar exaggerates the extent of change during this period. The expansion of scientific and technological approaches to the home may have highlighted a form of expert knowledge that appeared to differ from the views of a traditional, classically-educated upper class elite. However, planners' technological and middle class backgrounds continued to position them at a distance from the working class inhabitants for whom they planned.

The particularities of expert culture in the 1940s help explain the unique direction of planning after the Second World War and why this differed from events after 1918. Most notably, the increased importance of science and technology reshaped the class associations of knowledge and expanded the pool of information in which experts could search. A wave of rational technocrats challenged the dominance of upper-middle class pedagogues, and brought to planning new methods, approaches and subjects to investigate. Mike Savage writes, 'in the middle years of the twentieth

⁷³ Orwell presents this list of professions in George Orwell and Desmond Hawkins, 'The Proletarian Writer', *The Listener* (19 December 1940), cited in Nick Hubble, *Mass-Observation and Everyday Life: Culture, History, Theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 112, 227.

⁷⁴ Robert Millar, *The New Classes* (London: Longmans, 1966).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

century we can detect an increasingly clear rejection of what was deemed the snobbish and elitist refrain of “highbrow culture” and an increasing enthusiasm for a different kind of intellectuality, one bound up with science, technique, and skill’.⁷⁶ He continues, ‘the encounters between social scientists and their subjects tell us a lot about what can, and cannot, be said in different times and places, by different kinds of agents’.⁷⁷ During the 1940s, experts’ conceptualisation of identity, as something environmental and social, informed planners’ approach to the home and its male and female inhabitants.⁷⁸ Like Savage, I examine these ‘expert encounters’ as a way to establish the thematic contours of planning debates. However, they also provide information on masculine knowledge and reveal the complex exchange of values between men who planned homes and men who lived in them.

Sociology

The Second World War provoked innovation in the natural and human sciences; with the latter having a profound impact on how experts thought about human behaviour in the postwar decades.⁷⁹ Sociological studies of domestic space arrived late to planning debates in Britain. This absence left a space for organisations, such as MO, to flourish. MO was an early proponent of in-depth, sociologically-minded investigations that could reveal hidden systems of power that governed citizens’ daily lives.⁸⁰ MO co-founder Tom Harrisson explained that the organisation wished to forward a ‘more imaginative and active kind of sociology than seemed available at the time’, as the MO founders understood academic sociology in Britain as ‘timid, bookish and unproductive’.⁸¹ Although the LSE established a chair in sociology in 1907, no academic positions in sociology

⁷⁶ Michael Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain Since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19, 51.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, xii. Jon Lawrence also examines encounters between middle class investigators and working class subjects as an entry-point to his study of class in the 1960s, in Jon Lawrence, ‘Social-Science Encounters and the Negotiation of Difference in Early 1960s England’, *History Workshop Journal* 77, no. 1 (1 April 2014): 215–39.

⁷⁸ Conekin, Mort and Waters also identify the expanded context within which experts worked and their increased interest in urban environments and the psychological health of communities, in Conekin, Mort, and Waters, *Moments of Modernity*, 14–15.

⁷⁹ Rose, *Governing the Soul*, 16.

⁸⁰ Lawrence notes, ‘anthropologists were the trailblazers in Britain [of non-social problem studies], first in the amateur guise of Mass-Observation from the late 1930s, and then through established academic scholars such as Raymond Firth, John Mogey and Ronald Frankenberg’ in Lawrence, ‘Social Science Encounters’, 216.

⁸¹ Tom Harrisson, *Britain Revisited* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), 278. Harrisson more broadly criticised, ‘the continued neglect of scientific methods in the human field, as opposed to the material and technical field’ and ‘although enormous advances in the social sciences have been made in the last thirty years, especially in the United States, even some of the elementary precepts of social science are ignored’, Harrisson, *Human Planning*, 1, [MO SxMOA1/1/6/9/17 - File Report 378](#).

existed at the University of Oxford until 1955 and the University of Cambridge until 1962.⁸² Among the limited studies of planning projects in the 1940s, sociologists remained generally suspicious of what planners hoped to achieve.⁸³ American sociologist Harold Orlans studied Stevenage between 1948 and 1950 and expressed scepticism over planners' ability to use physical environments to shape human experience,

It may be concluded, therefore, that there are not universally acceptable architectural or sociological principles for engineering the happiness and success of neighbourhood or community, but only different principles catering to the needs of different social groups and planners. Many new town planners try to understand and cater to the needs of industrial workers, but, as no full-time planner is himself an industrial worker, it is more than likely that mistakes will be made. Again, most key planners are salaried intellectuals whose outlook differs in certain respects from that of the commercial and white-collar middle classes for whom the new town will cater, so here, too, mistakes are likely.⁸⁴

Orlans' criticism highlighted a social and intellectual disconnect between planners' expert knowledge and the quotidian experiences of the people for whom they planned. Sociologists found themselves well-placed to scrutinise these differences and therefore provided a vital voice in planning discussions. Ruth Glass worked as one of the earliest academic sociologists in Britain. Writing in 1964 on problems she observed in the 1940s, Glass questioned 'two articles of faith' that underpinned postwar confidence in planning: the expectation that relations between citizens and social institutions would grow increasingly harmonious, and the continuation of public trust in state authorities.⁸⁵ Glass criticised planners' attempts to engage with sociology as 'derived from the ideas of nineteenth-century utopias and social reforms; with seasoning by Geddes and [Lewis] Mumford; a few titbits from recent community studies; and with some compatible generalizations of their own spatial and social position in society'.⁸⁶

Sociology had become one of several new approaches taught to students of architecture in the 1940s, alongside civic design, transport, structural

⁸² Waters, 'The Homosexual as a Social Being in Britain, 1945–1968', 686–87.

⁸³ Ruth Glass recounts sociologists' suspicions in Ruth Glass, 'London Aspects of Change', in *Cliches of Urban Doom*, Originally Printed in 1964 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 18–19.

⁸⁴ Orlans, *Stevenage*, 101.

⁸⁵ Ruth Glass, 'The Mood of London', in *Cliches of Urban Doom*, originally printed in 1973 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 161.

⁸⁶ Glass, 'London Aspects of Change', 18–19.

engineering and garden planning.⁸⁷ Frederic Osborn, chairman of the Town and Country Planning Association and advisor on the *County of London Plan*, argued, 'town planning requires a sociological outlook' but 'if architects make claims outside their functional technique they must develop a new sort of responsibility – of which so far I see little evidence'.⁸⁸ Glass not only criticised planners' amateur attempts to co-opt sociological concepts into their studies, but also attacked sociologists who asked 'unanswerable [questions] because the premises are wrong. (They are based on an exaggerated concept of the 'plannable', and in particular also on a false image of environmental determinism)'.⁸⁹ London County Council architect Walter Bor also noted how sociologists, in line with others working on the design of unbuilt housing, attempted to project themselves into the future to predict the social needs of domestic space - an approach that differed from sociologists' previous role in which they retrospectively examined what went wrong.⁹⁰

In his account of the social sciences in the postwar decades, Savage writes, '[t]here were few academic social scientists in the late 1940s... Rather they occupied a small but strategically important niche within a 'gentlemanly' academic culture, in which their jurisdiction lay in their moralizing accounts of evolutionary development'.⁹¹ Although planners and sociologists agreed on many issues, and both wished to present their expertise as technical and different from the traditional bourgeoisie, sociologists like Glass could also provide an alternative voice to the technocratic rationalism of men like Abercrombie, particularly in follow-up studies of housing estates such as 'A Profile of Lansbury' (1954).⁹² Sociologists' involvement in planning took many forms. Whether sociologists criticised studies from afar or involved themselves in the process - in good or bad ways - the emergence of sociology as an academic discipline shaped the field of planning.

Welfare

⁸⁷ Williams-Ellis, *Plan for Living*, 23.

⁸⁸ Frederic Osborn cited in *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁹ Ruth Glass, 'Uneasy Partnership: The Application of Sociological Knowledge to Regional and Town Planning', in *Cliches of Urban Doom*, Originally Printed in 1959 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 20.

⁹⁰ Walter Bor, *The Making of Cities* (London: Leonard Hill, 1972), 94.

⁹¹ Savage, *Identities and Social Change*, 93.

⁹² John Westergaard and Ruth Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', *The Town Planning Review* 25, no. 1 (April 1954): 33–58.

The role of sociologists, and social scientists more broadly, became clear as the war turned upside-down men's relationships with their families, friends, neighbours and the state. Some people imagined that the communal spirit fostered during the war would continue into times of peace. Arthur Ling, who worked in the LCC Architects' Department in the 1940s and 1950s, summarised this belief in a 1985 interview,

People were much more together, they met in the air-raid shelters, in the tubes at night they were in the Home Guard or they queued for spam or whatever it was they could get hold of, one egg a week. Everybody really lost a lot of their inhibitions about talking to their next-door neighbours. When the raids were over they used to almost celebrate in the early morning and this was the spirit that I think a lot of people hoped would continue after the war.⁹³

This optimism dissipated as planners instead promoted a postwar ideal where families focused attention on their own home and its occupants. For example, writing in 1944, Pleydell-Bouverie described the wartime spirit of togetherness, collectivism and consideration of the common good as an exception rather than a new direction for society.⁹⁴ She predicted that the British desire for individuality and reserve would quickly return, which she saw as no bad thing as the basic unit 'of our social life is the family'.⁹⁵ Even among Labour Party figures at the vanguard of planning debates in the 1940s, statements moved away from the collectivism of the 'Blitz spirit' and focused on the life of the individual. Bevan, in his 1952 memoirs *In Place of Fear*, shared this outlook,

There is no test for progress other than its impact on the individual. If the policies of statesmen, the enactments of legislature, the impulses of group activity do not have for their object the enlargement and cultivation of the individual life, they do not deserve to be called civilized.⁹⁶

Sonya Rose describes the fragility of the popular image of neighbourly togetherness during the war and labels the period 1939 to 1945 a historical aberration rather than a redirection of communal values.⁹⁷ Waters agrees that the communal wartime spirit, whether real or imagined, did not stretch

⁹³ Paul Addison, *Now the War Is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-1951* (London: BBC Books, 1985), 3.

⁹⁴ Pleydell-Bouverie, *Daily Mail Book of Post-War Homes*, 85.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Aneurin Bevan, *In Place of Fear* (London, 1952), 200.

⁹⁷ Sonya Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chap. Conclusions and Afterthoughts.

beyond 1945 but continued as a key motif in popular films of the late 1940s and early 1950s.⁹⁸ Daniel Ussishkin helpfully identifies the state's 'legacy of collective affective ties that were both produced by the war and were necessary to win it' and how these 'imageries of war' helped establish the welfare state and safeguard the nation's postwar reconstruction.⁹⁹ But, as I examine in the next chapter, rather than continue the collective spirit of pulling-together associated with the Blitz, planners instead encouraged inhabitants to use their homes to pursue individualist ideals and think about society in terms of themselves and their direct family.

Historians have written extensively on the postwar solidification of the nuclear family, yet analysis gives scant attention to how men experienced an expanded and redefined welfare state and how this changed men's relationship to their home and family.¹⁰⁰ Accounts tend to support the view that postwar discourses enshrined families as private islands positioned outside the support of kin networks, friends and neighbours.¹⁰¹ Although most scholars agree that families became more likely to operate as self-sufficient units, it remains less clear how family members interacted within these units. The Council of Industrial Design report *The Family* (1948) includes a section on 'External Influences on the Family', in which it discusses the impacts of state intervention on men's role within family life. The report states that prior to the arrival of 'social services', the husband felt bound to support his wife and children, to give his children whatever education he received and assist them to find work when they reached working age.¹⁰² In reality, as the report admits, men did not always meet these duties and occasionally left families to suffer with only limited state assistance. The CoID report generally supports the work of social services and describes them as 'all valuable in themselves', yet also notes that with the rise of state intervention it 'is sometimes heard that, by reducing family responsibility, they also reduce its cohesiveness'.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Films include Henry Corneilus, *Passport to Pimlico*, 1949; Alexander Mackendrick, *Whisky Galore*, 1949; Charles Crichton, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, 1951, discussed in Chris Waters, "Dark Strangers" in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963', *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 2 (1 April 1997): 214.

⁹⁹ Daniel Ussishkin, 'Morale and the Postwar Politics of Consensus', *Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 3 (July 2013): 731, 732.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', 341; Stefania Bernini, *Family Life and Individual Welfare in Post-War Europe: Britain and Italy Compared* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 21.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Council of Industrial Design, 'The Family' (October 1948), 11, [DCA 14B/5181](#).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

I want to tease-out the significance of the CoID's interest in 'external influences on the family' and what this meant in terms of men's changing responsibilities in the 1940s. Rodney Lowe argues that architects of the welfare state specifically wished to improve women's lives, as women most strongly felt the effects of unemployment, sickness and poor housing.¹⁰⁴ Writing in 1955, sociologist Richard Titmuss also highlighted how women benefitted more from the state pension due to their longer life expectancy and younger retirement age.¹⁰⁵ Admittedly, some men took issue with particular aspects of welfare provisions, such as the concept of a social wage, and some organisations, such as Fathers' Councils, operated to foster 'a positive attitude among male heads of household for welfare work' as officials feared that men's prejudices may reduce women's willingness to access advice and welfare services.¹⁰⁶ However, Tim Fisher's account of interwar Fathers' Councils complicates this account and suggests that, in some instances, women expressed greater hostility to welfare services as they diminished their role as wife and mother.¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth Bott's 1962 sociological study of the working class Newbolt family from Bermondsey, London presents a postwar example. Mrs Newbolt used the local hospital, maternity and child welfare clinic; the children attended the nearby primary school; and the family regularly communicated with the local housing authority as they looked to find a new flat.¹⁰⁸ Although the Newbolts perceived these institutions as 'foreign bodies, not really part of the local life', Mrs Newbolt rather than Mr Newbolt questioned the effect of welfare services on their family life.¹⁰⁹ She told Bott, '[m]y husband says that we pay for it... and that we should use it, but I don't like coming here. I don't like hospitals and doctors, do you?'¹¹⁰ Although Mrs Newbolt's unease with the health service may not necessarily express her attitude towards all forms of welfare provision, Bott's research unsettles the view that welfare improvements destabilised the cohesiveness of the family unit or lessened men's status within the family.

¹⁰⁴ Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945*, 42.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Titmuss, *The Philosophy of Welfare: Selected Writings of Richard Titmuss*, ed. Brian Abel-Smith and Kathleen Titmuss (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 92, cited in Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945*, 42.

¹⁰⁶ Some men within the Labour Party and trade unions feared that the improvement of pay for women and children may limit men's ability to bargain with employers for a 'family wage'. This debate exposed a continued belief in men's role as family breadwinner. For further discussion, see Jane Lewis, 'Gender, the Family and Women's Agency in the Building of "Welfare States": The British Case', *Social History* 19, no. 1 (1 January 1994): 49–50.

¹⁰⁷ Tim Fisher, 'Fatherhood and the British Fathercraft Movement, 1919–39', *Gender & History* 17, no. 2 (1 August 2005): 445.

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Bott, *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms, and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families*, Second Edition (New York: Free Press, 1957), 65.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Although monumental in its aspirations, the welfare state appears to have had a limited effect on men's domestic actions and behaviours, particularly in the 1940s and early 1950s.¹¹¹ Louise Tracey's examination of the period 1945 to 1960 identifies a consensus between the state and welfare professionals over men's ideal role in the postwar family, in which men take on new responsibilities as fathers and husbands that pose little threat to their traditional role as family breadwinner.¹¹² The war changed what men expected from their everyday lives and, on their return home, men expressed an increased openness to new ideas that departed from the prewar status quo of minimal state intervention.¹¹³ It only becomes possible to understand how planners' conceptualised the home by viewing this issue within the wider context of the 1940s welfare state: welfarism helped normalise the concept of state intervention and promoted a new form of universal citizenship, in which men continued to hold the responsibility of economic provision while they also fostered conjugal relations with their wife and engaged emotionally in their children's upbringing.¹¹⁴

Reconstruction

Richard Hornsey describes the private home 'as one of the most contested sites in the concerted drive for social reconstruction and renewal' in the early postwar years.¹¹⁵ He adds, planners, policy makers and other public experts presented it as a 'formative space of national citizenship and an important battleground in the attempt to secure social order and psychological stability'.¹¹⁶ A comprehensive account of planning knowledge must therefore not only examine what planners hoped to achieve within individual families but also show how planners imagined domestic

¹¹¹ Kenneth Morgan and Ralph Miliband argued that the emerging welfare state did not pose an aggressive threat to existing systems of power or privilege nor did it rapidly change class structures or the distribution of wealth in Britain in Morgan, *Labour in Power, 1945-1951*, 184; Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (London, 1969), 97, 99, 100.

¹¹² Louise Tracey, 'Reconstituting the Family: Education for Parenthood and Maternity and Child Welfare, 1945-60', in *Consensus or Coercion?: The State, the People and Social Cohesion in Post-War Britain*, ed. Lawrence Black and Ross McKibbin (Cheltenham: New Clarion, 2001), 150.

¹¹³ Todd explains that working class people in the early 1940s began to think more clearly about the type of society they wanted after the war. People did not want to return to the poverty of the interwar period and expressed an enthusiasm for recommendations made in the Beveridge Committee's report *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (1942), which the Labour party embraced ahead of their 1945 general election victory, in Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class* (London: John Murray, 2014), 140-148.

¹¹⁴ Morgan, *Labour in Power, 1945-1951*, 186.

¹¹⁵ Richard Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect: Unruly Life in Postwar London* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 201.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

improvements as a component of national reconstruction. Two very different visual sources from the early 1940s help illustrate the link between planning the home and Britain's postwar reconstruction. The first example (figure 2.4) is an advertisement for the London Brick Company included in architect James Maude Richard's *An Introduction to Modern Architecture* (1940).¹¹⁷ The advertisement shows an LBC brick radiating energy in the centre of a busy urban environment, the tagline the 'Atom of Architecture' sits below the image. The advertisement encourages viewers to associate atoms, which join together to form everything in our world, with bricks, which join together to form a home. The LBC hoped the advertisement would attract custom for the business; however, for historians, the advertisement presents a clear example of a popular 1940s analogy. Hornsey cites further examples, such as Robin Day's promotional poster for the Festival of Britain's Exhibition of Science that placed Britain in the nucleus of an atom, and argues that planners saw the image of the atom as a way to reassure the public of the need for spatial organisation.¹¹⁸ Like the atom, planners imagined a future where science and technology could uncover eternal structures of our everyday world and create a more stable and predictable society.¹¹⁹ The advertisement not only associates the brick trade with the excitement of atomic technologies but also positions houses as the building blocks of the Britain's reconstruction.

Psychiatrists Phoebe and Laurence Bendit's *Living Together Again* (1946), a guide to rebuilding family life after the Second World War, similarly frames the home as a microcosm of the nation. They describe the home as 'the first and smallest unit of civilised life: the clan, the tribe, the race, the nation – all of these are simply extensions of the individual home'.¹²⁰ The guide shares the opinion of 22-year-old interviewee Jennie, 'who was extremely thoughtful', and explains, 'I don't quite know how it works out, but I feel certain every home that *is* a home is good for the whole country'.¹²¹ The Bendits added, 'the family is the smallest unit of people living together. It is the cell or nucleus out of which larger human communities are built'.¹²² Hornsey presents a similar assessment of the postwar period when he

¹¹⁷ R Cotterell Butler, *Atom of Architecture* in JM Richards, *An Introduction to Modern Architecture* (London: Pelican Books, 1940).

¹¹⁸ Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect*, 72, 77.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 73, 74.

¹²⁰ Phoebe Bendit and Laurence Bendit, *Living Together Again* (London: Gramol Publications, 1946), 4, 80.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹²² *Ibid.* I further discuss planners' use of natural world analogies to describe the home later in this chapter.

notes, 'as a familial microcosm of the neighbourhood, city, and even Commonwealth outside, the reconstructed interior was a space of order and control, in which the proscribed and prescribed routine movements of its inhabitants enacted a new type of spatial citizenship'.¹²³ The LBC advertisement and *Living Together Again* suggest a way of thinking about domestic space in 1940s Britain in which national reconstruction justified the state's greater interest in what went on inside people's homes.

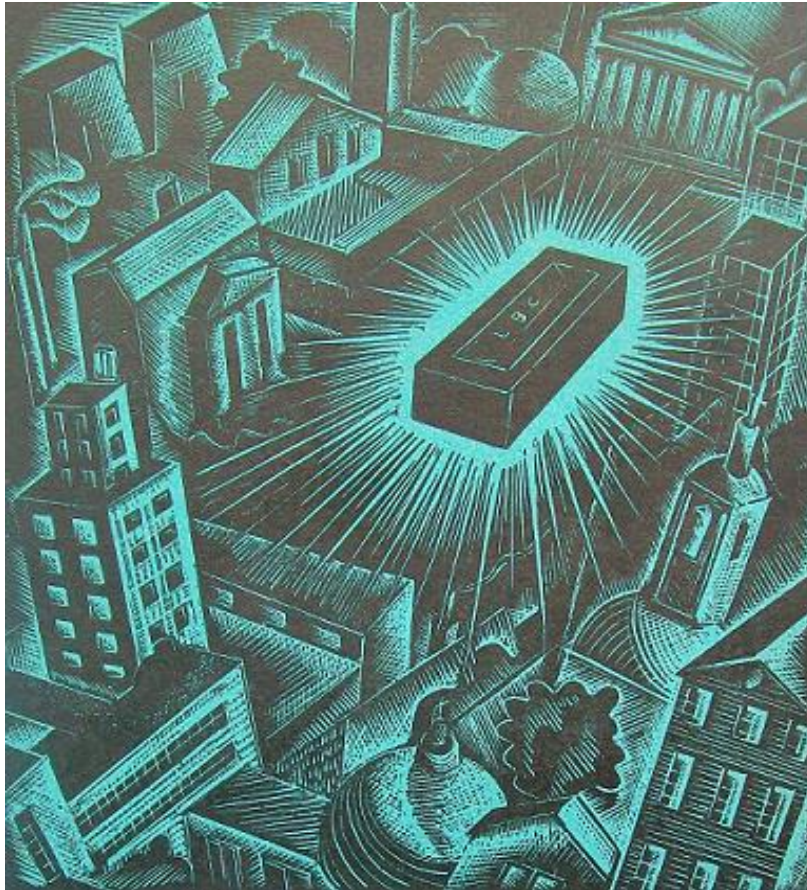


Figure 2.4: Advertisement for the London Brick Company, in JM Richards, *An Introduction to Modern Architecture* (1940).

The second example (figure 2.5) comes from a Labour Party pamphlet entitled *Your Home Planned by Labour* (1943).¹²⁴ The pamphlet recognises the link between well-planned domestic space and nationhood: it notes practical changes the Labour Party would make to future housing, these include designs that 'neither look nor feel like barracks' and houses 'as soundproof as possible'.¹²⁵ For men who moved into flats, Labour

¹²³ Hornsey, 'Homosexuality and Everyday Life in Post-War London', 177.

¹²⁴ Labour Party, *Your Home Planned by Labour* (London: Labour Party Publications Department, 1943).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

promised ‘an odd-job space’ to replace the loss of a yard or garden in their old house.¹²⁶ This promise acknowledged that men, as well as women, possessed a distinct set of gendered demands from their home. However an ‘odd-job space’ within the home served as a poor substitute for outdoor space and fostered grievances among some men who moved into ‘well-planned’ flats in the postwar decades.¹²⁷ In terms of nationhood, after discussing specific aspects of housing design, the pamphlet concludes, ‘[w]e started in your kitchen; we have ended with a view of all broad Britain. For each step in that journey, Labour has a plan, a plan that will work, a plan that is fair to everybody, a plan that you will see in action’.¹²⁸ The Labour Party associated well-planned domestic space with broader ideals of postwar nationhood and, in the process, conflated concepts of the individual, home and nation.¹²⁹

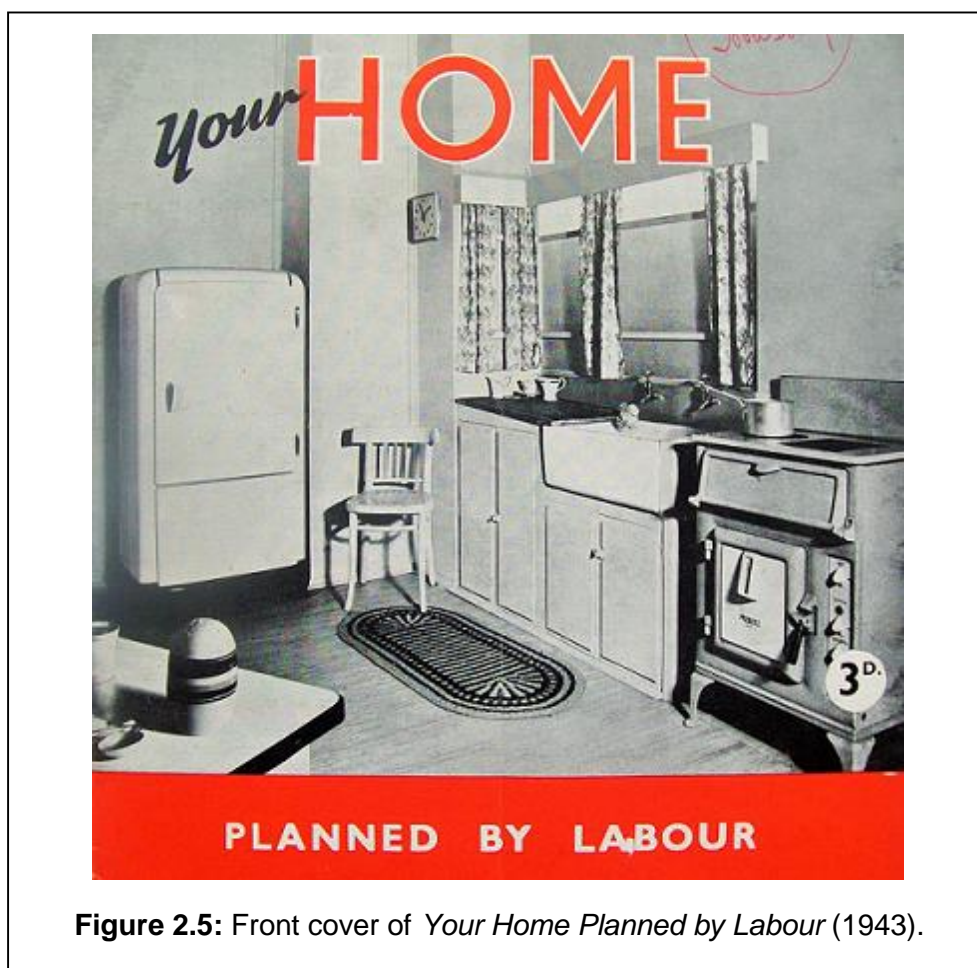


Figure 2.5: Front cover of *Your Home Planned by Labour* (1943).

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ I discuss the grievances of Albert Snoddy and George Copperwheat who moved into accommodation that did not provide a suitable ‘odd-job space’ in chap. 3, 152 and chap. 4, 202.

¹²⁸ Labour Party, *Your Home Planned by Labour*, 13.

¹²⁹ Planners Gilbert and Elizabeth McAllister expressed a similar sentiment in 1944 when they stated that plans for ‘new Britain’ must stretch from ‘from the planning of the kitchen to the planning of the nation’, in Gilbert McAllister and Elizabeth McAllister, eds., *Homes, Towns and Countryside: A Practical Plan for Britain* (Batsford, 1945), xxix, cited in Harriet Atkinson, *The Festival of Britain: A Land and Its People* (London: IB Tauris & Co., 2012), 159.

My research positions the *Your Home Planned by Labour* pamphlet within a wider cannon of 1940s planning literature that associated effective planning with a nation's democratic values. Town planner and popular writer Thomas Sharp (1901-1978) explicitly made this link in his popular publication *Town Planning* (1940).¹³⁰ Sharp countered the view 'that the spectacular town planning of dictatorships in the past and the equally spectacular general planning of dictatorship countries to-day, show that only dictators are capable of really vital planning' and instead argued, 'it is no overstatement to say that the simple choice between planning and non-planning, between order and disorder, is a test-choice for English democracy'.¹³¹ These examples demonstrate a correlation between well-planned homes and national reconstruction.¹³² In terms of gender, the home's position as the atomic core of the nation demanded expert design and management; planners could not therefore allow the actions and behaviours of inhabitants to develop organically and thus sought to control how men and women used and experienced the home.

'Women's knowledge'

Women's organisations, such as the National Union of Townswomen's Guild and the Women's Institute, also believed they had a right to contribute to planning debates, as women knew most about the daily operation of the home.¹³³ Housewives and representatives of women's organisations featured as 'experts', or in possession of knowledge 'that usually requires years of experience', in a number of 1940s planning publications.¹³⁴ Exhibitions also involved women as a type of expert who possessed gendered knowledge of the home that counterbalanced the views of male architects. For example, *Design Quiz* at Britain Can Make It invited visitors to select the 'best designed' objects from a list of options that included armchairs, lamp-shades, sauce pans, teapots, clocks and

¹³⁰ Sharp worked as a senior research officer in the planning section of the Ministry of Works and Planning between 1941 and 1943. His publication *Town Planning* sold over 250,000 copies, noted in Tom Campbell, 'For the Sake of Our Cities, It's Time to Make Town Planning Cool Again', *The Guardian* (10 November 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/nov/10/-sp-cities-town-planning-cool-architects>, accessed 2 March 2016.

¹³¹ Thomas Sharp, *Town Planning* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1940), 143.

¹³² MO's *An Enquiry into People's Homes* also reminds readers of the civic value of planning when it explains, 'the basic idea of democracy is that each individual citizen should feel personal responsibility for the management of the affairs of the community', in Mass Observation, *An Enquiry into People's Homes* (London: John Murray, 1943), 208.

¹³³ Caitriona Beaumont, "'Where to Park the Pram'? Voluntary Women's Organisations, Citizenship and the Campaign for Better Housing in England, 1928–1945', *Women's History Review* 22, no. 1 (February 2013): 91.

¹³⁴ Quotes come from Labour Party, *Your Home Planned by Labour*, 2; The Council of Industrial Design, *Design for a Housewife's Home*, New Home 2 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1948).

electric fires.¹³⁵ Three experts judged 'good' and 'bad' design: artist, Barnett Freedman; architect, Hugh Casson; and housewife, Mary Harrison (figure 2.6).¹³⁶ *Design Quiz* proved a hit with exhibition visitors and sold over 500 copies per day.¹³⁷ Its success partly came from its clever use of didactic techniques, discussed in the next chapter, but also its awareness that women possessed specialised knowledge of domestic design that ranked alongside the masculine views of architects and artists.



Establishment expertise did not always warmly welcome the input of women. For example, JM Mackintosh, professor of public health at the University of London, admitted the need to consider the housewife's view but called it an 'illusion' and questioned her status as 'all-knowing expert' as 'a dwelling designed by a housewife would be a great freak'.¹³⁸

Furthermore, women's knowledge had a limited and often tokenistic impact on mainstream planning debates: for example, among the 75 possible appointees reviewed in the formation of the CoID in 1943, only five were

¹³⁵ Council of Industrial Design, *Design Quiz* (London, 1946).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Mass Observation, *A Report on Britain Can Make It Exhibition, Section B Effects of the Exhibition: Taste, Design and Consumer Habits* (December 1946), 17-19, *DCA Britain Can Make It*.

¹³⁸ Mackintosh, *Housing and Family Life*, 142.

women.¹³⁹ The 1944 Design of Dwellings Committee made an effort to integrate the views of women, with seven female members on the committee.¹⁴⁰ Yet, the NUTG alone submitted over 35,625 group answers to the committee and only a handful of recommendations made it into the final report, such as kitchens equipped with gas and electric, increased floor space, tiled bathrooms and a space to park the pram indoors.¹⁴¹ Regardless of this reception, women's organisations understood the home as a gendered space and, unlike masculine planners, analysed men and women as distinct actors who possessed a unique set of domestic demands.

Caitríona Beaumont makes this observation in her study of women's organisations and their contribution to planning debates in the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁴² Women's organisations often framed the home as a workplace for women and a leisure space for men; this distinction implied that men and women used and experienced domestic space differently. Beaumont, for example, notes that women's organisations demanded 'good working conditions [in the home] so that they could perform their role well and at the same time ensure the security, happiness and welfare of their husbands and children'.¹⁴³ A gendered conceptualisation of the home also appeared in planning publications. For example, Erno Goldfinger and the RIBA librarian EJ Carter, in their accompaniment to the *County of London Plan*, praised the need for well-designed homes so that housewives can work 'well' and 'happily' in the home.¹⁴⁴ The CoID leaflet *Ways of Living* (1949) similarly shares men's specific demands of the home: the leaflet describes the model family home of a doctor, his wife and their 13-year-old son; it then explains that the doctor stands most of the day so 'at home in the evening he's a sedentary man' and therefore enjoys the comforts of his sitting room.¹⁴⁵ The leaflet informs the reader, 'an active man doesn't mind being passive, at home'.¹⁴⁶ The CoID makes it seem commonsensical that, after a day's work, the doctor need not help with any non-leisure activities,

¹³⁹ Jonathan Woodham, 'Design and Everyday Life at the Britain Can Make It Exhibition, 1946: "Stripes, Spots, White Wood and Homespun Versus Chintzy Armchairs and Iron Bedsteads with Brass Knobs"', *The Journal of Architecture* 9, no. 4 (December 2004): 466.

¹⁴⁰ Caitríona Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 171.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, chap. Housewives and Citizens: Post-war Planning and the Post-war Years.

¹⁴³ Beaumont, "'Where to Park the Pram'?", 78.

¹⁴⁴ Erno Goldfinger and EJ Carter, *The County of London Plan, Explained by EJ Carter and Erno Goldfinger* (London: Penguin Books, 1945), 32.

¹⁴⁵ Council of Industrial Design, 'Ways of Living' (1949), 3, [DCA 14B/5181](#).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

regardless of the stresses his wife and son may have faced in their day. Women's organisations viewed the home through a gendered lens and provide an account of domestic space in which male and female inhabitants expressed distinct demands of the home. Beaumont's primary intention is to highlight women's voices in early twentieth century housing debates; however, in bringing the influences of 'women's knowledge' to the surface, she unexpectedly highlights the oversight within existing historical scholarship to study the influence of 'men's knowledge' in debates around the planning of domestic space.

In many instances, planners remained silent on the domestic demands of male inhabitants. This presents one of the greatest challenges in my research: the location of normative masculinities in the past. Trev Broughton, in his review of John Tosh's *A Man's Place*, describes the challenge of locating 'ordinary' masculinities as coming from their 'pervasiveness, their aspect of routine, their subtlety and smallness', which makes them 'relatively inaccessible to analysis'.¹⁴⁷ Tosh explains that unlike histories of women's lives, which often attempt to redress the omission of women from history, men's lives represent 'the stuff of traditional history', which means that historians overlook men as gendered subjects.¹⁴⁸ In order to counter this challenge, Tosh focuses on specific families and analyses the letters and diaries of individuals to produce in-depth, biographical studies that allow him to uncover men's domestic lives.¹⁴⁹ Drawing upon Tosh, my account of planning knowledge focuses on the approaches of individuals who developed their ideas within specific intellectual contexts. Although planning publications, films and correspondence present individual rather than general accounts of men and masculinities, they help illustrate the influences of broad themes such as science and technology, sociology, welfare and the demands of reconstruction on masculine planning identities.

Examining masculinities of the past require us to untangle 'men' from wider discussions of 'humankind': planners' attention to women and children's actions and behaviours did not indicate a greater interest in these

¹⁴⁷ Trev Broughton, 'The Importance of Being Ordinary', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 49 (2000): 259.

¹⁴⁸ John Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept?', in *What Is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. John Arnold and Sean Brady (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 21.

¹⁴⁹ Tosh explains his method in John Tosh, 'Home and Away: The Flight from Domesticity in Late-Nineteenth-Century England Re-Visited', *Gender & History* 27, no. 3, Special Issue Men at Home (November 2015): 565.

inhabitants, only that women and children differed from the masculine norm. It also becomes apparent that changes explicitly engineered to reconfigure the domestic lives of women, such as improvements in kitchen design, affected the totality of family life and therefore indirectly changed men's use and experience of the home. In order to uncover men's gendered presence in planning sources of the 1940s, historians must adopt a broad approach to language, abandon overly restrictive terms of classification (for example, 'masculinities' and 'manliness') and look beyond these explicit references to consider other notions of masculine identity, such as men's roles as fathers and husbands.

Masculine planning identities, methods and ideas

I now turn attention to consider planning identities and how they shaped the study and conceptualisation of the home and its male inhabitants. Leah Armstrong examines ways in which designers in mid-twentieth century Britain articulated a relationship between vision, knowledge and the image of the expert and searched 'for new ways to see and be seen, within and beyond the profession'.¹⁵⁰ This section will similarly analyse text and images from planning publications and films to assess how planners represented themselves and the effects of planning identities on ideas about domestic space in 1940s Britain. Although I discuss individual planners, this section does not present a list of character types, as planners' actions and behaviours most often cut across the themes presented. Instead, I focus on planners' intentions, leaving judgement on their successes or failures to other historians, and show that in the process of conceptualising space planners also expressed particular ideas about gender.

Individual genius

Andrew Saint defines the architect as a masculine professional, an image popularised by the young, individualistic architect Howard Roark in Ayn Rand's 1943 novel, and 1949 film, *The Fountainhead* - arguably the most famous cultural representation of an architect.¹⁵¹ Unlike the technical-

¹⁵⁰ Armstrong, 'Designing a Profession', 294.

¹⁵¹ Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 1-5.

mindful, leftwing planners and architects introduced in the previous chapter, *The Fountainhead* exhibits the virtues of sticking to an architectural vision and shows Roark's unwillingness to dilute his modernist principles to accommodate the views of others. Roark follows the view that 'no work is ever done collectively, by a majority decision. Every creative job is achieved under the guidance of a single individual thought'.¹⁵² *The Fountainhead* presents a reciprocal relationship between architecture and masculinity, two practices not commonly viewed together.¹⁵³ For Rand, Roark represented the ideal man as he maintained his individuality against the pressures of society. Rand described the primary theme of *The Fountainhead* as, 'individualism versus collectivism, not in politics but within a man's soul'.¹⁵⁴ Saint draws a comparison between Roark and the individualist approach of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959), but adds that during Wright's lifetime the dominance of the individual genius 'gradually whittled away'.¹⁵⁵

Similarly, Roark's masculinity contradicted the collective rationalism of planners in 1940s Britain. Planners feared that isolated faith in the expert judgement of an individual genius could set a dangerous precedent, as public health expert Mackintosh explained,

The opinions of experts in isolation are dangerous: like the milk from individual cows – if they happen to be contaminated they are apt to contain a lethal dose... It is only when experts are ready to pool their knowledge that we get results.¹⁵⁶

For Mackintosh, planning required teamwork and diverse input from a range of experts. The *County of London Plan's* supporting film *The Proud City* further champions the value of teamwork and shows Patrick Abercrombie and John Forshaw lead a team of planning experts at the LCC as they develop plans for the rebuilding of London. The film opens with an introduction from Abercrombie and Forshaw then illustrates the work of the LCC Architects' Department as Arthur Ling provides further detailed information on the plan (figure 2.7). The film presents planning knowledge as something produced collectively, with the genius of Abercrombie and

¹⁵² Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1996), 682.

¹⁵³ Sanders, 'Introduction', 11.

¹⁵⁴ Ayn Rand, *The Journals of Ayn Rand*, ed. David Harriman (New York: Dutton, 1997), 223.

¹⁵⁵ Andrew Saint, *Architect and Engineer: A Study in Sibling Rivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 14.

¹⁵⁶ Mackintosh, *Housing and Family Life*, 141–42.

Forshaw mediated by the communal working environment and input of others. John Gold and Stephen Ward argue that *The Proud City's* emphasis on collaboration would have pleased viewers in the mid-1940s as the planning activities of the LCC appear to continue the imagined camaraderie that helped Britain win the war.¹⁵⁷ *The Proud City* therefore underlines the value of pooling expert knowledge and presents masculine planning identities that differed from the individual genius of Roark.



Figure 2.7: Arthur Ling (left) and the *County of London Plan* team in *Proud City* (1946).

Even though planners in 1940s Britain favoured the pooling of expert knowledge, this did not necessarily mean planners extracted knowledge from new sources or engaged more thoroughly with the working class people for whom they planned. Some planners, policymakers and politicians continued to hold the belief that only special experts with the correct training, education and background could possess knowledge of the home. For instance, in his address as founder to the inaugural meeting of the CoID on 12 January 1945, Labour politician Hugh Dalton explained,

If you succeed in your task, in a few years' time every side of your daily life will be the better for your work. Every kitchen will be an easier place to work in; every home a pleasanter

¹⁵⁷ Gold and Ward, 'Of Plans and Planners. Documentary Films and the Challenge of the Urban Future, 1935-1952', 77.

place to live in. Men and women in millions will be in your debt, though they may not know it.¹⁵⁸

Dalton represented those working for the CoID as custodians of a specific form of knowledge, who knew more about people's homes than the people who lived in them. Gordon Russell, who became president of the CoID in 1947, continued this view. In the design publication *The Things We See, Furniture* (1947) he praised the work of furniture designers in Scandinavia and Continental Europe as they asked '[w]hat do the people need?' rather than '[w]hat have they bought in the past?'¹⁵⁹ Russell then explained, '[w]hat people think they want is not what they really need, for they have few ways of finding out what is technically possible'.¹⁶⁰ Although designers, politicians and planners expressed hostility towards the individual genius of men like Roark, paternalist masculinities continued to dominate planning approaches and it remained possible for planners to function in an expanded bubble of technocratic, middle class expertise.¹⁶¹

Bird's eye view

Images of planners standing above their plans further confirm a masculine personification of 1940s planners as technocratic, rational, paternalist and omniscient. Mort identifies two ways in which experts visualised urban life in the mid-twentieth century: the 'bird's eye view' from above and the 'horizontal view' of studies like MO.¹⁶² The 'bird's eye view' most clearly appears in staged images of planners stood above their plans in an all-knowing and all-powerful position (figures 2.8 and 2.9).

¹⁵⁸ The Council of Industrial Design, *First Annual Report* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1945), 6.

¹⁵⁹ Gordon Russell, *The Things We See, Furniture* (West Drayton: Penguin Books, 1947), 43.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Leslie Whitworth writes that within organisations like the CoID, design became a form of 'arcane knowledge and insights were seen to be in the gift of high level initiates' rather than something accessible to all, in Leslie Whitworth, 'Anticipating Affluence: Skill, Judgement and the Problem of Aesthetic Tutelage', in *An Affluent Society? Britain's Post-War 'Golden Age' Revisited*, ed. Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, Modern Economics and Social History Series (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 176.

¹⁶² Mort, 'Fantasies of Metropolitan Life', 134.



Figure 2.8: Planners (from left to right) Percy Johnson-Marshall, LW Lane and Hubert Bennett examine further plans for the reconstruction of Stepney-Poplar (1955), UEA 237/PJM/LCC/E/2.3.2.



Figure 2.9: The planner positioned 'above' his plans and equipped with his triangular ruler, in *The Youngest County: A Description of London as a County and its Public Services* (1951).

Planners' decision to depict themselves in this manner indicates the continuation of a paternalist approach to planning, with experts positioned outside their planned world and disengaged from the people for whom they planned. Geographer Doreen Massey describes top-down conceptualisations of space as an approach that favours 'the point of view of an authoritative, privileged, male position'.¹⁶³ Massey therefore positions planners' elevated view within a long history of male expertise.¹⁶⁴ However, as the landscape of expert knowledge changed in the 1940s so too did the public's receptiveness to top-down planning approaches and their readiness to vocalise their doubts. For example, Harold Orlans' 1952 report on the planning of Stevenage identifies residents' dislike for planners' remoteness.¹⁶⁵ It shares the view of one resident who, after attending a planning discussion at the offices of the Stevenage Development Corporation, stated, '[t]heir ideas seem so theoretical and so far off, their approach is so academic, as if they are dealing with a virgin site in public ownership and as if the people are counters in a game'.¹⁶⁶ Mark Llewellyn's interview with Kensal House resident 'Arthur' raises similar criticisms: 'Arthur' praised Maxwell Fry's engagement with residents during the building of the estate but noted how this contrasted with most other architects, who blindly built high rise developments against the public's wishes,

[Fry] was the only architect who thought about people. Not about architecture only. He thought about what people needed and what they wanted. Which after the war, this was the biggest mistake of their lives. Instead of getting people saying, what would you like now, now that we got the space to rebuild? I bet you none of them would have said we're going up into the heavens. Because that's where communities finished.¹⁶⁷

My research posits an overlap of knowledge among those who worked in the broad field of planning. However, in some instances, the public expressed different attitudes towards different experts involved in planning projects. Correspondence exchanged during the planning stages for a public information film on English housing exemplifies these discrepancies.

¹⁶³ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), 232.

¹⁶⁴ Commenting on Massey's observation, Malcom Miles writes, 'the conventional city view and the city plan are elements in possession of the city and its objectification by what might be termed the 'planning gaze'', in Malcolm Miles, 'Wish You Were Here', in *Urban Visions: Experiencing and Envisioning the City*, ed. Steven Spier, Tate Liverpool Critical Forum (Liverpool: Tate Liverpool, 2002), 29–36.

¹⁶⁵ Orlans, *Stevenage*, 101.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Llewellyn, "Urban Village" or "White House", 244–45.

Denis Forman, chief production officer in the Central Office of Information's film division, wrote to Eric Mosbacher, public relations officer in the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, on 15 January 1947 to share ideas for the division's next production, *An Englishman's Home*.¹⁶⁸ Forman wanted the film 'to bridge the gulf between the planner and the people, showing that the former is not a little tin god sitting up in Whitehall, but is an expert human being whose job it is to construct the sort of towns that will make all human beings happier'.¹⁶⁹ As plans developed, the production ran into difficulties as debate raged over the depiction of architects and planners on screen. An unsigned letter to Mosbacher on 10 April 1947 highlights the public's negativity towards planners,

As an architect, the leading character is above criticism. He is a qualified professional figure, unquestionably accepted in British every-day life. But if he becomes a "planner" – as he appears to, later – is he not exposed to possible derision by people who believe that "words not followed by deeds are meaningless?" The tragedy is that at the moment there is nothing to refute the popular cry that "planners have led us nowhere." In terms of titles, "planners" are much maligned; architects aren't. I would suggest using the words plan, planners and planning as sparingly as possible in the actual film.¹⁷⁰

Although the public started to question planners' idealistic promises, their faith in visions propagated by architects continued. Mark Tewdwr-Jones further explains that by the 1950s, the 'portrayal of the planner as expert had moved on, relegated to second place behind the central messages of building and renewal'.¹⁷¹ In place of the rational, professional expert, figures such as poet John Betjeman and writer JB Priestley gained prominence in planning discussions as personas that stood against what the public perceived as an increasingly narrow culture of expertise.¹⁷² Tewdwr-Jones attributes this turn to their willingness to question accepted wisdom and, in the case of Betjeman, effective use of film 'to juxtapose the official expertise' of planners with 'his own perspectives that he genuinely believed to be the 'voice of the people''.¹⁷³ The production of *An Englishman's Home* went ahead with an architect in the central role:

¹⁶⁸ Letter from Denis Forman to Eric Mosbacher (15 January 1947), [NA HLG 90/35](#).

¹⁶⁹ Letter from Denis Forman to Eric Mosbacher (11 March 1947), [NA HLG 90/35](#).

¹⁷⁰ Unsigned Letter sent to Eric Mosbacher (10 April 1947), [NA HLG 90/35](#).

¹⁷¹ Mark Tewdwr-Jones, "Oh, the Planners Did Their Best": The Planning Films of John Betjeman', *Planning Perspectives* 20, no. 4 (January 2005): 395.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 407; Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 9.

¹⁷³ Tewdwr-Jones, "Oh, the Planners Did Their Best", 390, 407.

directions from the shooting script detail the exact image the Ministry of Town and Country Planning wished to present,

The Camera moves left to right across darkness, bringing into field THE ARCHITECT, lit solitarily in the blackness. He is in his thirties, assured, anxious to explain his great purposes, selfcertain, persuasive, not domineering. His voice is like a burr which sticks to the words and leaves them unwillingly. He is standing, hands resting on his drawing board.¹⁷⁴

The masculine identities of planners underwent a transformation in the 1940s as the public grew increasingly hostile towards top-down diktats that offered grand ideas but rather little substance. Tewdwr-Jones' study of planning documentaries highlights how filmic representations of planners changed in the 1940s. As an example, Abercrombie and James Paton Watson, co-authors of *A Plan for Plymouth* (1943) starred as themselves in Jill Craigie's public information film *The Way We Live* (1946). Although Craigie depicts them as experts 'prepared to engage with the public', Tewdwr-Jones' analysis rightly highlights that the rhetoric of public engagement did not necessarily match the expert's actions.¹⁷⁵ Multiple masculine planning identities therefore existed. Rather than attempt to elevate one type of planner, this chapter instead presents a broad mosaic of influences, characteristics and approaches.

Information accumulation and management

Planning identities developed within a unique climate of expert knowledge and made use of specific methods to understand the home and the actions of its inhabitants. 'Total war' meant that the public experienced an unprecedented level of intervention in all aspects of life, from emergency war acts to full employment, and created opportunities for the state to expand the methods they used to relate to citizens.¹⁷⁶ John Agar describes the Second World War as 'an almighty challenge to the orderly nation

¹⁷⁴ John Rowdon, *An Englishman's Home*, Revised Shooting Script (Crown Film Unit, 26 June 1947), 2, [NA HLG 90/35](#).

¹⁷⁵ Mark Tewdwr-Jones, 'From Town Hall to Cinema: Documentary Film as Planning Propaganda in Post-War Britain', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 173.

¹⁷⁶ Deborah Thom identifies the Second World War and its immediate aftermath as one of three turning points for the relationship between the British family, civil society and the state in the twentieth century (the other two being the sexual revolution of the late 1960s/early 1970s and Thatcherism) in Deborah Thom, 'Britain', in *Families and States in Western Europe*, ed. Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19.

state', the stress created made state actions 'more explicit, more mechanical' and gave birth to 'a cluster of new mid-century information systems'.¹⁷⁷ Agar's work draws particular attention to the postwar legacy of information management: organisations established to collect, process and distribute information during the war did not retract with the news of Britain's return to peace but, in fact, expanded their powers and greatly shaped the social and intellectual landscape of postwar planning.¹⁷⁸ The accumulation and management of information provided technical-minded planners with a method to better understand the home and its inhabitants.

A climate of heightened state interest in the home and the private actions of inhabitants existed in the 1940s.¹⁷⁹ In the interwar decades, welfare professionals had focused efforts on schools and factories as many perceived homes as a 'realm inviolable' situated beyond their reach.¹⁸⁰ State access into people's homes usually took the form of investigations of social workers, charity inspection agents and school inspectors into the domestic interiors of problem families; or the widely-despised welfare means-tests where inspectors checked that families did not own any sellable objects.¹⁸¹ Deborah Thom identifies the state's intensified interest in domestic space as a byproduct of the widespread desire to combat the threat of 'squalor' raised in William Beveridge's 1942 report.¹⁸² The situation changed in the mid-1940s as planners, buoyed from the successes of information accumulation and management during the Second World War, used the illusion of objectivity that came with technical and scientific approaches to justify their interest in people's domestic lives.

Three examples provide further evidence of planners' use of information accumulation and management methods, and what this reveals about planners' masculine identities. Returning to the *County of London Plan* and *The Proud City*, Abercrombie and Forshaw explain information's role in finding out what citizens wanted from a reconstructed London,

¹⁷⁷ Jon Agar, *The Government Machine: A Revolutionary History of the Computer* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2003), 416.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁷⁹ Hornsey highlights the paradox inherent in planners' approach to domestic privacy: '[t]o promote the reordering of domestic home life as a necessary requirement of postwar citizenship was simultaneously to endorse those bourgeois ideologies of privacy and discretion that closed the private home to the prying eyes of the state', in Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect*, 203.

¹⁸⁰ Margaret Arnot, 'Infant Death, Child Care and the State: The Baby-Farming Scandal and the First Infant Life Protection Legislation of 1872', *Continuity and Change* 9, no. 2 (1994): 275.

¹⁸¹ Savage, *Identities and Social Change*, 168; Jon Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, 1930–64', *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 2 (1 June 2013): 280; Selina Todd, *The People*, chap. Dole.

¹⁸² Thom, 'Britain', 20.

First of all we had to find out everything about this great city we were planning to rebuild. Everything about its history, and its geography, its people and the way they live... Then we had to learn what the people were thinking. What they felt should be done about it all and what they wanted. We had to know what sort of homes they lived in and how and where they spent their leisure hours... In fact everything that affected the lives of Londoners past, present and future had to be taken into consideration in our plans.¹⁸³

Planners optimistically imagined that the accumulation of information on citizens' everyday lives, and reading of this information in a certain way, would expose planning faults of the past and give planners opportunities to fix them. *The Proud City* shows Abercrombie and Forshaw lead a team of planning experts as they collected and processed a huge amount of information on how Londoners lived. The narrator explains, 'it wasn't until all this information had been collected and the results tabulated and put into records that we could begin to see the broad outline of the task before us and our architects could get to work on their first designs for the new London'.¹⁸⁴ Abercrombie and Forshaw express a paternalist responsibility to liberate people from badly planned living spaces that had hampered the actions and behaviours of previous generations. Their plan for London would create an urban environment that gave all citizens the best opportunity to raise a family, develop civic and community pride, locate work and employment, engage with arts and culture, lead a healthy lifestyle, improve their education, take time for individual happiness and personal hobbies, and accumulate money and material goods. Peter Larkham describes the *County of London Plan's* reliance on data collection and presentation as a 'techno-centric planning approach'.¹⁸⁵ Gold and Ward also describe the planning activities depicted in *The Proud City* as 'scientific, rational and empirically based' with the process led by a team of 'technicians'.¹⁸⁶ Although arguably misguided, men like Abercrombie and Forshaw exemplify the technical-minded paternalism of planners involved in Britain's postwar reconstruction and their belief that information accumulation and management would allow them to reach objective conclusions.

¹⁸³ Ralph Keen, *The Proud City* (Greenpark Production, Ministry of Information, 1945).

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Larkham, 'Replanning London', 5.

¹⁸⁶ Gold and Ward, 'Of Plans and Planners. Documentary Films and the Challenge of the Urban Future, 1935-1952', 69.

The architect Clough Williams-Ellis, chairman of the Stevenage Development Corporation, presents a second example of how planners accumulated and managed vast amounts of information. During the town's planning he noted, 'there is no magic whereby these towns can be conjured into being', as planning depended on 'accumulating surveys, statistics, graphs, diagrams, drafts, outline plans, and finally more or less detailed layouts'.¹⁸⁷ Building work commenced in Stevenage only after a 'variety of experts' had 'learnt and noted and recorded' every feature of the project area.¹⁸⁸ Williams-Ellis's account of Stevenage demonstrates planners' use of technical tools and methods to further strengthen their sense of omniscience.

Preceding the architectural plans of Williams-Ellis, Abercrombie and Forshaw, MO approached its research with the belief that every problem in this world had an answer. The accumulation of *all* information, regardless of how quotidian or unconventional, presented ways to understand everyday experience and therefore improve people's lives.¹⁸⁹ Although not directly involved in the drafting of plans, MO found a role within planning debates of the 1940 and wanted to use its investigative methods to put out some 'pointers, and puzzles for pointers, to the planners and architects of a Brave New Britain'.¹⁹⁰ Agar describes the intentions of MO researchers as 'complete knowledge' and cites the organisation's mission,

[MO] does not set out in quest of truth or facts for their own sake or for the sake of an intellectual minority, but aims at exposing them in simple terms to all observers, so that their environment may be understood and thus constantly transformed.¹⁹¹

Between 1937 and 1945, MO recruited 1894 respondents who, in the first year alone, reported on a range of issues and submitted over 2.3 million words of text.¹⁹² Although MO investigations, such as *An Enquiry into People's Homes* (1943), failed to gather enough responses to achieve the

¹⁸⁷ Clough Williams-Ellis, 'New Towns, New Hopes', *Britain To-Day* (November 1947), [TA 200015/7/2](#).

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, this theme is also expressed in Keen, *The Proud City*.

¹⁸⁹ Charles Madge, Tom Harrison, and Humphrey Jennings, 'Anthropology at Home', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 30 January 1937, 155.

¹⁹⁰ Mass Observation, *An Enquiry into People's Homes*, 5.

¹⁹¹ Madge, Harrison, and Jennings, 'Anthropology at Home', 155.

¹⁹² Information from AH Halsey, 'Madge, Charles Henry (1912–1996)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57883>, accessed 2 September 2014. Experts appear to have taken pride in the number of responses received to their enquiries, for example Pleydell-Bouverie claimed to speak on behalf of over 4.5 million women, the sum total of the women's organisations she encountered in Pleydell-Bouverie, *Daily Mail Book of Post-War Homes*, 15.

organisation's goal of producing 'complete knowledge', the movement gave the verbatim opinion of inhabitants a central role in discussions around how to plan the home,

One often hears planners argue that ordinary people have no idea of what they want in housing. This is a satisfactory argument when you are planning for others without knowing their hearts and minds. The many verbatim remarks in this report... put that tale out of court once and for all.¹⁹³

MO's rhetoric of engagement and interest in citizens' everyday experiences became more common among planners throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. For instance, as previously noted, Abercrombie and Forshaw embarked on their study to find out 'everything that affected the lives of Londoners past, present and future' and 'what sort of homes they lived in'.¹⁹⁴ Yet, even though MO presented an approach to planning the home that took a greater interest in people's everyday lives, the report also highlights continued scepticism over the value of respondents' views,

However compressed, uninformed, and contradictory the feelings and opinion of ordinary citizens may be, it is these opinions which must either be met or modified and led into new channels by planners.¹⁹⁵

MO expressed the need for experts to engage with the public on planning matters, while also explicitly excusing the modification of findings so that they align with pre-existing expert knowledge. Although MO aspired to achieve 'complete knowledge', people's private domestic lives generally remained hidden from view and researchers instead projected idealised accounts of how families *should* use and experience their homes without empirical evidence to support their claims. MO also relied on a narrow pool of middle class respondents that arguably perpetuated rather than destabilised a paternalist approach to the study of the working classes.¹⁹⁶

Although many planners did not heed MO's request to listen to the opinions of ordinary citizens, information accumulation and management came with an air of scientific authority that helped buttress planners' sense of omniscience. Although planners emerge from this analysis as rational and

¹⁹³ Mass Observation, *An Enquiry into People's Homes*, 5.

¹⁹⁴ Keen, *The Proud City*.

¹⁹⁵ Mass Observation, *An Enquiry into People's Homes*, 5.

¹⁹⁶ Claire Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 1 (March 2007): 194.

technically-minded, a thread of traditional paternalism also continues: surveys, statistics, graphs and diagrams simply made it easier for planners to frame themselves as all-knowing experts distinct from traditional bourgeoisie expertise. Mike Savage argues that the deployment of 'myriad classifications, social aggregates, and abstracted territorial entities' refashioned 'understandings of time, change, space, class, and gender'.¹⁹⁷ While I agree with Savage that changed methods affected key social concepts, the technological glaze adopted by planners in the 1940s arguably masked the fact that the accumulation and management of information did not necessarily present objective guidance on how best to plan. To some extent, it remained possible for planners to use the veneer of rationalism, science and technology to continue traditional masculine identities.

The natural world

Technocratic, rational and omniscient planning identities and methods, such as information accumulation and management, coalesced to form specific ways of thinking about the home and its inhabitants. For example, the idea of domestic space as linked to the rhythms and processes of the natural world featured in a number of 1940s planning publications. Architectural commentators of the 1930s, such as Lewis Mumford, articulated the concept of 'biotechnic planning' as a means 'in which the biological sciences will be freely applied to technology, and in which technology itself will be oriented toward the culture of life'.¹⁹⁸ Writing in 1943, Tom Harrisson also highlighted the need for experts to explore the 'ecology' of the home, which 'examines the human habitat, and seeks to show how men, women and children live in it'.¹⁹⁹ Ralph Tubbs, a high-profile proponent of this approach with a life-long interest in the natural world, wrote about towns as ecological units dependent on the operation of individual parts for their efficient operation.²⁰⁰ He noted,

The order in nature is derived from the balanced relationship of every integral part of the universe, necessary for its very

¹⁹⁷ Savage, *Identities and Social Change*, vii.

¹⁹⁸ Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), 495, cited in Llewellyn, "Urban Village" or "White House", 233.

¹⁹⁹ 'People and Homes' (April 1943), 1, [MO SxMOA1/2/1/4/1 - File Report 1651](#).

²⁰⁰ Alongside his career as an architect, Tubbs also served as Vice President of the Royal Entomological Society of London between 1982 and 1984, noted in Elain Harwood, 'Tubbs, Ralph Sydney (1912–1996)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2012), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64071>, accessed 2 September 2014.

existence. Just as necessary is a balanced relationship of the parts and functions of the town.²⁰¹

Tubbs accompanied this statement with images of flowers, snowflakes and a terrestrial system, which encouraged readers to comprehend the built environment as another feature of the natural world (figure 2.10). Writer and rural revivalist Harold Massingham described the state's role as 'simply to see that the various parts of this cellular organism are in proper working order'.²⁰² Abercrombie presented similar analogies in *The Proud City* when he compared the needs of humans and plants: 'you've got to give the plants air and sunshine and then also you've got to give them shelter from wet and cold and they've got to have room to grow'.²⁰³

Although metaphors offer an insight into how planners' understood their work and wished to disseminate their ideas with the public, I am more interested in how the natural world affected planners' use of techniques and methods to study the home and its inhabitants. Simon Rycroft shares the view of Hungarian art theorist György Kepes that mid-twentieth century advances in techniques of scientific visualisation, such as the telescope and the microscope, allowed scientists to 'see' the structural forms that constructed the natural world.²⁰⁴ Scientists increasingly found it possible to report on an organism's overall health from the study of cells under a microscope. In a similar vein, planners hoped that the study of individual domestic tasks could reveal a home's overall 'health'. To some extent, this approach built on the aspirations of Charles Booth in his late-nineteenth century study of London's poor: in which he explained, 'every social problem, as ordinarily put, must be broken up to be solved or even to be adequately stated'.²⁰⁵ Like American mechanical engineer Frederick Taylor, who championed a model of efficiency in which 'every pair of hands was more or less reduced to automatic movements', planners also believed that physical and social problems would become clearer, and therefore

²⁰¹ Tubbs, *Living in Cities*, 46.

²⁰² Harold Massingham, *Home*, Design for Britain (London: JM Dent & Sons, 1942), 30.

²⁰³ Keen, *The Proud City*. Other metaphors include a description of the ribbon model of urban growth as 'a cancer – a growth of apparently healthy cells but proceeding without check or relation to the whole body', in Abercrombie, *Town and Country Planning*, 121. And Clough Williams-Ellis's description of ruined cities after the Blitz, 'in nearly every British town much of the tissue destroyed was of a morbid growth that we ought to have cut away', in *New Towns for Old* (1941), [NA HLG/86/13](#), cited in Allen, 'Contested Understandings', 101.

²⁰⁴ György Kepes, *The New Landscape in Art and Science* (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1956), 17, cited in Simon Rycroft, 'The Geographies of Swinging London', *Journal of Historical Geography* 28, no. 4 (October 2002): 569.

²⁰⁵ Charles Booth, 'The Inhabitants of Tower Hamlets (School Board Division), Their Condition and Occupations', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 50, no. 2 (1887): 375.

easier to remedy, if they dismantled the operation of domestic tasks into its component parts.²⁰⁶

This approach seemed more achievable in the 1940s with operational research, a new branch of management studies popularised in Britain.²⁰⁷

As Walter Bor explained,

In general terms operational research involves the identification of the subsidiary parts of a complex human activity and of the relationship between these parts in terms of performance required to make the whole activity work effectively.²⁰⁸

The influences of operational research materialised in planning publications as flowcharts, in which planners broke down domestic tasks and analysed the efficiency of its constituent parts. EM Willis's report *The Hub of the House* (1945) includes the 'Kitchen Sink Diagram Process', which gives readers guidance on how to clean plates after serving food. The diagram explains each stage of the process - stacking, scraping, soaking, washing, scouring, rinsing, draining and drying - and the tools required, with particular information on when to use the squeegee.²⁰⁹ Tubbs' *Living in Cities* also includes a flowchart that presents 'a diagram of the rotation of work done in the kitchen', which begins with the arrival of food in the house and ends with clearing dishes away (figure 2.11). He concluded, 'a good plan based on this [will] make the work as easy as possible' and that 'analysis of requirement is the basis of all planning'.²¹⁰ These flowcharts did not necessarily share new ways for families to use their kitchens. More importantly, they expressed an optimism for what well-planned homes could achieve: just as a biologist could chart the transition between caterpillar and butterfly or tadpole and frog, planners equally hoped to unearth rational and predictable patterns of human activity within the home.

²⁰⁶ Fredrick Taylor (1856-1915) is regarded as one of the intellectual leaders of the efficiency movement and the father of scientific management. For further discussion, see James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 337.

²⁰⁷ For further discussion, see MW Kirby and R Capey, 'The Origins and Diffusion of Operational Research in the UK', *The Journal of the Operational Research Society*, vol. 49, no. 4. (April 1998): 307-326.

²⁰⁸ Bor, *The Making of Cities*, 35-36.

²⁰⁹ The publication also offered guidance on the specific contents of kitchen cupboards (four saucers, six egg cups, two tea pots, one jam dish and so on) in EM Willis, ed., *The Hub of the House: Survey Before Plan Two* (London: Lund Humphries & Company Ltd., 1946), 20, 45.

²¹⁰ Tubbs, *Living in Cities*, 39.

The natural world not only provided men like Tubbs, Bor and Abercrombie with analogies that helped disseminate planning ideas with the public but also opened-up new methods, such as flowcharts, for planners to understand and remedy problems found in the home. James Scott criticises planners' attempts to break-down domestic activities into component parts and notes how this approach failed to capture the complexities of domestic life. For Scott, the home functions as a site of varied activities that occur simultaneously, including work, recreation, privacy, sociability, education, cooking, gossip, politics and so on. Scott explains, 'each of these activities, moreover, resists being reduced to criteria of efficiency'.²¹¹ He gives the example that 'what is going on in the kitchen when someone is cooking for friends who have gathered is not merely 'food preparation''.²¹² Sociologists WV Hole and JJ Attenburrow also surveyed people's domestic experiences between the 1940s and 1960s as part of their research for the government report *Houses and People* (1966). Their investigation ruled-out the possibility of the full-scale rationalisation of housework for two key reasons,

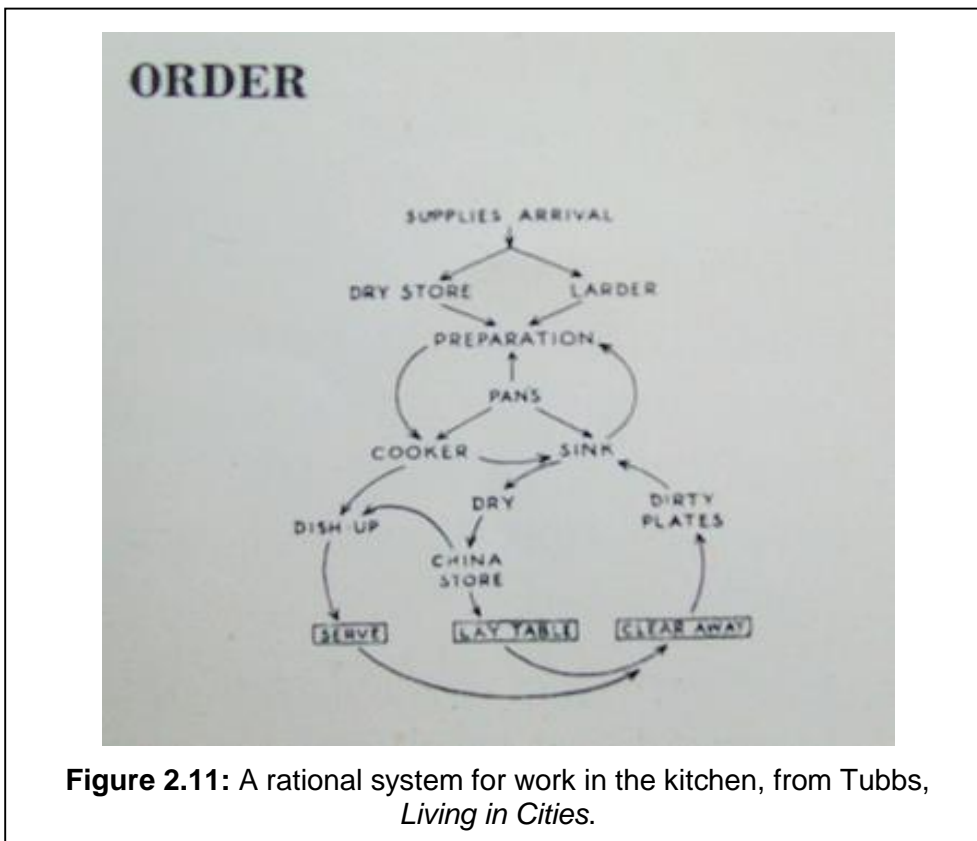
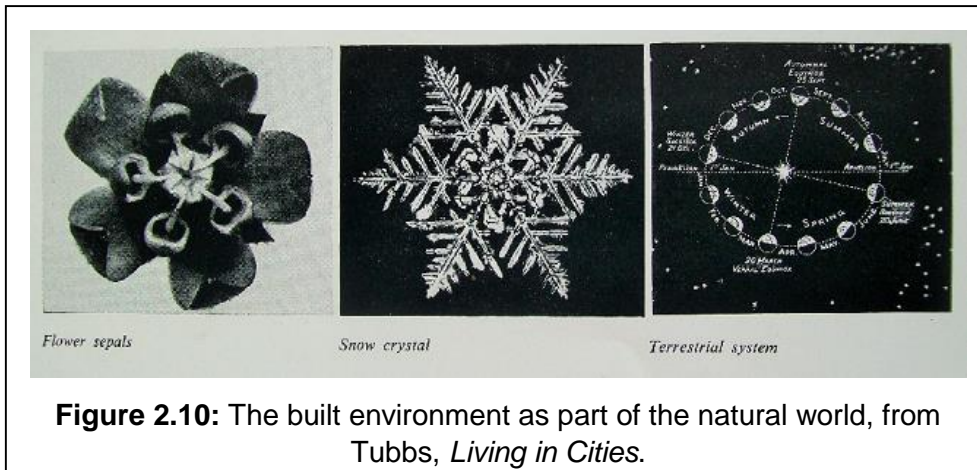
The constant and unpredictable demands of small children, which preclude long periods of concentration on any single task, and the fact that the housewife often lacks the incentive to simplify the way she works in order to save time, since she is any case tied to the house by young children and by the routine of recurring mealtimes.²¹³

Although Scott, Hole and Attenburrow rightly contest the efficacy of these planning approaches in reality, I am most interested in what these approaches reveal about planners' conceptualisation of the home. The 1940s presented planners with unprecedented opportunities to test their ideas; however, as the field remained uncharted for most experts, scientific and technological approaches presented what seemed like a safe method to guarantee successful research and results. Planners looked to the natural world for analogies that could help rationalise human behaviour within the home but, more importantly, they also adopted systematic approaches to the home, such as flowcharts, to disassemble and better understand domestic tasks.

²¹¹ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 110–11.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ WV Hole and JJ Attenburrow, 'Houses and People: A Review of User Studies at the Building Research Station (Ministry of Technology)' (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), 56.



A house is a machine for living in

In contrast to men like Abercrombie and Tubbs, who gathered historical information to make sense of the present and plan for the future, the high modernist ideas of Swiss-born architectural thinker Le Corbusier (1887-1965) promoted housing forms that radically broke from the past. Le Corbusier avoided decorative frills or ornamentation, with traditional feminine associations, in favour of austere, clean designs in glass, steel and stone surfaces that matched his dictum '*une maison est une machine-*

à-habiter - a house is a machine for living in.²¹⁴ Le Corbusier embodied the ideals of high modernism: an unwavering faith in scientific and technological progress, in which the rearrangement of complex environments created rational systems of order that best served human needs.²¹⁵ Yet his vision of a Radiant City of tower blocks dotted across open green space, best realised in Marseille's *Unité d'habitation*, strayed too far from tradition and seemed beyond practical realisation for most planners in 1940s Britain. Le Corbusier's ideas did not inspire planners to build upwards but they did inform planning sources in other ways.²¹⁶

The *County of London Plan* presents one of the most notable examples. The report describes London using three lenses: as a community where people enact their everyday lives; as a metropolis that houses the institutions of government, culture and commerce; and as a machine that operates in 'locomotion'.²¹⁷ Like a machine, Abercrombie and Forshaw promote the design of the city's components (housing and infrastructure) to maximise the efficiency of its energy source (citizens). However, the public found this planning approach problematic as it cast citizens in a passive role as little more than an energy source for machines. Millicent Pleydell-Bouverie, writing one year later, cited her communications with people across the nation and stated, 'when the war is over [people] want to feel themselves not as cogs in a great machine, but as individuals'.²¹⁸ Planners therefore had to remain mindful that although rational and technological language warmed the public to planning ideas, people did not wish to live in a society where machines controlled everyday lives.²¹⁹

Jerry White claims that young planners at the LCC in the 1940s and 1950s felt 'moved by Le Corbusier's radical vision of streets in towers stretching to the stars' as well as Scandinavian high-rise developments and the iconic New York skyline.²²⁰ In fact, planners' engagement with Le Corbusian ideas differed in that they mediated high modernism for a particularly British audience. Writing in 1944, architectural commentator John Gloag captured the view of 1940s architects when he described the English home as

²¹⁴ For further discussion, see Moran, 'Housing, Memory and Everyday Life', 613.

²¹⁵ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 89–90.

²¹⁶ For example, Elizabeth Denby adopts the language of Le Corbusier and describes homes in Britain as 'modern "machines for living in"' in 'Plan the Home', *Picture Post* (4 January 1941), 21.

²¹⁷ John Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, 'County of London Plan', Prepared for the London County Council (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1943), 7.

²¹⁸ Pleydell-Bouverie, *Daily Mail Book of Post-War Homes*, 86.

²¹⁹ For further discussion, see Massingham, *Home*, 4.

²²⁰ Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and Its People* (London: Viking, 2001), 47.

'certainly not a "machine for living in": it is something more human and civilised and comfortable - it is a home'.²²¹ Neave Brown, who worked as chief architect at the LCC from 1972, also highlighted planners' postwar concerns over the application of Le Corbusier's ideas in the BBC documentary *High Rise Dreams*.²²² Brown criticised Le Corbusier's desire for a 'tabula rasa' that erased 'an old society' and created 'a new kind of landscape upon which you put isolated, new sorts of buildings for a totally new lifestyle'.²²³ Brown, speaking in 2003, felt that this approach 'produced an alien kind of life pattern' at odds with the wishes of the British public.²²⁴

Planners' unease over Le Corbusier's 'tabula rasa' approach also appear in planning films of the 1940s, such as Kay Mander's public information film *Plan to Work On* (1948). The film follows fictional town planner RA James, played by Donald Bisset, as he researches everyday life in the Scottish town of Dunfermline ahead of drafting its postwar plan. The film follows James as he speaks to residents and investigates maps from the 1700s to learn how the town functioned in the past. When his wife asks about his plans for Dunfermline, James explains,

I could plan your town from the beginning without much trouble, but here we've got something that's been changing for hundreds of years, we can't clear it away or even ignore it, we just have to take what there is and see what can be best done with it.²²⁵

During a period of economic austerity, the employment of costly planning experts for towns like Dunfermline, which emerged unscathed from the war, may have seemed imprudent. However, Peter Larkham explains that many small towns 'jumped on the bandwagon' in an effort to 'reposition themselves in the changing urban hierarchy of post-war Britain'.²²⁶ He estimates that planners drafted 250 plans for areas across Britain between 1940 and 1952, many of which were unaffected by German bombs.²²⁷ Without the 'tabula rasa' that followed environmental destruction, many town plans had to appease local histories, traditions, customs and pre-existing structures. In *A Plan to Work On*, James hoped to recover and

²²¹ John Gloag, *The Englishman's Castle* (New York: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1944), 163.

²²² Neave Brown (1929-) is best known as the architect behind the Alexandra Road Estate (1968-1978) in Camden, North London.

²²³ Carole Lockhead, 'High Rise Dreams', *Timeshift* (Bristol: BBC, 2003).

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Kay Mander, *A Plan to Work On* (Central Office of Information, 1948).

²²⁶ Larkham, 'Replanning London', 2.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

restore quotidian patterns of life in Dunfermline lost during the Second World War and in the pandemonium of urbanisation and industrialisation.²²⁸ Although fictional, James's attempt to produce a plan that balanced the past, present and future most accurately reflects the ethos of planners in 1940s Britain and stood in contrast to the high modernism of Le Corbusier.

Planners' engagement with Le Corbusian ideas help reveal the presence of masculinities in 1940s planning debates. Le Corbusier's desire for a 'tabula rasa' proved too radical for most planners in Britain, particularly as plans most often had to incorporate pre-existing spatial features and thus balance past, present and future. Mark Llewellyn, writing on what inspired the architects behind the modernist interwar Kensal House Estate, further explains that the 'year-zero' view of architects like Le Corbusier could not respond to the 'needs and desires of people for 'homes' as opposed to 'housing', and left no space for their existing social practices'.²²⁹ Recent historical studies of town planning in postwar Britain support this position. For example, Simon Gunn's account of Bradford's redevelopment between the 1930s and 1960s describes plans 'as the basis of modernist principles, yet principles that were embedded in a language of technocratic pragmatism'.²³⁰ Even though the dictum 'a house is a machine for living in' chimed with the public's mid-twentieth century enthusiasm for science and technology, Le Corbusier's masculine identity - as a radical rationalist with a minimal interest in the past as a guide for the future - failed to appeal to planners in 1940s Britain.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the expanded landscape of expert knowledge in 1940s Britain and shown how planners' masculine identities shaped ideas about the home and its inhabitants. Planning became an increasingly professionalised field between the late-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries that brought together experts from a diverse range of

²²⁸ Hornsey makes a similar observation, 'Abercrombie argued that London still retained its foundational structure as an ancient network of villages... The planner's task, he believed, was to reinvigorate these archaic communities', in Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect*, 51. In his study of rebuilding Europe's bombed cities, Jeffrey Diefendorf also notes, 'reconstruction planning often looked back to earlier conceptions of ideal urban forms', in Jeffrey Diefendorf, 'Introduction: New Perspectives on a Rebuilt Europe', in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. Jeffrey Diefendorf (London: St Martin's Press, 1990), 5.

²²⁹ Llewellyn, "'Urban Village' or 'White House'", 245.

²³⁰ Gunn, 'The Rise and Fall', 858.

backgrounds. In particular, the work of Patrick Geddes, development of Garden Cities and interwar projects, such as Kensal House, influenced planning ideas in the 1940s. The Second World War helped normalise state intervention and the idea of a 'planned society', demonstrated the efficacy of planning approaches and necessitated a massive rebuilding programme after the environmental devastation of the Blitz. The unique conjuncture of events and intellectual trends in the 1940s presented planners with unprecedented opportunities to trial new ideas as they worked to reconstruct the country.

Planners developed ideas within a wide intellectual context, which included science and technology, sociology, environmental psychology and MO. The correlation of domestic life and national reconstruction justified planning interventions and the home became the key location for state actors to rebuild family life, with expert attention increasingly focused on men's use and experience of domestic space. The contributions of women's organisations to planning debates further highlighted men and women's different domestic experiences, as well as the masculine biases of conventional planning knowledge.

My examination of how planners conceptualised the home highlights the influences of masculinities on planning ideas in mid-twentieth century Britain, most notably notions of paternalism and omniscience. Planners represented themselves as technical-minded, rational experts and used the accumulation and management of information to conceptualise the home as analogous to the natural world and, to a lesser extent, a machine for living in. During this period, a new type of expert emerged who favoured science and technology and wished to stand apart from traditional associations of expertise with the bourgeoisie elite. Mike Savage explains how this technical identity benefitted experts as it allowed figures 'from the traditional middle classes to avoid increasingly staid and snobbish claims to cultural superiority, since it enabled people to position themselves as technically valuable and with the kind of meritocratic skills that a modern nation required'.²³¹ The rational, scientific and technical framing of planning projects presented a veneer of objectivism, yet planners continued to approach studies of homes and their inhabitants as paternal figures who

²³¹ Savage, *Identities and Social Change*, 19.

saw it as their duty to disseminate a specific spatial and moral order to save the working classes from bad environments. This mindset expanded in the 1940s with the growth of the welfare state, in which citizens could enjoy an increased quality of life in exchange for new levels of state intervention.

Although scholars, such as Savage, have questioned the reliability and effectiveness of postwar social scientific and technical approaches, planners genuinely believed they possessed the power to identify and resolve a variety of physical and social problems found in the home.²³² What remains less clear is the extent to which the postwar language of planning spoke to those positioned outside expert, middle class and technocratic circles. The following two chapters will discuss planners' inability to bridge differences between middle class ideals and working class realities, which created situations where experts directed the working classes on what they *should* want from their home. A 'spirit of postwar planning' existed as a mode of thinking rather than a series of individual projects and analysis of how planners conceptualised the home and its inhabitants offers a way for historians to explore concepts of identity and space in mid-twentieth century Britain.

²³² Ibid., 93. Also see Waters, 'The Homosexual as a Social Being in Britain, 1945–1968', 686–87.

Chapter Three: The Exhibition of Ideal Domestic Masculinities



Figure 3.1: Albert Snoddy kisses goodbye to his old home at 6 Yatton Street ahead of moving to the new Lansbury Estate, in *First Citizens of New Estate* (1951).

Gerald Barry, director general of the Festival of Britain, described the 1951 festival 'as a corporate act of national reassessment, and of reaffirmation of faith in our future'.¹ Although far less popular than exhibitions on the South Bank, and scarcely discussed in the period's historiography, the Festival of Britain's East London exhibition of town planning and building research - Live Architecture - presents an important location where expert ideas about domestic space and gender came into contact with the postwar public.² Exhibition planners, alongside employees from the London County Council Architects' Department, earmarked 124 acres for development in the Metropolitan Borough of Poplar into what would become the Lansbury Estate.³ The development began life as an exhibition of 'live architecture' then continued as a community in the decades that followed.⁴ On 14

¹ Gerald Barry speaking to heads of local government at the Guildhall, London (8 June 1949), [DCA 14B/880](#).

² Works, such as Harriet Atkinson, *The Festival of Britain: A Land and Its People* (London: IB Tauris & Co., 2012), focus on the main festival site, with limited analysis of the ideals projected through Live Architecture and the Lansbury Estate. Susanne Cowan, 'A Model for the Nation: Exhibiting Post-War Reconstruction at the Festival of Britain 1951', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014) focuses specifically on Live Architecture but overlooks the influences of gender on how planners conceptualised the space and thought about inhabitants' actions.

³ 'The General Plan for Lansbury, Poplar', Press Notice Relating to the Development of Lansbury, Poplar, and the *Live Architecture* Exhibition (6 June 1950), [NA WORK 25/28](#).

⁴ Fred Berry, 'Lansbury: Lessons from the Past', *Municipal Review* (January 1978), 300.

February 1951 Albert Snoddy (a 35-year-old welder), Alice Snoddy (a 28-year-old part-time paper sorter), her mother Mrs Ball and their two children, Albert (aged seven) and Jean (aged four) arrived in Lansbury to collect the keys for their new three-bedroom flat in Gladstone House, East India Dock Road.⁵ Reginald Stamp, chairman of the LCC Housing Committee, presented the keys at a public ceremony in which he evoked the legacy of Labour Party stalwart and East London politician George Lansbury, after whom the estate was named. George Mills, the mayor of Poplar, also drew attention to Albert's new address, Gladstone House, and noted, 'the names of two great Englishmen are associated with these flats'.⁶ He added that with Albert's arrival, 'another great man goes into them - the working man'.⁷ Stamp described Albert as 'a quiet and unassuming ordinary working man, a man upon whom England relies' and promised that the LCC 'shall go on building similar homes until all the people like you in need of houses have got one'.⁸ Stamp's vision of working class housing became a reality in Lansbury as skilled or semi-skilled manual workers, such as lorry drivers, dockers, factory operatives and builders, made up around 90 per cent of the estate's first residents.⁹ In her assessment of the event, historian Jennifer Allen describes the Snoddy family as 'the ideal and typical working-class East End family, the sort of decent, home-loving nuclear family for whom the estate was built and by implication upon whom the future of working-class Britain rested'.¹⁰ Local newspapers shared the excitement of the day with their readers and Pathé News produced a film report entitled, 'First Citizens of New Estate'.¹¹ Albert unexpectedly found himself in a position of great civic responsibility and an emblem of Britain's postwar reconstruction.

Yet, when analysis scratches the veneer of media coverage and looks beyond the official statements of the Festival of Britain and the LCC, uncertainties emerge over Albert's enthusiasm to leave his old address at 6 Yatton Street, a 15-minute walk from Gladstone House. The Snoddy's departure from Yatton Street, which survived the Blitz but stood in an area

⁵ Albert Richman, 'Lansbury, E.14, Gets a Family: London's New District', *Daily Herald* (14 February 1951); 'First Tenants of Lansbury', *East End News* (16 February 1951).

⁶ William Gladstone, in fact, came from a Scottish family and may not have agreed with Mill's description.

⁷ 'First Tenants of Lansbury'.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ John Westergaard and Ruth Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', *The Town Planning Review* 25, no. 1 (April 1954): 37–39.

¹⁰ Jessica Allen, 'Contested Understandings: The Lansbury Estate in the Post-War Period' (Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1994), 191.

¹¹ British Pathé, *First Citizens of New Estate* (1951).

the LCC wished to demolish for new housing, meant that the family said goodbye to their cat and cocker spaniel, Ginger and Patty, as well as four chickens kept in their back yard. The LCC made it clear that 'flats are hardly the place for animals' and thus forced the family to abandon customs associated with their old home.¹² However, they did permit the Snoddys to bring their tortoise, Tommy, but the new flat presented an unwelcome environment for pets and Alice accidentally beheaded Tommy with the steel patio door.¹³ The demise of the Snoddy tortoise reminds us that the movement of working class families into supposedly well-planned homes could bring problems as well as new opportunities.

Albert Snoddy (1915-1971) was not a fictional character, unlike the majority of the other men described in this chapter, but featured in *Live Architecture* as a representative ideal of postwar masculinity. His selection as the 'First Citizen' of Lansbury showcased a complex working class masculine identity: most visibly, Albert struggled with a physical disability that made it difficult to walk and, as a result, planners assigned him a ground floor flat in Gladstone House specifically to aid his condition.¹⁴ Albert's selection exemplifies a meritocratic and inclusive ethos among exhibition organisers, with their projected ideals of citizenship and masculinity open to all, regardless of physical ability or class background. The Pathé report shows Albert blow a kiss to his old home and the narrator explains, 'as the Snoddys leave for their new home, Albert says farewell like a soldier' (figure 3.1). Albert's departing kiss, most likely staged by the director, conveyed planners' linear vision of change over time in which men like Albert would leave old accommodation for well-planned homes.

In their new homes, men would find material environments that utilised scientific and technological advances, delimited the private domain from the public street and offered space to enjoy individual leisure alongside communal family life. Above all, the well-planned home would present men with opportunities to reconfigure what they did as fathers and as husbands. In Albert's case, he literally 'kissed goodbye' to his old home and past

¹² Richman, 'Lansbury, E. 14'.

¹³ Catherine Croft, 'Texture, Detail (and Tortoise Tragedy)', *Twentieth Century Society* (9 June 2013), <http://www.c20society.org.uk/2013/09/06/texture-detail-and-tortoise-tragedy/>, accessed 10 November 2015.

¹⁴ Jennifer Allen asserts that the LCC selected Lansbury residents on the basis of need, with priority given to those who found themselves homeless or living in bombed property. The Snoddys had a home that survived the Blitz, it therefore seems likely that the LCC selected Albert and his family as they fitted the image of what planners hoped the estate would come to represent, see Allen, 'Contested Understandings', 19.

domestic practices for the well-planned environment of Gladstone House. Yet, men's relocation from old to new material environments did not always change men's domestic actions and behaviours. As I will discuss, nostalgia for traditional customs threatened the success of housing estates, such as Lansbury, as men constructed identities as fathers and husbands during a period that Frank Mort, Chris Waters and Becky Conekin describe as 'a hybrid affair, assembled out of tales about the past as well as narratives of the future'.¹⁵

This chapter examines housing exhibitions, and associated planning publications, between 1946 and 1953 to show how planners represented ideal domestic spaces and used pedagogical methods to promote particular ways for men to use and experience the home. I discuss exhibitions and publications as disseminative tools used to filter planning knowledge, detailed in the previous chapter, into mainstream discourses in an attempt to reshape inhabitants' domestic lives. In order to do this, I outline the different didactic roles of commercial and state exhibitions. These include the Modern Homes Exhibition (1946), Britain Can Make It (1946), Ideal Home Exhibitions (1947-), the Festival of Britain (1951) and Register Your Choice (1953). Attention then turns to consider four pedagogical methods – the quiz, walk-through, anti-model and model masculine lifestyle - used in exhibitions to convey planners' ideal visions of domesticity and men's roles within the home. These methods demonstrate the materialisation of expert knowledge as physical interfaces through which exhibition visitors could learn, consciously or subconsciously, about planning mistakes made in the past and efforts to remedy these problems in the present. In particular, model masculine lifestyles blurred the traditional divide between working and middle class masculinities, and sought to enthuse working class exhibition visitors about domestic ways of living that stood outside traditional class rules. I then discuss these methods within the context of Lansbury and the Live Architecture exhibition, in which planners used material objects, a demarcation of public and private space as well as ideas from the past, present and future to present ideal visions for men's domestic roles.

¹⁵ Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters, *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain, 1945-1964* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1999), 3.

The exhibitions discussed in this chapter rarely featured the genuine voices of inhabitants and a chasm continued between middle class experts and the everyday realities of the working class people for whom they planned. This examination of how exhibitions represented model masculine lives, and the tools used to guide visitors through the material presented, connects arguments not previously aligned in extant historiography on gender, expert knowledge and the home in mid-twentieth century Britain. Although John Tosh's *A Man's Place* focuses on the domestic lives of middle class men in late nineteenth century Britain, his postscript 'A Note on Method' establishes the strengths and limitations of didactic sources such as advice manuals.¹⁶ Tosh writes,

Didactic writing of this kind is used here not as a short cut to discovering what domesticity meant in practice, but as an essential guide to the values which people regarded – with varying degrees of commitment – as the benchmark against which their home life should be judged.¹⁷

Like Tosh, I view the model masculine lifestyles found at postwar exhibitions not as a window into men's domestic experiences but as a way to explore how planners conceptualised the relationship between men and the home. Grace Lees-Maffei, writing on domestic advice manuals in Britain and the USA in the mid-twentieth century, similarly warns that advice literature 'cannot be taken as direct evidence of past experience; it is not a record of what people actually did in their homes or how they decorated or used their domestic interiors' but can enable us to see 'the normative ideal shared by members of a society'.¹⁸ Nigel Edley, Margaret Wetherell and, most recently, Michael Roper further underline the need for historians to view representations of masculinities as cultural constructions and that men's 'emotional investments' in these representations varied.¹⁹ Roper writes, 'a focus upon cultural scripts rather than biographical experience' can result in a 'rather one-dimensional understanding of masculinity'.²⁰ The lives of fictional male inhabitants, photographs of models situated in furnished rooms and detailed inventories discussed in

¹⁶ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 198.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Grace Lees-Maffei, *Design at Home: Domestic Advice Books in Britain and the USA since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 2.

¹⁹ Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherell, *Men in Perspective: Practice, Power, and Identity* (London: Prentice Hall, 1995), 211; Michael Roper, 'Slipping Out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal* 59, no. 1 (1 March 2005): 67.

²⁰ Roper, 'Slipping Out of View', 67.

this chapter cannot say much about the private, lived realities of domestic life. However, they do tell us about the masculine identities of the planners who produced exhibition materials and the effect of these identities on the type of domestic lifestyles disseminated.

The chapter concludes with an assessment of the exchange of masculine knowledge between planners and inhabitants, and casts doubt over the extent of cross-class engagement on planning matters. I problematise Selina Todd's claim that working class people were not 'passive or unwilling recipients of postwar political and social reforms'.²¹ When opportunities existed for working class people to contribute to planning debates they engaged enthusiastically.²² However, at least in the 1940s and early 1950s, these opportunities remained rare and knowledge therefore tended to predominantly flow in one direction.²³ The absence of opportunities for men to express agency over the planning of their domestic lives did not stop working class visitors from approaching exhibitions with pre-existing ideas about how to use their home, much to the annoyance of organisers, or appropriating material presented to fit their individual, domestic contexts. The 1940s and 1950s therefore marked a period of change for working class men but not in a way that jeopardised pre-existing class boundaries or signified the embourgeoisement of the working classes, as argued in many sociological works of the 1950s.²⁴ Instead, the presentation of planning ideas at housing exhibitions heightened a sense of confidence, optimism and enthusiasm among the working classes for what homes in the future may bring.

The language of exhibitions

Unease existed among some architects over the practice of 'exhibition'. Hugh Casson, the Festival of Britain's director of architecture, attempted to assuage any fears that architects may have about sharing their work with

²¹ Selina Todd, 'Phoenix Rising: Working-Class Life and Urban Reconstruction, c. 1945–1967', *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 3 (July 2015): 680–81.

²² Peter Larkham, 'Exhibiting Planning in Wartime Britain', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 132; Todd, 'Phoenix Rising', 687.

²³ Harriet Atkinson highlights planners' increased awareness of the need to consult residents about what they want from plans. However, it remains unclear if these practices played out in reality, in Atkinson, *The Festival of Britain*, 159.

²⁴ Notable works include Ferdynand Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London: Heinemann, 1961), ix; Graham Turner, *The Car Makers* (London, 1963), 12, 97, 234.

the public in a lecture at the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1950. He opened his lecture with negative associations of the term 'exhibition',

Exhibition... there is something raffish, posturing, even faintly disreputable about the word. Indeed, in certain fields the act of exhibition is a criminal offence. (Sexologists describe it as an 'aberration, characterised by the irresistible need to display in public, generally under certain conditions of time and place') and no doubt there are many of you here who remember the childhood advice, 'Don't make an exhibition of yourself'.²⁵

Casson went on to detail the idiocy of this view and praise the architects behind the Festival of Britain. However, Casson's decision to lecture at the RIBA, a few months before the festival opened, reminds us that 'exhibition' remained a radical concept for some architects in 1940s Britain.²⁶ While advances in architecture languished during the Second World War, many planners found work in the organisation and delivery of government-sponsored propaganda exhibitions, such as the Ministry of Information's exhibition *Off the Ration* (1942) at London's Charing Cross underground station.²⁷ The skillset of planners involved in propaganda exhibitions during the war would easily transfer to postwar projects. At the same time, the ascendancy of sociological expertise meant that exhibitions could share the latest research into what people require from their homes and also report retrospectively on the impact of exhibitions.²⁸ These developments, discussed in the previous chapter, meant that a new wave of experts, who considered themselves rational and technical-minded but also paternalist and omniscient, determined the type of information disseminated at exhibitions.

The prevalence of planning exhibitions and the public's enthusiasm peaked around 1945 but planning continued to interest the public into the early 1950s.²⁹ Mass Observation calculated that in 1950 around 76 per cent of

²⁵ Sir Hugh Casson, 'Festival of Britain 1951', *Lecture to the Royal Institute of British Architects* (24 March 1950), [NA WORK 24/43](#).

²⁶ Even though the Festival of Britain celebrated the centenary of the 1851 Great Exhibition and London had hosted numerous large-scale state, trade and commercial exhibitions on themes such as housing and Empire, some architects remained unsure about the practice of 'exhibiting' their work, see Deborah Ryan, *The Ideal Home Through the 20th Century* (London: Hazar, 1997), 13.

²⁷ Misha Black, 'Exhibition Design', in *Exhibition Design*, ed. Misha Black (London: Architectural Press, 1950), 11.

²⁸ Atkinson explains that in order for section designers at the Festival of Britain to qualify for their full fee, they had to demonstrate use of social science research to construct 'ideal environments in which families could function', Atkinson, *The Festival of Britain*, 166.

²⁹ Larkham, 'Exhibiting Planning in Wartime Britain', 132. Also see Peter Larkham and Keith Lilley, 'Exhibiting the City: Planning Ideas and Public Involvement in Wartime and Early Post-War Britain', *Town Planning Review* 83, no. 6 (January 2012): 647–68.

Londoners had attended some form of exhibition.³⁰ Todd highlights the high attendance at national and local planning exhibitions in the 1940s, and argues that 'working-class residents were deeply interested in the reconstruction of their urban centers'.³¹ Although attendance numbers decreased, exhibitions became increasingly participative and encouraged visitors to actively engage with the material presented.³²

The popularity of housing exhibitions captured the mood of a society hungry for change and fed into what Carolyn Steedman, who grew up working class in 1950s South London, experienced as a state-fostered sense of being 'worth something'.³³ Steedman identifies the state's provision of 'orange juice and milk and dinners at school' as part of this social transformation.³⁴ I argue that the state's promotion of ideal domesticities at exhibitions also augmented an aspirational ethos and encouraged working class visitors to look beyond their current socioeconomic contexts, escape from the unexciting realities of everyday life and enter into a world filled with new possibilities and experiences.³⁵ For example, exhibitions provided opportunities for the public to see first-hand the abundance of domestic appliances that emerged with the boom in science and technology.³⁶ Exhibitions' representation of model masculine lifestyles helped galvanise working class self-confidence and made it seem possible for everyone to improve their domestic conditions, regardless of their material circumstances.³⁷ As TH Marshall noted, during a period of economic austerity, the postwar state could only stimulate the *belief* among citizens that living standards were improving and promise that, in the future, everyone would feel the positive effects of change.³⁸ Exhibition material

³⁰ 'Exhibitions', *MO Bulletin* 39 (December 1950), 3, [MO SxMOA1/1/10/4/4 - File Report 2230](#); [SxMOA1/2/1/4/1 - File Report 2251](#).

³¹ Todd, 'Phoenix Rising', 687.

³² Deborah Ryan writes that historians have largely overlooked the pedagogical techniques used at exhibitions although 'a substantial technical literature on the design and planning of exhibitions' exists that would benefit from careful attention, Ryan, *The Ideal Home*, 3.

³³ Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives* (London: Virago Press, 1986), 122.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Matthew Hollow, 'Utopian Urges: Visions for Reconstruction in Britain, 1940–1950', *Planning Perspectives* 27, no. 4 (October 2012): 574.

³⁶ Black writes that '[p]eople come to exhibitions to see *things*' and commented on the enthusiasm of visitors 'to inspect furniture and household goods which they were debarred from buying', in Black, 'Exhibition Design', 12, 18.

³⁷ Even though the availability of material goods displayed at exhibitions remained scarce, the increased wages of manual workers in the 1940s made these material ideals seem more achievable. Todd notes, 'manual workers' earnings more than trebled during the war' and '[i]n the late 1940s most people spent about one-third of their income on rationed goods; quite a change from the 1930s, when many families had had to spend at least two-thirds of their income on food and clothing', in Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class* (London: John Murray, 2014), 131, 155.

³⁸ TH Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 33.

bolstered Marshall's 'equality of status', in which citizens *perceived* themselves as equals; whereas 'equality of income', in which citizens *experienced* equal socio-economic conditions, remained impossible in the 1940s and early 1950s.³⁹ Marshall's distinction illustrates the role of exhibitions in the wider context of postwar reconstruction and highlights the gulf between domestic aspirations and realities in the early postwar period.

Commercial exhibitions

Deborah Ryan describes the annual Ideal Home Exhibition as the best attended and longest running exhibition of ideal domestic interiors in twentieth century Britain.⁴⁰ The *Daily Mail* devised the exhibition in 1908 and it recommenced in London in 1947, after a six-year hiatus, as a vehicle to attract new readers, particularly female consumers from the lower-middle classes.⁴¹ Ideal Home Exhibitions followed a quasi-educational agenda which showcased 'ideal homes' gathered around themes such as interior design, domestic appliances, children and gardens. Exhibits intended to both entertain and educate the public on new technologies, new styles and new ways of living. Ryan has written extensively on its history and notes, '[t]he Ideal Home Exhibition succeeded because it built on forms of entertainment that the public were already well accustomed to'.⁴² On its 1947 return, Esmond Harmsworth, chairman of the Daily Mail and General Trust, noted the exhibition's role in the nation's recovery,

The prime purpose of this first post-war DAILY MAIL Ideal Home Exhibition is to accelerate the pace of its recovery and further the re-establishment of that most vital part of the nation's life which is family-life. If there are to be families there must be homes – not makeshift homes but individual centres for harmonious living, each within a setting of beauty.⁴³

Although the commercialism of Ideal Home Exhibitions promoted a 'suburban vision of modernity', which stood in contrast to the urban and technocratic outlook of men like Patrick Abercrombie, Arthur Ling and

³⁹ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁰ The Ideal Home Exhibition attracted a peak audience of 1,329,644 in 1957, noted in Ryan, *The Ideal Home*, 17.

⁴¹ Ibid., 9, 16, 17; Deborah Ryan, 'The Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition and Suburban Modernity, 1908-1951' (University of East London, in collaboration with the Victoria & Albert Museum, 1995), 67.

⁴² Ryan, *The Ideal Home*, 13.

⁴³ 'Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition Catalogue and Review', *Daily Mail Ideal Home Homes Exhibition* (26 March 1947), 3, [MO SxMOA1/2/1/9/E](#).

Ralph Tubbs, they also present a historical location in which different types of experts came together to share ideas on how best to plan the British home.⁴⁴ Robert Freestone describes exhibitions as ‘important sites of encounter between professionals and the public’; Ryan highlights how Ideal Home Exhibitions created an environment that enabled ‘the Daily Mail - a newspaper with political sympathies firmly to the right - to consult garden city reformers, social reformers and women's organisations associated with the left’.⁴⁵ Even though organisers followed commercial interests, Ideal Home Exhibitions’ popularity and ability to bring together a plurality of planning voices makes them significant events in my study of postwar exhibitions.

State exhibitions

The state played an active role in the exhibition of planning ideas during the 1940s, and this chapter predominantly focuses on the representation of domestic spaces and masculinities at BCMI and the Festival of Britain. The Council of Industrial Design oversaw the organisation of BCMI and a network of committees delivered the Festival of Britain, with assistance on Lansbury from Ling and a team from the LCC Architects’ Department. In both examples, government ministers, architects, designers and a variety of other experts worked together to present a corporate state voice. As an example, the ‘panel of experts’ that devised the Homes and Garden section of the Festival of Britain included Hugh Casson (architect), Richard Titmuss (sociologist, Ministry of Health), Kenneth Chapman (biologist), Margaret Solomon (secretary, Housing Centre), HL Beales (social historian, London School of Economics) and Frank Austin (panel member, the Board of Trade).⁴⁶ The varied assortment of experts brought together different types of knowledge and countered the dangers of an ‘individual genius’, such as the fictional architect Howard Roark in Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead*. The Ministries of Health, Works, and Town and Country Planning also published reports in the 1940s that gave planners additional platforms to disseminate their ideas with the public. These include the *County of London Plan*

⁴⁴ Ryan, ‘The Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition’, 1995, 132.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 98. Also see Robert Freestone, ‘The Exhibition as a Lens for Planning History’, *Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 3 (3 July 2015): 436.

⁴⁶ Council of Industrial Design, ‘Panel of Experts’ (1949), <http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=164301&sos=9>, accessed 10 July 2015, [DCA 14B/5181](#).

(1943), *Housing Manuals* (1944-) and *Design of Dwellings* (1944).⁴⁷ The origins, approaches and end goals of the CoID, BCMI, Festival of Britain and Lansbury each come with their own particularities. I therefore intend to address these differences before examining planners' use of pedagogical methods.

The Council of Industrial Design and Britain Can Make It

Hugh Dalton, Labour politician and president of the Board of Trade, founded the CoID in 1944 and appointed SC Leslie, a civil servant from the Ministry of Home Security, as director.⁴⁸ Designer Gordon Russell replaced Leslie in 1947 and led the organisation until 1956. During Russell's tenure the CoID established itself as a proactive force in design education and set a template followed by design councils around the world.⁴⁹ The CoID primarily concerned itself with the public dissemination of 'good design' and worked to broaden people's opportunities to see well-designed material objects first-hand.⁵⁰ The council encouraged exhibitions to feature household items of various price points, as this allowed all consumers, regardless of class or spending power, the opportunity to purchase at least one item on display. Experts hoped that the presence of even one or two CoID-approved items in people's homes would mean that 'in every household there would soon be goods bearing the quality mark, next to goods without'.⁵¹ Over time, the design discrepancy between objects would become more apparent and eventually reach a 'turning point' in which consumers' 'natural' instincts of good and bad design would awaken and they would see for themselves the value of well-designed objects within the home.⁵²

The educational efforts of the CoID extended beyond exhibitions. The CoID believed that the British public had a thirst for education and therefore facilitated the dissemination of educational material on design and planning

⁴⁷ John Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, 'County of London Plan', Prepared for the London County Council (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1943); Central Housing Advisory Committee, *Design of Dwellings* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1944).

⁴⁸ Fiona MacCarthy, 'Russell, Sir (Sydney) Gordon (1892–1980)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31640>, accessed 2 March 2014.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ The Council of Industrial Design, *First Annual Report* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1945), 20.

⁵¹ Franz Singer, 'Outline of a Scheme', 4, [DCA 14B/880](#).

⁵² *Ibid.*

in schools, clubs, businesses and voluntary organisations.⁵³ Examples include the distribution of design folios that showcased well-designed material objects, the production of educational films, loan of educational stands and box exhibitions for school lessons, and the production of miniature furniture to train staff in home stores on the arrangement of objects within rooms.⁵⁴ In the period 1948 to 1949, the CoID undertook 249 lectures, loaned their box exhibitions to 155 educational institutions and took part in 34 teachers' courses and conferences.⁵⁵ Trevor Keeble describes the CoID's approach as 'technocratic' and in pursuit of a 'pseudo modernist model of design reform' that took little account of 'the lived experiences, practices and preferences of domestic householders'.⁵⁶ The CoID's ethos towards design therefore aligns with the personification of the masculine planner established in the previous chapter: although the organisation used technical language and repeatedly stressed its wish to empower the public to recognise good design for themselves, the CoID propagated a paternalist relationship between expert and citizen that continued the mindset of nineteenth-century design reform organisations.⁵⁷ Men like Russell vocalised an egalitarian ideal of good design for all but subtly solidified the power of a small, middle class elite - predominantly composed of men - to define 'good' and 'bad' design.

The CoID's most high-profile platform to educate the public was BCMI, which opened on 24 September 1946 at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and became one of the year's best-known attractions.⁵⁸ Organisers wanted the exhibition to showcase the power of 'good design' to reshape people's everyday domestic practices and make a positive contribution to Britain's postwar recovery.⁵⁹ Commentators found something new and exciting about the exhibition. Among the 2,800

⁵³ Council of Industrial Design, 'Exhibition of Visual Aids on Industrial Design', *Murray House Exhibition Hall* (3-29 January 1949), [DCA Design Weeks Educational Policy](#).

⁵⁴ Ibid. Films include Roger MacDougall, *Designing Women* (Council of Industrial Design, 1947); *A Question of Taste* (Council of Industrial Design, 1948); *Made by Design* (Council of Industrial Design, 1948).

⁵⁵ 'Statement from 1948/1949 Annual Report, A Service for Schools' (1949), [DCA 19/670](#).

⁵⁶ Trevor Keeble, 'An Unknown Radical: Dennis Chapman and The Home and Social Status', *Design and Culture* 1, no. 3 (1 November 2009): 333-34.

⁵⁷ Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 19. It is important to note that Victorian design reformers primarily focused efforts on the middle rather than the working classes.

⁵⁸ MO recorded that a month after opening nine out of ten people across the country knew about the exhibition, with one third of Londoners acquainted with someone who had attended the exhibition, in Mass Observation, *A Report on "Britain Can Make It" Exhibition* (December 1946), [MO SxMOA1/2/26/1/A](#).

⁵⁹ Jonathan Woodham, 'Design and Everyday Life at the Britain Can Make It Exhibition, 1946: "Stripes, Spots, White Wood and Homespun Versus Chintzy Armchairs and Iron Bedsteads with Brass Knobs"', *The Journal of Architecture* 9, no. 4 (December 2004): 463.

journalists who registered their attendance, Raymond Mortimer, the literary editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*, noted 'the exhibition is not just a Trade Fair; it is an attempt to set a standard of good design' and called on other organisations to accept the CoID's design standards as 'the benefit to the country would be inestimable'.⁶⁰ BCMI shared with the public several ideal representations of domestic space and masculine domestic identities, which I discuss in detail in the subsequent section.

MO investigated BCMI's impact on its visitors, and their findings present one of the most insightful elements of the exhibition. 'A Report on Britain Can Make It Exhibition' involved the research of 15 field investigators who analysed over 2,500 interviews and more than 1,000 comments overheard at BCMI.⁶¹ The report found that the 'most widely represented class was very definitely artisan working class'.⁶² It also assessed BCMI's impact and noted that 'two men for every women... mentioned furniture as their special interest' and around 29 per cent of men and 30 per cent of women in their general sample had changed their tastes in domestic design since visiting the exhibition.⁶³ The report adds that among those who stated 'that their tastes had not been altered at all by what they had seen', in follow-up investigations researchers found that 'in every home visited some alteration was planned, or some new article required, that had first been seen at "Britain Can Make It"'.⁶⁴ Most importantly, MO found that the number of people who had changed their tastes rose to 47 per cent when the sample exclusively focused on unskilled workers (compared to 20 per cent of middle class visitors).⁶⁵ For the CoID, MO's research confirmed their belief that the working classes would be most likely to change their attitudes towards design when presented with the right information and opportunities. Furthermore, the report supports this chapter's understanding of early postwar exhibitions as locations for the exchange of ideas between men who planned homes and the men who lived in them. 'A Report on Britain Can Make It Exhibition' followed an impressionistic methodology and used a comparatively small sample of respondents that

⁶⁰ Raymond Mortimer, 'Britain Can Make It!', *The New Statesman and Nation* (28 September 1946), cited in Woodham, 'Design and Everyday Life', 463.

⁶¹ Woodham, 'Design and Everyday Life', 467; Claire Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (1 April 2005): 347.

⁶² Mass Observation, *A Report on "Britain Can Make It"*, [MO SxMOA1/2/26/1/A](#).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

therefore may not paint the full picture.⁶⁶ Yet, the very fact that the CoID commissioned MO to conduct the investigation reveals an interest among experts in exhibitions' power to reshape visitors' domestic practices and ultimately remodel postwar British society.

Lansbury, Live Architecture and the Festival of Britain

Five years after the popular success of BCMI, Lansbury welcomed the Snoddy family as its first residents. Lansbury would function as a permanent community in East London and thus outlive the Live Architecture exhibition, which ran on the site from 3 May to 30 September 1951 as part of the Festival of Britain. Lansbury presents an incisive case study of when expert ideas about gender and the home encountered the public, which historians of postwar Britain have not yet fully examined.⁶⁷

The project's multi-disciplinary team included architects, planners, landscape-architects, surveyors and the sociologist Margaret Willis - the first sociologist appointed to a planning team in Britain.⁶⁸ Willis described herself as a 'liaison officer' who stood between inhabitants and the '[LCC's] technical men and women who make the plans in the drawing office'.⁶⁹ Willis' inclusion in the team helped address the public's increased criticisms of planners' remoteness and disengagement from the people for whom they planned.⁷⁰ Sociologists, like Willis, would serve as a vital bridge between the aloof expertise of masculine planners and an increasingly vocal public keen to share their views on the future shape of their everyday environments.

With a broad, universal appeal, which catered to both industry professionals and local novices, Live Architecture hoped to attract domestic and overseas audiences for its specialist showcase of design and planning, building sciences and model homes. Its unwillingness to court populism

⁶⁶ For further discussion on methodological issues associated with MO, see Claire Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 1 (March 2007): 194.

⁶⁷ The only detailed study of the Live Architecture and the Lansbury Estate is found in Cowan, 'A Model for the Nation'.

⁶⁸ *The Planner* (January 1978), 13, cited in 'The Lansbury Estate: Introduction and the Festival of Britain exhibition', Survey of London: Volumes 43 and 44: Poplar, Blackwall and Isle of Dogs (1994), 212-223, www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46490, accessed 12 July 2013.

⁶⁹ Margaret Willis, *My Job, A Sociologist in the Architects Dept. of the LCC*, a Script for a Radio Broadcast (1955), cited in Nicholas Merthyr Day, 'The Role of the Architect in Postwar State Housing, A Case Study of the Housing Work of the London County Council 1939-1956' (University of Warwick, 1988), 263.

⁷⁰ Criticisms noted in Harold Orlans, *Stevenage: A Sociological Study of a New Town* (London: Routledge, 1952), 101.

meant that Live Architecture emerged from the festival as the poor sibling of events held on the South Bank - around eight million people visited the South Bank exhibitions, which far outnumbered Live Architecture's 86,646 visitors.⁷¹ However, Live Architecture generally impressed industry commentators. Writing in 1953 for *The New Yorker*, Lewis Mumford described Lansbury as 'one of the best bits of housing and urban planning anywhere' due to its focus 'on the social constitution of the community itself'.⁷² He also noted that, unlike Britain's New Towns, Lansbury promoted high-density living that created 'a theatre for ordinary people to live an ennobled existence through their visibility to each other'.⁷³ The editors of the *Architects' Journal* labelled Live Architecture an 'inspiring note' in the festival's programme, which avoided the utopian ideals promoted at other sites and instead showed what postwar Britain can achieve, in spite of the nation's material and economic restrictions.⁷⁴ Neil Bullock argues that utilitarianism and economic pragmatism governed the interests of planners and exhibition organisers working in London in the late 1940s, rather than utopian idealism.⁷⁵ Lansbury therefore presents a version of mid-twentieth modernism in Britain, which amalgamated ideas from the past, present and future to create domestic environments that encouraged new family practices but also continued prewar familiarities.

Lansbury's East London location, in an area where 24 per cent of buildings had been destroyed or seriously damaged in the Blitz, also enabled the incumbent Labour Party to frame the project as an emblem of its reconstructionist housing programmes and vision for social order.⁷⁶ As early as 1954, sociologists Ruth Glass and John Westergaard noted that this 'small corner in the East End of London, [had] already achieved world fame' with visits from 'foreign and native planners, architects,

⁷¹ Hermione Hobhouse, ed., 'The Lansbury Estate: Introduction and the Festival of Britain Exhibition' 43 and 44, no. Poplar, Blackwall and the Isle of Dogs (1994): 212–23.

⁷² Lewis Mumford, 'London Can Teach Us', *The Observer*, 18 October 1953, 12.

⁷³ Lewis Mumford, 'Old Forms for New Towns', in *The Highway and the City*, ed. Lewis Mumford (London: Harcourt, 1964), 44, cited in Adrian Forty, 'Being or Nothingness: Private Experience and Public Architecture in Post-War Britain', *Architectural History* 38 (1995): 33.

⁷⁴ The Editors, 'Lansbury: A Principle Put Into Practice', *Architects' Journal*, 6 September 1951, 275.

⁷⁵ Nicholas Bullock, 'Ideals, Priorities and Harsh Realities: Reconstruction and the LCC, 1945–51', *Planning Perspectives* 9, no. 1 (January 1994): 89. The limited availability of building materials made it particularly difficult for planners to create 'ideal homes', discussed in Kenneth Morgan, *Labour in Power, 1945–1951* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 166.

⁷⁶ Planners selected Poplar as it offered 'the possibility of associating the "Live" Exhibitions with reconstruction, particularly in the badly bombed areas', noted in Gerald Barry, 'Site for the Live Architectural Exhibition, Memorandum from the Executive Committee' (18 September 1948), [NA WORK 25/28](#). Bullock also writes how 'London had suffered more than any English city [particularly] those living in the dense housing of the East End, near the docks', in Bullock, 'Ideals, Priorities and Harsh Realities', 87. For further information, see *Architect and Building News* (9 June 1950), 589.

administrators and housing managers'.⁷⁷ Willis, who now worked as a sociologist in the LCC's Town Planning Department, ran illustrated talks and led tours of Lansbury in November 1954 for international students from Egypt, Japan, Sudan, USA, Iraq and Indonesia researching with the British Council.⁷⁸ Planners therefore conceived Lansbury neither as a stand-alone project nor simply as a means to improve the lives of its working class residents. For instance, the Live Architecture catalogue introduces Lansbury as 'a great contribution to progress, progress in the best sense, in that it aims to open the way to a new and better life – to-day for the people of Poplar – tomorrow for the people of Britain'.⁷⁹ Similarly, Frederick Gibberd, who devised the idea of Live Architecture and designed several elements of the estate, saw Lansbury as a way to preserve for posterity the work of postwar planners,

The whole scheme would form a permanent record of the stage we [the country] had reached in 1951, in solving the aesthetic and scientific problem of creating a new environment. As such it would have immense significance for future generations.⁸⁰

Planners intended to extend the Lansbury model to improve the domestic environments of working class people across the nation. This ideal never became a reality. However, it remains possible to read this small pocket of East London as shorthand for how planners imagined housing, and the domestic actions of men like Albert Snoddy, would develop across Britain.⁸¹

So what does this tell us about the masculinities of the planners behind these projects and their vision for gender roles in well-planned homes of the future? When historians of the Festival of Britain discuss gender they tend to focus on women's experiences as exhibition visitors. Harriet Atkinson, for instance, asserts that 'representations of home in the Festival were meant to appeal to female visitors'.⁸² Even if females attended the exhibitions in greater numbers than men, this has distracted attention from

⁷⁷ Westergaard and Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', 33.

⁷⁸ 'Illustrated Talk on the Lansbury Neighbourhood by Miss MB Willis' (26 November 1954); and 'Tour of Lansbury Conducted by Miss MB Willis' (29 November 1954) in The British Council, *Survey: Life in an East London Neighbourhood* (Student Welfare Department, 26 November - 18 December 1954), [THA 700.2\(4\)](#).

⁷⁹ H McDunnett, ed., *How Lansbury Was Planned, Guide to the Exhibition of Architecture, Town-Planning and Building Research* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951), 47, [NA WORK 25/230](#).

⁸⁰ Council of Architecture, 'Memorandum submitted by Mr Fredrick Gibberd, A Proposal for the Exhibition on Architecture, Town Planning and Building Science' (19 July 1948), [NA WORK 25/28](#).

⁸¹ Cowan makes a similar argument in Cowan, 'A Model for the Nation', 177.

⁸² Atkinson, *The Festival of Britain*, 165.

what exhibitions tell us about masculinities and domestic space in postwar Britain - both in terms of imagined inhabitants and the masculinities of the men who produced the material. Atkinson adds that the primarily-male festival planning groups assumed women's presence in the home, even though 31 per cent of the national workforce in 1951 was female, and made judgements on her likes and dislikes without proper research or consultation.⁸³ Although the gendered assumptions of masculine planners are less conspicuous than other groups, such as women's organisations, this does not mean that masculinities had no influence on the domestic ideals disseminated at exhibitions. Rather, the public's understanding of planners' identities as normative and their actions as commonsensical may have masked the pervasive influences of masculinities on how planners conceptualised the home.

The previous chapter described how planners imagined themselves as members of a new technical class, distinct from traditional bourgeois expertise, yet maintained a 'moral duty' to 'save' the working classes from bad environments. These attributes appear in a number of housing exhibitions, often conflated with broader concepts of national identity and citizenship. For example, Chris Waters notes that 'the components of national identity... seemed to come unstuck' in Britain in the late 1940s and 1950s.⁸⁴ He cites John Huizinga's 'we stood alone' account of the Second World War, which enabled Britain to frame itself in the postwar decades as a 'unique national culture'.⁸⁵ Waters questions this view as, on closer inspection, the uniqueness of British postwar culture 'seemed no more than a delusion', as its social and economic situation did not merit any special attention and the impending collapse of its Empire further tested its international status.⁸⁶ This did not discourage exhibition organisers who continued to broadcast Britain's 'exceptionalism' and showcase uniquely national definitions of domesticity and masculinity. At the Festival of Britain, for example, organisers enthusiastically declared, 'the English have led the world in making a "home" and there are still many countries who

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Chris Waters, "Dark Strangers" in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963', *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 2 (1 April 1997): 213.

⁸⁵ Waters refers to Johan Huizinga's account of England in Johan Huizinga, *Confessions of a European in England* (London: William Heinemann, 1958), 83, in Waters, 'Dark Strangers', 213.

⁸⁶ Waters, 'Dark Strangers', 213.

have no word for it' and that the 'English spend more time on their homes than any other race'.⁸⁷

The uniqueness, whether real or imagined, of Britain's postwar situation required a particular and proactive response, which brought to the fore the home and men's domestic roles. Planners' identities as technical, paternalist and omniscient, discussed in the previous chapter, meant that their conceptualisation of the nation, gender and the home took a certain form. Yet, planners also grew aware of the need to consult with the public to some extent and therefore brought figures like Willis into the planning process to bridge the gap between planners' aloof expertise and an increasingly vocal public.

Pedagogical methods

Exhibitions used a variety of didactic and participatory methods to instruct visitors on how to use and experience their homes. Misha Black, exhibition designer and member of the Festival of Britain's Design Panel, described exhibitions as a means 'to persuade the visitors to undertake actions, or accept conditions, often contrary to their natural appetites'.⁸⁸ He praised British exhibition designers' prowess in 'the informative and story-telling type of exhibition (as differentiated from the simple display of commodities)' and argued that this form of propaganda 'can be varied to work for reasonable ends, and is no less required to persuade people of the importance of town planning than it is to exploit latent racial rivalries'.⁸⁹ Although these methods built on a long history of exhibition techniques, which sociologist Tony Bennett describes as 'cultural technologies', and present instances of interaction between experts and the public, historians of the home have thus far overlooked what these methods reveal about gender.⁹⁰

I examine four pedagogical methods used at BCMI, the Festival of Britain and other postwar exhibitions to demonstrate the types of masculine

⁸⁷ Council of Industrial Design, 'Homes and Gardens' (23 April 1949), 1, [DCA 14B/5181](#); Council of Industrial Design, 'Homes and Gardens draft' (23 May 1949), 3, [DCA 14B/5181](#).

⁸⁸ Black, 'Exhibition Design', 30.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 11, 21.

⁹⁰ Tony Bennett explains, 'exhibitions operate as distinct 'cultural technologies' with specific languages and conventions', in Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations* 4 (1988): 76.

practices planners hoped to encourage in the home. In doing so, this section analyses the influences of planners' masculine identities on the exhibition material presented. Experts believed, that through their accumulation and management of information, they had identified physical and social problems that hampered men's ability to perform the domestic roles of husband and father. With an objective standard of 'good' and 'bad' housing, exhibitions could instruct visitors on how to remedy these problems and thus improve their everyday lives. Analysis of exhibition methods therefore highlights the transfer of ideas from middle to working class men in mid-twentieth century Britain, as well as the epistemic gap between expert knowledge and inhabitants' lived experiences.

The quiz

Quizzes were one of the most inventive methods that planners used to educate visitors. Quizzes usually required visitors to answer questions, set by design and planning experts, on the suitability of domestic objects for particular contexts. BCMI's *Design Quiz* presents the most notable example of this approach.⁹¹ The CoID-produced pamphlet invited participants to select the 'best-designed' object from one of three options for 12 different household items.⁹² The quiz asked visitors to 'choose the ones YOU like – then compare your choice with that of an artist, an architect, and a housewife'.⁹³ Contrary to the quiz's invitation to choose objects that matched personal tastes, participants won a small prize if they selected the 'right' object for the room, as decided by the expert panel of Hugh Casson, Barnett Freedman and housewife Mary Harrison.⁹⁴

As noted in the previous chapter, the CoID's inclusion of a 'housewife' as an expert acknowledged the role of 'women's knowledge' in planning debates and that inhabitants' experience of domestic space differed for women and men. *Design Quiz* demonstrates the presence of gendered knowledge in exhibitions and also highlights experts' attempt to portray themselves as masters of objective knowledge about the home. The CoID first tested this pedagogical method at their stand at the Modern Homes

⁹¹ Other examples include the Handles Quiz at the 1948 Design Fair, in which visitors matched 30 different handles to particular jobs, see Sydney Foot, 'Come to the Fair' (1949), 2, [DCA Design Weeks Education Policy](#).

⁹² *Design Quiz* (London: Council for Industrial Design, 1946), [MO SxMOA1/2/26/1/B](#).

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Mr Gardiner to Mr Barr, 'Quiz Coins' (1946), [DCA Summer Exhibition 1946](#).

Exhibition, which ran from 26 March to 25 May 1946 at Dorland Hall, London (figure 3.2). Like their BCMI pamphlet, the Modern Homes Exhibition invited visitors to choose everyday objects from a variety of categories, with cash prizes awarded to those who selected the same objects as the CoID experts.⁹⁵ Around 37,000 visitors entered the competition, a level of enthusiasm that exceeded the CoID's expectations.⁹⁶

Over the next decade, exhibitions continued to quiz visitors on good and bad design – a notable example is found at the Design and Industries Association's exhibition Register Your Choice (1953) at Charing Cross underground station.⁹⁷ However, a dissonance between what visitors told exhibition investigators and how they used and experienced their home grew increasingly clear, particularly among the working classes. MO, in their regular role as exhibition investigators, asked 255 Register Your Choice visitors to consider two furnished rooms: Room R (modern and contemporary) and Room L (ornate and overly-decorated), and then select the style they would choose for their own home.⁹⁸ The DIA happily reported that 75 per cent of respondents selected Room R as their favoured style. Yet, on closer examination, the MO report reveals that only middle class visitors favoured the modern design.⁹⁹ MO concluded, '[t]here is some indication that many people have in their minds a stereotyped ideal of what constitutes a solid, respectable 'good class' home'.¹⁰⁰ Yet, for working class visitors, the 'good class' home stood at odds with the DIA's position and threw into doubt the influence of large-scale exhibitions, such as BCMI and the Festival of Britain, on working class tastes.

⁹⁵ Woodham, 'Design and Everyday Life', 470.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ MO advised organisers to host exhibitions at 'convenient and active locations, frequented by people of all classes' in order to 'to improve public outreach', in *Report on Government Exhibitions* (1941), 4-5, [MO SxMOA1/2/43/5/A/2](#), cited in Cowan, 'A Model for the Nation', 179.

⁹⁸ For further information on the *Register Your Choice* exhibition, see Richard Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect: Unruly Life in Postwar London* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 208.

⁹⁹ 'Furnishing', *Mass-Observation Bulletin* No. 49 (March-June 1953), 6, [MO SxMOA1/1/18/2/1](#).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

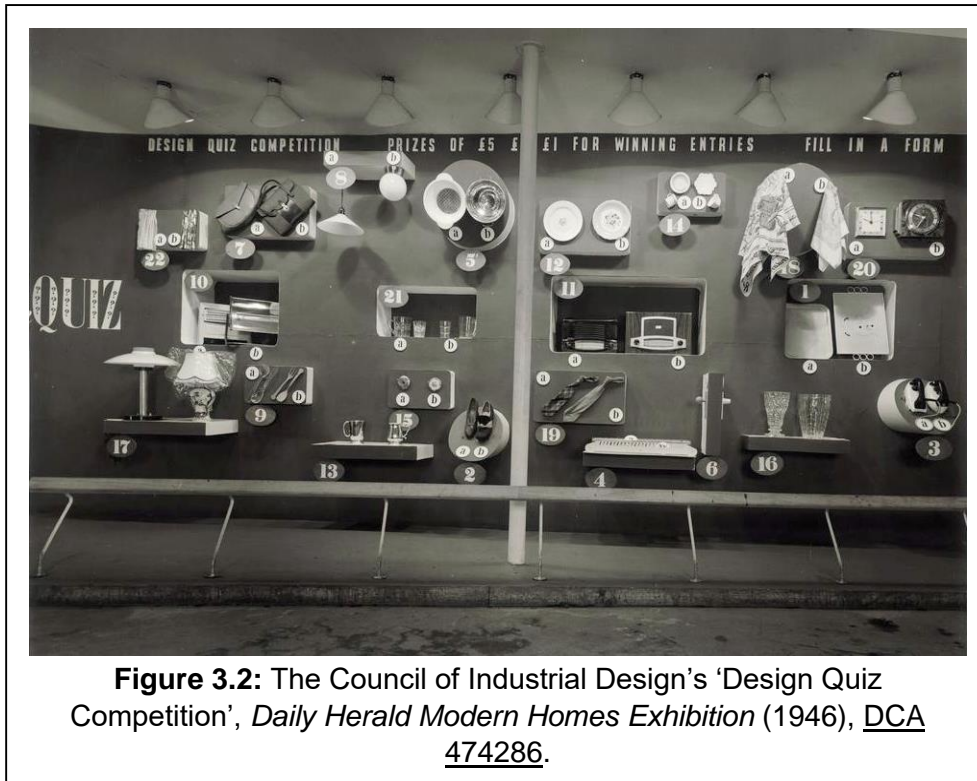


Figure 3.2: The Council of Industrial Design's 'Design Quiz Competition', *Daily Herald Modern Homes Exhibition* (1946), [DCA 474286](#).

Quizzes illustrate how planners' masculine identities shaped discourses about ideal homes and their inhabitants at postwar exhibitions. Laura King writes that exhibitions attempted to harness the popularity of magazine and newspaper quizzes in the 1940s, and that readers took a particular interest in what quizzes could reveal about family life.¹⁰¹ She highlights examples from the *Daily Mirror* such as 'Are You a Family Man?', 'Father's Quiz', and 'Am I a Good Husband?'¹⁰² In these examples, the quizzes claimed they could define your identity as a father or husband through a series of multiple-choice questions.¹⁰³ For King, quizzes demonstrate the role of the 1940s popular press in 'influencing, measuring and defining what people did, thought and felt'.¹⁰⁴ Exhibitions utilised newspaper techniques to encourage quiz participants to understand personal issues, tastes and experiences as something experts could objectively explain through the use of the right tools (in the case of newspapers, a series of multiple choice questions; in the case of exhibitions, a panel of experts). Exhibition quizzes gave planners a platform to reaffirm their status as masters of objective knowledge and, like the CoID, project the view to visitors that they alone knew best. Quizzes offered a familiar and welcome form of entertainment for exhibition visitors, which also functioned as a pedagogical method for

¹⁰¹ Laura King, 'Hidden Fathers? The Significance of Fatherhood in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain', *Contemporary British History* 26, no. 1 (March 2012): 36.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

organisers to impart their vision of how the public *should* understand planning and design. Leslie Whitworth describes *Design Quiz* as ‘an exemplar of heavy-handed didacticism’, which offered ‘firm guidance on the criteria against which products should be evaluated’ and therefore reinforced an aura of objectivity around expert knowledge.¹⁰⁵ Quizzes helped normalise the view that there existed a ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ way to design and plan; as will become apparent, experts would expand upon this approach and attempt to prescribe the ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ way for men to use and experience the home.

The walk-through

The walk-through method required visitors to traverse a series of connected properties, which showcased a linear direction of change and positioned their present-day domestic arrangements within broader historical and social contexts. Like quizzes, the walk-through emphasised an omniscient planning identity and strengthened the belief that planners had the power to identify the faults of the past and rectify these problems in future homes. In an instance of state and commercial crossover, the Ministry of Housing presented an example of this approach at the 1956 Ideal Home Exhibition.¹⁰⁶ The ministry used the exhibition as a platform to share with the public their campaign to convert old, neglected properties in need of repair. The walk-through’s first stop presented visitors with a typical example of ‘slum’ housing, stylishly reproduced by a creative team from Ealing Studios. Visitors then walked into an identically sized property that contained three new flats, each capable of housing an entire family.¹⁰⁷ Passage through the exhibition space, in which visitors literally moved through time, presented a particularly effective way to educate the public on planners’ linear vision of change and their ability to identify and remedy problems that had afflicted domestic lives in the past.¹⁰⁸ This pedagogical method reflects a key planning belief, detailed in the previous chapter’s

¹⁰⁵ Lesley Whitworth, ‘Anticipating Affluence: Skill, Judgement and the Problem of Aesthetic Tutelage’, in *An Affluent Society? Britain’s Post-War ‘Golden Age’ Revisited*, ed. Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, Modern Economics and Social History Series (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 172.

¹⁰⁶ Ryan, *The Ideal Home*, 110.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ The 1959 Ideal Home Exhibition presented a similar exhibit called New Rooms for Old: Transformation Scene, in which a new kitchen and living room dropped from the ceiling to replace the interiors of an old home, in British Pathé, ‘Earl’s Court – Furniture’s New Look’ (29 January 1959).

discussion of Tubb's *Living in Cities*, in which history followed a logical order and the postwar moment marked its rational culmination.¹⁰⁹

Control of visitors' movements also interested the planners involved in the Festival of Britain and Live Architecture. On the insistence of Isaac Hayward, leader of the LCC between 1947 and 1965, Live Architecture visitors received maps that piloted them through the exhibition material and told them how to understand the information presented.¹¹⁰ Rather than heavy-handed supervision, organisers hoped that visitors would experience this 'shown around the home' approach 'just as any of us might show our friends around, explaining the limitations we have had to contend with, as well as the things we have been able to do in spite of them'.¹¹¹ Black explained that exhibition designers had succeeded when the visitor imagined 'that he is following his own volition, when, in fact, he is moving round the exhibition in the pattern which the design team has pre-determined'.¹¹² Richard Hornsey claims that state policymakers looked to emulate exhibition organisers' ability to influence visitors and find other ways 'that family life might be rendered more open to expert supervision without requiring an intrusive invasion by impersonal agencies of the state'.¹¹³ Hornsey also analyses the efforts of BCMI organisers to direct exhibition visitors, as movement became an imperative of successful postwar planning, and how this reflected wider fears over men's use of urban spaces.¹¹⁴ Moments of 'unplanned movement' also worried exhibition organisers in the 1940s. Peter Larkham shares the experience of an architect at the RIBA's exhibition of Knutsford New Town (1946), who expressed distress as visitors could 'wander from one exhibit to another without any real direction or circulation and there did not appear to be any real sequence and climax'.¹¹⁵ The rational arrangement of information in the exhibition space and the walk-through method highlight the influences of planners' omniscient and technical-minded identities on postwar exhibitions.

¹⁰⁹ The front cover of *Living in Cities* presents a chronology that moves from the religious buildings of 'Long ago' to the rational vision of 'To-morrow?', discussed in chap. 2, 45-46.

¹¹⁰ Deborah Ryan, 'The Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition', *Paper Presented to the Institute of Historical Geographers* (London, May 1994), cited in Allen, 'Contested Understandings', 151.

¹¹¹ 'Homes and Gardens - Suggested Illustration' (1950), 9, [DCA 14B/5181](#).

¹¹² Black, 'Exhibition Design', 32.

¹¹³ Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect*, 32.

¹¹⁴ Richard Hornsey, 'The Queer (Spatial) Economies of The Lavender Hill Mob', *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 5, no. 1 (May 2008): 46. For instance, Hornsey identifies travel on the London Underground as an 'ambiguously unstable' moment in everyday life, in which the absence of purpose presented men with opportunities to deviate from the expectations of the rational metropole, in Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect*, 105.

¹¹⁵ Larkham and Lilley, 'Exhibiting the City', 652-53.

The anti-model

Exhibitions made it seem possible that experts, with the correct education and training, could objectively identify, explain and remedy material problems found in the home. The professionalisation of fields such as architecture in the 1930s helped solidify this view and strengthen the belief that experts could offer objective judgements. The anti-model presented an entertaining method for planners to express this foresight.¹¹⁶ A popular attraction at Live Architecture was 'Gremlin Grange', a replica mock-Tudor house described by historian S Martin Gaskell as 'an object lesson in how not to build'.¹¹⁷ The house exhibited the damage of substandard building work such as rising damp, leaning walls, peeling plaster and frozen pipes (figure 3.3). After viewing this 'house of horrors', visitors moved into Live Architecture's Building Research Pavilion that explained how building sciences could address the problems of poor stability, heating, lighting, noise, hygiene and durability.¹¹⁸

Like other pedagogical methods, 'Gremlin Grange' raised the esteem of experts and encouraged the public to place faith in their knowledge of the home. However, anti-models also exposed a number of concerns among exhibition organisers over the public's reception of planning ideas. At Live Architecture, organisers quickly became aware that some visitors misunderstood 'Gremlin Grange' as a *positive* example of postwar architecture. Cartoonist Arthur Horner expressed this concern in the *News Chronicle* on 4 May 1951, one day after Live Architecture opened to the public (figure 3.4).¹¹⁹ The cartoon depicts an exhibition organiser, dressed in a dark suit and black spectacles, surrounded by delighted visitors keen to ask questions about 'Gremlin Grange'. The organiser expresses his disbelief that 'people keep asking me for the name of the architect'.¹²⁰ Horner's cartoon exposes incongruities between the formulation of planning

¹¹⁶ This method built upon previous exhibitions such as the 1920 Ideal Home Exhibition's 'Chamber of Horrors', which educated visitors on how *not* to decorate or furnish the home, in Ryan, 'The Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition', 1995, 107–8.

¹¹⁷ S Martin Gaskell, *Model Housing from the Great Exhibition to the Festival of Britain* (London: Mansell, 1986), 125.

¹¹⁸ 'Architecture in Poplar', in *Festival of Britain, Catalogue of Exhibits* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951), 13, [NA WORK 25/230](#). These examples come from the seven zones constructed for *Live Architecture*; each zone identified a physical problem and presented a means to remedy this problem, in Hugh Casson, 'Report on Building Sciences Exhibition', *Festival of Britain 1951, Council for Architecture, Town Planning and Building Research* (13 July 1949), [NA WORK 25/28](#).

¹¹⁹ Arthur Horner, *News Chronicle* (4 May 1951), [BCA AH0033](#).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

ideas among middle class technocrats and the reception of these ideas among working class audiences.

Even among visitors who understood anti-models as something to avoid rather than replicate, this approach could offend visitors when the 'anti-model' seemed similar to, if not better than, their own homes. MO investigators at the Modern Homes Exhibition drew particular attention to the exhibition's 'Quiz Kitchen', which showed visitors how *not* to design their kitchen. MO reported, '[t]here is something of a back-handed insult in presenting as an example of all that is bad in kitchens something so much better than most of the visitors [sic] kitchens at home'.¹²¹ Visitors described the 'Quiz Kitchen' as a 'typical example of houses today' and an unnecessary feature of the exhibition, as 'all of us got badly planned kitchens'.¹²² Exhibits like 'Gremlin Grange' and the 'Quiz Kitchen' demonstrate planners' attempt to portray themselves as omniscient domestic experts. More tellingly, the exhibits expose communication difficulties between planners and the people for whom they planned, as visitors either misunderstood planning messages or took offence at planners' derision of their everyday, domestic realities.



Figure 3.3: 'Gremlin Grange' (3 May 1951), NA WORK 25/207.

¹²¹ Mass Observation, *Modern Homes Exhibition, An Advance Note on Relative Popularity of Exhibits, General Criticisms, and Public Reactions to the Lighting Exhibit and Quiz Kitchen* (28 March 1946), 6, MO SxMOA1/1/11/2/2 - File Report 2360.

¹²² *Ibid.*



Figure 3.4: 'People keep asking me for the name of the architect', cartoon from the *News Chronicle* (4 May 1951), [BCA AH0033](#).

Anti-models focused on a narrow list of material components that, when corrected, would produce ideal houses. This failed to take into account financial, social and psychological factors that also created a person's sense of home.¹²³ The rational and technocratic outlook of planning knowledge could not tabulate some people's preference for houses with subsidence and damp, on a street rich in community spirit, above well-planned houses in satellite towns far removed from their family and friends. Jane Jacobs, in her study of urban planning in the US in the 1950s, wrote the reasons 'why slum dwellers should stay in a slum by choice, after it is no longer economically necessary, has to do with the most personal content of their lives, in realms which planners and city designers can never directly reach and manipulate – nor should want to manipulate'.¹²⁴

In postwar Britain, the local press documented public meetings in which working class men and women vented their disapproval of redevelopment plans.¹²⁵ Alfred Egan, a 67-year-old Poplar resident, shared this view at a

¹²³ I discuss the distinction between 'houses' and 'homes' in chap.2, 58.

¹²⁴ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 279.

¹²⁵ Peter Shapely and Selina Todd also highlight the public's willingness to contribute to planning debates when the opportunities existed, Peter Shapely, 'Civic Pride and Redevelopment in the Post-War British City', *Urban History* 39, no. 2 (May 2012): 315-316; Todd, 'Phoenix Rising', 687.

1952 public meeting on the LCC's proposed Development Plan for the area,

Years ago, working men's houses were built to be let at a low rent which he could afford to pay and they had a small back yard. These houses are now apparently slums. But the rent was low and it suited the working man alright.¹²⁶

Alfred may represent little more than a vocal minority, yet his criticisms reveal a more complicated picture of how inhabitants understood their physical environments and counter planners' view that slums, or homes like 'Gremlin Grange', exemplified intrinsically negative locations. Alfred's focus on the 'working man' also highlights some of the problems men faced when they moved into new housing. Two thirds of families that moved to Lansbury paid at least twice as much rent than in their old homes, which could limit men's disposable income and impinge upon traditional masculine customs such as gambling and drinking in the local pub.¹²⁷ Although working class critiques of experts' plans appeared in sources like the local press, the genuine voices of working class inhabitants remained overwhelmingly absent from exhibitions. Planners' self-confident masculine identities meant that they made minimal effort to consult with future inhabitants ahead of the display of plans. I return to the omission of inhabitants' voices in the final section of this chapter, where I more fully assess the exchange of masculine knowledge at exhibitions.

The model masculine lifestyle

The quiz, walk-through and anti-model helped establish the groundwork for the most explicit pedagogical method found in housing exhibitions: the presentation of model masculine lifestyles, in which fictional characters illustrated how men *should* use the home. This method used text, images and staged rooms to present ideal forms of domestic masculinities that, planners hoped, would influence the actions and behaviours of male exhibition visitors. While planning Live Architecture, Frederick Gibberd highlighted the long queues at Ideal Home Exhibitions for the 'actual houses', rather than plans or blueprints, and encouraged organisers to

¹²⁶ 'Poplar Man Speaks for House-Owner Residents', *East London Advertiser* (12 December 1952), [THA 700.2](#).

¹²⁷ John Westergaard and Ruth Glass note that, on moving to Lansbury, 'all families faced increased rents and costs' such as appliance hire and the purchase of new furniture, in Westergaard and Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', 42, 43.

include as many believable, real-life examples as possible.¹²⁸ In MO's report on BCMI, 24 per cent of respondents described the furnished rooms, 24 architect-designed rooms with fictional inhabitants, as 'the thing that interested them most', twice as many people as the second most popular section on women's dresses, and spent the longest time in this part of the exhibition.¹²⁹

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, model masculine lifestyles do not present a window into men's lived experiences in the postwar home.¹³⁰ Their historical value instead comes from what they tell us about planners and their ideal vision for the working and middle class home and its male occupants. Alison Ravetz argues that exhibitions' use of model rooms brings to light differences between houses and homes, as the show house 'fools no one that it is a real home, however artfully a copy of the local paper is arranged on the coffee table' as believable homes require more than the expert arrangement of objects.¹³¹ Ravetz's critique of model rooms' authenticity fails to accurately understand the complex pedagogy that lay behind what planners' hoped to achieve. Planners did not imagine that visitors would experience model rooms as extractions of real homes; instead, the space and its fictional inhabitants conveyed prescriptive values that, to varying degrees, visitors could work towards in their own homes.

Poet Laureate and architectural commentator John Betjeman scripted a collection of masculine characters to populate BCMI's furnished rooms. Throughout his career, Betjeman distanced himself from what he considered the institutional biases of planners and considered himself the 'voice of the people'.¹³² His invitation to script BCMI's model lifestyles therefore illustrates an attempt among BCMI organisers to make their furnished rooms appear as realistic as possible.¹³³ Betjeman's description of how men would use and experience the furnished rooms provides an insight into the types of domestic masculinities organisers wished to promote at housing exhibitions. In one example, architect David Booth,

¹²⁸ Fredrick Gibberd, *A Proposal for the Exhibition on Architecture, Town Planning and Building Science* (19 July 1948), 1, *NA WORK 25/28*.

¹²⁹ A Report on "Britain Can Make It", 33, *MO SxMOA1/2/26/1/A*.

¹³⁰ Edley and Wetherell, *Men in Perspective*, 211; Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 198; Roper, 'Slipping Out of View', 67.

¹³¹ Alison Ravetz, *The Place of Home: English Domestic Environments, 1914-2000* (London: E & FN Spon, 1995), 14, 99.

¹³² Mark Tewdwr-Jones, "'Oh, the Planners Did Their Best": The Planning Films of John Betjeman', *Planning Perspectives* 20, no. 4 (January 2005): 390, 407.

¹³³ It also reflects an increased public scepticism towards planners in the mid-1940s, discussed in chap. 2, 81.

who later helped plan Lansbury, designed a suburban dining room with an oak sideboard, glass fronted shelves and chairs upholstered in red.¹³⁴ Betjeman's supporting panel describes the middle class inhabitant as a 'young curate, who is a keen naturalist and a great reader' with 'not much money', and explains how the curate 'jumped at the idea' to construct 'a really good window-box' for the room's large window, in a similar style to boxes he saw on a recent hiking trip in Denmark.¹³⁵ His wife 'was delighted to see him so enthusiastic' about the idea, as the DIY project would make good use of the space.¹³⁶ The panel adds that the curate has 'three children, who do their homework in the dining room'.¹³⁷ Booth's suburban dining room encouraged families to use rooms for multiple purposes and, with more family members in the same room, increased the likelihood of everyday interactions between fathers and children.

Between the 1940s and 1960s, experts focused less on the physical dimensions of rooms and more on the activities of family members within these spaces.¹³⁸ The promotion of domestic space as a location for fathers and children to spend time together in the same room, though not necessarily involved in the same activity, also appears in Frank Austin and Neville Ward's model living room for a middle class family from the 1949 Ideal Home Exhibition. An image from the exhibition shows how the living room brought families together and provided men with a space to perform an active form of fatherhood (figure 3.5). In the background, the mother arranges flowers at the dining table; in the foreground, the father and daughter sit together in the living room.¹³⁹ The father and daughter are not engaged in the same activity – one reads a newspaper, while the other reads a book - but the father's attention remains focused on his daughter.

¹³⁴ Council of Industrial Design, 'Britain Can Make It Exhibition – Rooms Made to Fit', *Notes for the Press on the Furnished Rooms* (September 1946), 6, [MO SxMOA1/2/26](#).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Council of Industrial Design, *Furnishings to Fit the Family*, illustrated by Nicolas Bentley, Hugh Casson and Hilton Wright. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947), 18, [DCA 32/2/1/38](#).

¹³⁷ Council of Industrial Design, 'Britain Can Make It Exhibition', 6, [MO SxMOA1/2/26](#).

¹³⁸ A focus on domestic activities is particularly evident in Parker Morris Committee, *Homes for Today & Tomorrow (Department of the Environment)* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961). For further discussion, see Ali Madanipour, *Public and Private Spaces of the City* (London: Routledge, 2003), 92.

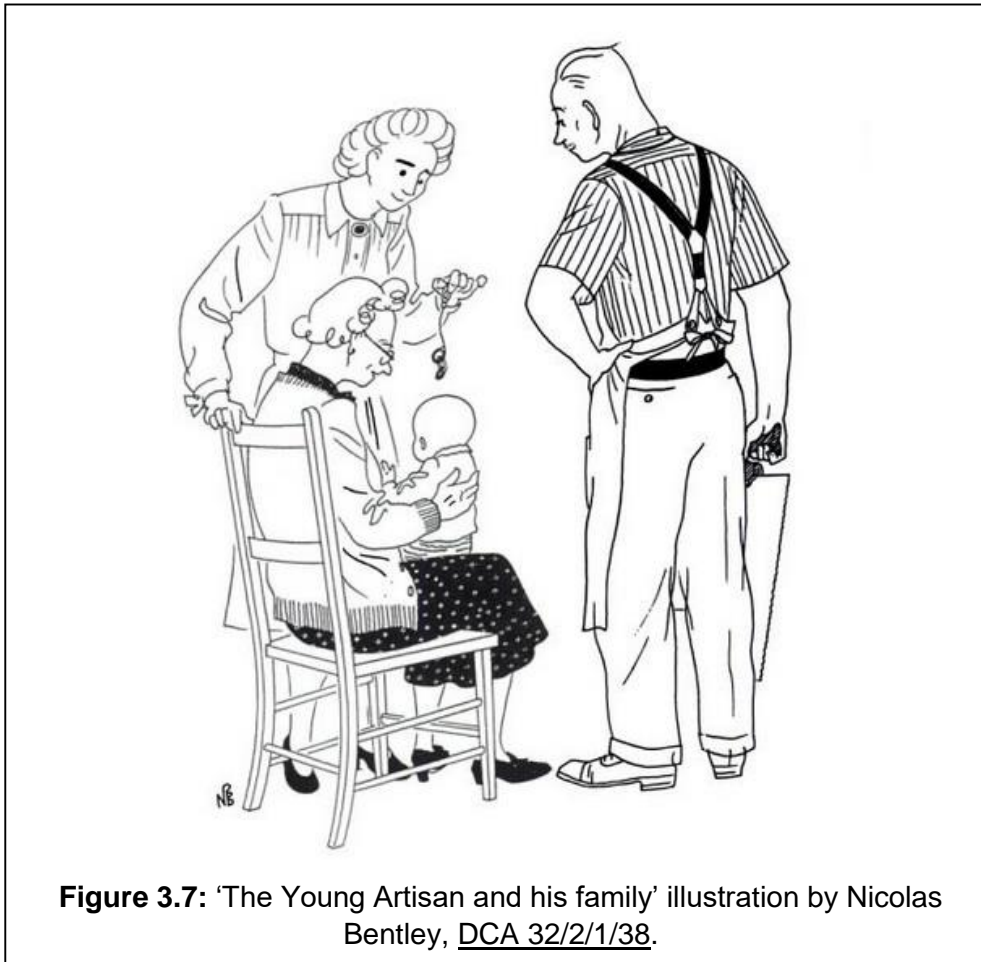
¹³⁹ The actors chosen to represent the parents appear significantly older than the 1949 norm. However, other photographs of the model room depict an older teenage daughter and show the family together in their living room in the evening.



Figure 3.5: 'The living room in a family house looking through into the dining room' by Frank Austin and Neville Ward, Ideal Home Exhibition (1949), [DCA 350/11](#).



Figure 3.6: 'Design for the living room in a small house on a new estate' by Elizabeth Denby (1946), [DCA 0829](#).



In a further example from BCMI, architect Elizabeth Denby designed the living room of 'a young artisan' who lived in a small semi-detached house on a new estate (figure 3.6). Although the description of the household head as a 'young artisan' would suggest a family of lower class status than the 'young curate', the BCMI exhibit underplays any class differences and instead emphasises commonalities in how the two men used their well-planned homes. Betjeman's panel notes that the male inhabitant 'enjoys a bit of carpentry and motor-cycling' and lived with his wife, a former school teacher, mother-in-law and young baby, brought to life in an illustration by Nicolas Bentley (figure 3.7).¹⁴⁰ Around half of the young couples surveyed in Peter Willmott and Michael Young's mid-1950s study of Bethnal Green, East London lived with in-laws.¹⁴¹ BCMI's inclusion of a non-nuclear family therefore made it easier for visitors to relate to the imagined inhabitants. Like the curate, the artisan used his carpentry skills to build shelves and cupboards that improved upon the room's original design and ensured that

¹⁴⁰ Council of Industrial Design, 'Britain Can Make It Exhibition', 6-7, MO SxMOA1/2/26.

¹⁴¹ Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), 31, cited in Claire Langhamer, 'Adultery in Post-War England', *History Workshop Journal* 62, no. 1 (1 January 2006): 93.

the space best suited his family's needs.¹⁴² The artisan's alterations meant 'there is room for toys and books and magazines and other things' in 'the cupboard that lines one side of the room'.¹⁴³ Planners again promoted the living room as a space where the activities of fathers and children should overlap, with the storage of the artisan's possessions alongside his children's toys likely to create incidental interactions. Betjeman's panel adds that the artisan's living room 'looks on to the garden'. Studies found that people wanted homes with gardens and planners understood gardens as private locations for men to play with children and perform new hobbies.¹⁴⁴ The artisan's interest in carpentry, access to his own garden and interest in his young baby signified a family-orientated masculine identity that planners wished to encourage among BCMI visitors.

BCMI's furnished rooms present an ambiguous distinction between working class and middle class masculinities. In the case of the 'young curate', his passion for reading, nature, Scandinavian design and DIY suggests a middle class lifestyle but the panel also describes him as a man 'with not much money'.¹⁴⁵ The residence of the 'young artisan' in a semi-detached house may also seem middle class, yet his relocation to a house on a new estate with his wife, child and mother-in-law would become increasingly common among working class families.¹⁴⁶ Grace Lees-Maffei's account of 1950s domestic advice literature explains that authors wrote for aspirational working class readers as 'established members of the middle class have no need for advice literature' and instead gather 'social knowledge through experiential, familial channels'.¹⁴⁷ MO reported 'working class artisanal' as the most common type of BCMI visitor, it therefore seems likely exhibition organisers scripted model lifestyles for a working class audience, who understood the aspirational material as open to men from all class backgrounds.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Council of Industrial Design, 'Britain Can Make It Exhibition', 9, [MO SxMOA1/2/26](#).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁴ Millicent Pleydell-Bouverie conducted a survey of 4.5 million women for the *Daily Mail* between 1941 and 1944 and reported that 99 per cent of her interviewees wanted a private garden in Millicent Pleydell-Bouverie, *Daily Mail Book of Post-War Homes* (London: Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition Department, 1944).

¹⁴⁵ Council of Industrial Design, 'Britain Can Make It Exhibition', 6, [MO SxMOA1/2/26](#).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 6-7. For example, 900,000 local authority houses were built between 1945 and 1951, almost two thirds of the total amount built in the previous thirty years, figures from J Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970*. (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1978), 249, 286.

¹⁴⁷ Grace Lees-Maffei, 'Dressing the Part(y): 1950s Domestic Advice Books and the Studied Performance of Informal Domesticity in the UK and the US', in *Performance, Fashion and the Modern Interior: From the Victorians to Today*, ed. Fiona Fisher et al. (Oxford: Berg, 2011), 193.

¹⁴⁸ Woodham, 'Design and Everyday Life', 468.

Working class visitors encountered model domestic lifestyles at BCMI that made it clear that class should not determine one's access to a good home or men's ability to perform a family-orientated role. My assessment supports Carolyn Steedman's view that the politics of postwar Labour governments fed a sense of entitlement among the working classes and fostered a belief that everyone should have an opportunity to prosper in their domestic lives, regardless of their class background.¹⁴⁹ Stephen Brooke re-examines Steedman's assessment and argues that the postwar period witnessed a reformation of working class identities, which changed 'within the context of class, not outside it'.¹⁵⁰ The pedagogical methods used at housing exhibitions expressed a similar transformation of masculine aspirations: planners wished to encourage new working class, masculine values orientated around family and the home, without destabilising pre-existing categories of class and gender.¹⁵¹ Furnished rooms did not instruct working class men to replicate middle class lifestyles, as this risked the collapse of class categories at a time of postwar social instability. Instead, exhibitions encouraged men to appropriate some customs for their own domestic contexts and slowly create family-orientated homes more representative of the modern nation envisaged by planners.

Model masculine lifestyles also feature in planning publications such as the LCC's *The Youngest County* (1951).¹⁵² The LCC used the publication to share its achievements since 1945 and highlighted the experiences of the fictional London family, the Citizens. The family had recently moved into a new flat on the aptly-named Everyman Street. The publication describes a typical Saturday afternoon: 'Mrs Citizen is in the kitchen of their four-roomed flat, making toast on the grill of the neat looking cooker in its tiled recess', preparing tea 'for her husband, two sons and two daughters who will soon be home from their Saturday afternoon shopping or football match'. Mrs Citizen prepares a bath for her son, before doing a 'quick tidy-up in the living-room where they will be spending their evening listening to the radio'. Mrs Citizen concludes, '[a]ll this is so very different from the

¹⁴⁹ Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*.

¹⁵⁰ Stephen Brooke, 'Revisiting Southam Street: Class, Generation, Gender, and Race in the Photography of Roger Mayne', *Journal of British Studies* 53, no. 2 (April 2014): 457.

¹⁵¹ This claim builds upon Jack Saunders' study of social organisation and workplace culture in British factories in the 1950s and 1960s, in which he argues that working class people 'formed new values and solidarities', in Jack Saunders, 'The Untraditional Worker: Class Re-Formation in Britain 1945-65', *Twentieth Century British History* 26, no. 2 (1 June 2015): 227.

¹⁵² London County Council, *The Youngest County: A Description of London as a County and Its Public Services* (London: London County Council, 1951), 165–66. The following quotes come from the same source.

three attic rooms where the six of them had been crammed together until the month before'. The publication primarily functioned as a congratulatory form of self-promotion for the LCC. However, a more detailed reading of the Citizen family raises a number of key points about how planners imagined men's role in the postwar home. Although the feature focusses on Mrs Citizen, her actions revolve around the performance of domestic chores for her husband and children. For Mr Citizen, domestic space functions as a site to refuel and relax.¹⁵³ *The Youngest County* tellingly notes that the father plans to spend his Saturday night at home with other members of the family – a practice that fits with other prescriptive accounts of men at home during this period.¹⁵⁴ The feature makes no mention of friends, neighbours or extended family and therefore strengthens a definition of the postwar family as a discrete unit detached from external networks. However, above all, the LCC demonstrates how the domestic life of the Citizen family 'is so very different' because of the opportunities the family found in their new home. The publication frames material changes – such as four bedrooms, a cooker in a tiled recess and a bath – as an enabling force that brought positive changes to the Citizens' everyday domestic life.

These four pedagogical methods highlight tools planners used to share their ideal vision of domestic space and masculinities at housing exhibitions in postwar Britain. Experts' efforts went beyond the stated remit of the CoID, to improve the public's taste in design, and instead used exhibitions as platforms to disseminate didactic information on family life, hobbies and the domestic roles of men and women.¹⁵⁵ Quizzes, walk-throughs and anti-models provided a means for planners to disseminate their rational and technically-minded approaches to the home, and normalised a paternalist culture of knowledge in which experts could provide objective guidance on how inhabitants *should* use and experience the home. This groundwork

¹⁵³ The 1944 *Housing Manual* paints a similar account of inhabitants' gendered experiences of the home: the manual includes a timetable that advises housewives on when to serve meals to her husband and children but fails to take account of when she found time in the day to eat, in 'Housing Manual' (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1944). Planner Lawrence Wolfe critiqued the mechanistic account of the housewife, found in publications such as *Design of Dwellings*, and accused the authors of 'treating the unfortunate housewife as a mere machine, leaving her requirement as a human being out of account', cited in JM Mackintosh, *Housing and Family Life* (London: Cassell and Company, 1952), 155–56.

¹⁵⁴ For example, planners designed many new estates with an inadequate provision of external leisure spaces, such as pubs, which had the effect of making men spend more evenings at home, noted in Peter Willmott and Michael Young, *Family and Class in a London Suburb* (London: New English Library, 1976), 85; Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 194.

¹⁵⁵ The Council of Industrial Design, *First Annual Report*, 20.

provided a fertile environment for planners to then forward model masculine lifestyles, which demonstrate planners' promotion of the home as a site for masculine leisure and hobbies, a space to interact with children, and a private refuge. In the examples discussed, men's class backgrounds did not disqualify their ability to appropriate elements from model lifestyles into their domestic lives; nor did the lifestyles presented pose a threat to pre-existing class categories. However, as the example of 'Gremlin Grange' shows, the use of inventive methods to disseminate planning ideas did not always transpire as imagined as intellectual gaps between middle class planning knowledge and the lived realities of working class inhabitants could prove problematic. I will return to this tension in the concluding section of this chapter, in which I examine communication difficulties between planners and inhabitants.

Representations of domestic masculinities on the Lansbury Estate

I now turn attention to examine representations of masculinities and domestic space on the Lansbury Estate and what this reveals about expert knowledge and the challenges planners faced. Three themes emerge from my analysis of Lansbury that together paint a complex and multi-layered picture of how planners envisaged the domestic experiences of men in postwar Britain. Firstly, planners foregrounded men's use of domestic appliances and objects, such as televisions and armchairs, to frame the ideal home as a site of masculine leisure. This projection differed from the interwar period as planners presented domestic leisure as an ideal open to both middle and working class families.¹⁵⁶ Secondly, these changes required a demarcation of private and public spaces to remedy the blurred spatial boundaries of badly-planned housing and empower men to perform family-orientated identities without the risk of others seeing. Finally, planners presented Lansbury as a community that learnt from the past but looked forward to the future. The Festival of Britain catalogue explains that planners worked to maintain some 'traditions of the district' and built houses with 'buff stock bricks and grey slates, so characteristic of the London scene'.¹⁵⁷ Yet, at the same time, planners wanted London to

¹⁵⁶ As I will discuss, model dwellings on the working class Lansbury Estate included televisions and easy chairs designed specifically to facilitate masculine relaxation.

¹⁵⁷ Festival of Britain, *Catalogue of Exhibits* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951), 13, [NA WORK 25/230](#).

escape its Victorian past and provide environments that gave citizens freedom to follow new ways of living. As Chris Waters explains, this period generated a 'desire for the promises of the "new Jerusalem" offered by postwar planners and new capacities for nostalgically remembering a vanishing world'.¹⁵⁸ The cross-over between past, present and future found on new housing estates, such as Lansbury, mirrored how men constructed their roles as fathers and husbands, discussed in detail in the subsequent chapter.

Masculine leisure

Planners used Lansbury's 'live community' setting to share their vision for how families *should* interact within the home. In an attempt to unsettle traditional design conventions, terraced houses on the estate's north and central sites located the kitchen at the 'front' of the property, a planning decision described as 'mildly innovative' in a 2001 article about the Lansbury Estate in the *Architects' Journal*.¹⁵⁹ Planners hoped this would enable women to watch their children play, feel a greater connection to community life outside and bring the housewife 'back where she belongs – into the social life of the house – without interrupting her work in the kitchen'.¹⁶⁰ The London Cooperative Society, who designed a model flat on the estate, explained, 'as a great deal of the time of the housewife will be spent in this room', it required a 'cheery and gay' colour scheme and wanted to 'make the kitchen a room that is far removed from the drab routine "workroom" of so many houses'.¹⁶¹ The design of Lansbury's kitchens promoted women's visibility in the postwar home, yet maintained her primary role as housewife.¹⁶² Further analysis shows how kitchen design and its location within the home also impacted men's domestic roles. For instance, planning publications, such as *Design of Dwellings*, promoted the dining-kitchen as a space for men, women and children to engage in family activities beyond cooking and eating, such as homework

¹⁵⁸ Chris Waters, 'Representations of Everyday Life: L. S. Lowry and the Landscape of Memory in Postwar Britain', *Representations* 65, no. Special Issue: New Perspectives in British Studies (Winter 1999): 121.

¹⁵⁹ 'Live Architecture Exhibition – Development of Lansbury Neighbourhood Poplar', *The Architect and Building News* (9 June 1950), 11, cited in 'Best Intentions', *Architects' Journal* (6 September 2001).

¹⁶⁰ Council of Industrial Design, 'Homes and Gardens - Suggested Illustration' (1950), 8, [DCA 14B/5181](#).

¹⁶¹ London Cooperative Society, *The 1951 Furnished Flat Lansbury Estate Poplar* (London: Festival of Britain Architecture Department, 1951).

¹⁶² Matrix and Marion Roberts identify the increased integration of women in domestic space as one of the key features of postwar planning, in Matrix, *Making Space: Women and the Man-Made Environment* (London: Pluto Press, 1984); Marion Roberts, *Living in a Man-Made World: Gender Assumptions in Modern Housing Design* (London: Routledge, 1991).

and hobbies.¹⁶³ Lansbury adopted this recommendation in its plans and promoted housing designs that brought men, women and children closer together in the home.

The noises of family life, neighbours and the outside world vexed a large number of people in the late 1940s. According to a 1948 survey, one fifth of residents in brick houses lost sleep due to noise.¹⁶⁴ This figure rose to one third among those in flats and one half for residents in steel-framed houses.¹⁶⁵ Commentators understood noise as particularly troublesome for men, as it impeded their ability to relax in the home after a day's work. In 1948, Rose Buckner, a journalist for *The People* magazine, wrote a letter on behalf of the nation's women to the Minister for Health, Aneurin Bevan. In the letter, Buckner described the ideal home as 'a place where father can find a haven of peace away from the noise of children; a place where children can find a little corner of quietness for their studies – a house, in fact, where there is a place for everyone and everything!'¹⁶⁶ However, as men increasingly spent more time at home and planners encouraged the use of rooms for multiple activities, the idyll of domestic tranquillity grew harder to achieve.¹⁶⁷ Buckner's letter argues, 'instead of a showpiece sitting room we want a "Dad's Den" – a sound-proof room he can use for well-earned comfort away from the noise of children'.¹⁶⁸ Buckner wanted men to remain part of children's domestic lives but give them private space within the home to use as and when required.

Competition between individual and collective activities in the home continued into the 1960s and features prominently in *Homes for Today and Tomorrow*. The government report found that family members 'live their own lives for an increasing part of the time they spend at home' and recommends housing designs that best provide families with space to enjoy individual activities alongside other family members.¹⁶⁹ Margaret Willis also reported that in a typical semi-detached, three-bedroomed house on an estate with a garden, occupants 'aspire to privacy, but from neighbours, not

¹⁶³ See room plans in Central Housing Advisory Committee, *Design of Dwellings*, 38.

¹⁶⁴ Figures from Ravetz, *The Place of Home*, 121–22.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Rose Buckner, 'Give Us Houses That Really Work', *The People*, February 1948.

¹⁶⁷ Working class men worked an average of 53 hours per week in 1900, this dropped to 42 hours per week in 1962. Men also enjoyed more paid holidays and spent more leisure time at home as external leisure spaces - such as the pub, dance hall and cinema - became costlier (in real terms) and further away from where they lived, figures from *Housing in Britain. A Town and Country Planning Association Survey* (London: The Association, 1964), 43.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Parker Morris Committee, *Homes for Today & Tomorrow*, 4.

from each member of the family'.¹⁷⁰ And in these homes, although children most likely had small bedrooms of their own, 'their play area will be the main living room in the house, the room where their parents will watch television, read newspapers and relax'.¹⁷¹

Live Architecture's Building Research Pavilion also highlighted this problem and showed visitors how proper planning could combat the issue of noise. The exhibit invited visitors to 'listen to a recording of noises such as radios, babies' cries, and suburban orgies [boisterous parties], as they sound when transmitted through different types of wall'.¹⁷² Information panels emphasised Britain's prominent role in the science of sound insulation and promised that future houses, with walls built in the correct materials, could reduce, if not eliminate, unwanted domestic noises.¹⁷³ Planners optimistically expressed their technological and scientific prowess with easy-to-understand resolutions to planning mistakes made in the past. For example, some inhabitants in terraced houses bemoaned planners' decision to build houses with living rooms positioned adjacent to each other.¹⁷⁴ *Design of Dwellings* notes an easy fix, in which cavity walls and the 'placing of halls and staircases between the living-rooms in adjoining houses will prevent noise being carried from one house to the next'.¹⁷⁵ Planners' promotion of the home as a site of masculine leisure did not fit with open plan designs, and therefore helps explain the lukewarm reception of open plan living in postwar Britain. In 1961, *Homes for Today and Tomorrow* reported that open plan living 'has been disliked so far in local authority housing' as it 'provides little privacy from view, from noise, or from distraction'.¹⁷⁶ Live Architecture's exhibition of sounds and wall types demonstrates planners' confidence that science and sensible planning could create homes that brought families together, but continued to offer men space to relax in silence.

Television

¹⁷⁰ Margaret Willis cited in Robert Millar, *The New Classes* (London: Longmans, 1966), 193–94.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 195.

¹⁷² Noted in 'Best Intentions'.

¹⁷³ 'Notes on the Possible Future Trends in Sound Insulation, Heating and Lighting in Relation to the Home' (1949), 1, [DA 14B/5181](#).

¹⁷⁴ Mark Clapson writes that studies of working class tenants conducted in the 1940s noted a 'preference for semi-detached houses vis-a-vis terraced houses', in Mark Clapson, 'The Suburban Aspiration in England Since 1919', *Contemporary British History* 14, no. 1 (March 2000): 157. Ali Madanipour also writes that '[b]y the mid-twentieth century, the terraced house had lost its appeal' due to inhabitants' concerns over the lack of privacy and noise, in Madanipour, *Public and Private Spaces of the City*, 85.

¹⁷⁵ Central Housing Advisory Committee, *Design of Dwellings*, 19.

¹⁷⁶ Parker Morris Committee, *Homes for Today & Tomorrow*, 9.

The exhibition of televisions at Live Architecture and the Festival of Britain brought this tension between men's individual and collective leisure activities to the fore. Public opinion towards the future role of television in family life remained mixed in the early 1950s: Willmott and Young's 1953 study of working class Bethnal Green found that 21 in 100 households owned or hired a television, with less than 1.5 million homes nationwide able to access a television in 1952.¹⁷⁷ Ian Cox, who devised the overall theme of the South Bank exhibition, attempted to answer any concerns in his visitor guide. He highlighted the need for 'special methods of restricting the spread of light or sound, so that people in the home who would rather not be entertained just at the moment can get on with what they are doing without being distracted'.¹⁷⁸ Model living rooms from the Festival of Britain's travelling exhibition also shared advice on where to position televisions to minimise their sensory impact on other family members.¹⁷⁹ The exhibit's captions explained, 'the table model may be placed to avoid interference with those who want to do something else' and 'with a corner set, more viewers may be comfortably seated without upsetting the rest of the room'.¹⁸⁰ Organisers knew that 'television is not yet everybody's choice' and therefore devised ways to arrange the home that promoted the latest domestic appliances but also allowed traditional customs to continue.¹⁸¹

Efforts to assuage the public's concerns did not satisfy everyone: one LCC councillor disapproved so strongly of the inclusion of television sets in model council dwellings on the Lansbury Estate that he raised the issue at a 1951 council meeting.¹⁸² The exhibition of televisions in Lansbury, and throughout the Festival of Britain, indicates tensions between individual and collective activities in the home that planners hoped to remedy. Laura King highlights that in mid-twentieth century Britain 'an increasing number of leisure activities centred on the family, from evenings spent watching

¹⁷⁷ Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 117. 1.45 million combined sound and television licenses were issued in 1952, noted in Tise Vahimagi, 'TV in the 1950s', *BFI Screen Online*, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1321302/>, accessed 7 November 2013.

¹⁷⁸ Ian Cox, *The South Bank Exhibition, A Guide to the Story It Tells* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951), 72.

¹⁷⁹ The exhibition visited Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Nottingham and included a section on People at Home that presented, according to the *Manchester Guardian* journalist Norman Shrapnel, a 'vision of the English as they might - not in all cases willingly - become', in Norman Shrapnel, 'Britain As It Might Be', *The Manchester Guardian* (4 May 1951).

¹⁸⁰ Photograph of 'Television', part of the home exhibit Land Travel version (11 May 1951), [NA WORK 25/207](#).

¹⁸¹ This statement comes from London Cooperative Society, *The 1951 Furnished Flat*.

¹⁸² London County Council, *Council and Committee Minutes and Papers in the Greater London Record Office* (1951), 251.

television to days out in the family car'.¹⁸³ Ferdynand Zweig blamed 'slummy conditions' for 'a certain segregation of the sexes in their leisure-time activities' and suggested that better environments would change gendered experiences of leisure.¹⁸⁴ Both accounts accurately present a vision of masculine leisure very much entwined with family life. However, when one examines the promotion of leisure activities at exhibitions in more detail, it becomes less clear whether planners wished to promote activities that involved the participation of all family members at the same time.

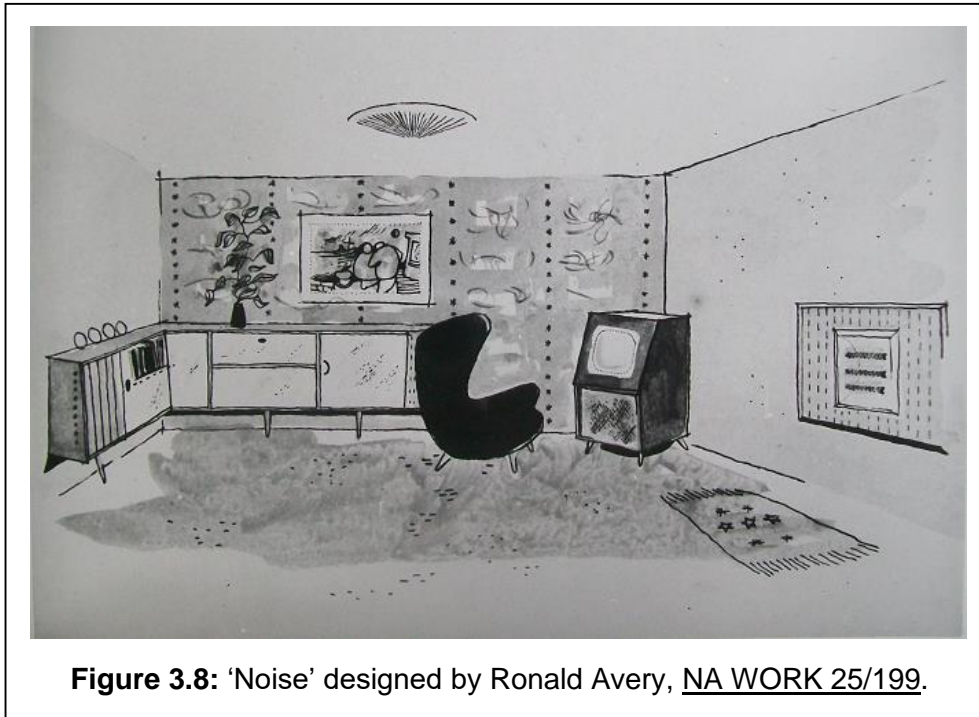


Figure 3.8: 'Noise' designed by Ronald Avery, NA WORK 25/199.

For example, Richard Avery designed a model room for Live Architecture's Building Research Pavilion that shows a single armchair positioned in front of a television (figure 3.8).¹⁸⁵ The absence of other chairs and proximity between viewer and screen suggests an activity best enjoyed on your own. Other Lansbury examples show the male head of the household located among other family members, most often in the living room, yet engaged in an individual, leisure activity.¹⁸⁶ Planners' promised that science could solve the problem of excess noise or the proper arrangement of rooms could limit the glare of a television screen, as their ideal home involved the simultaneous performance of different activities in one space. Lansbury did

¹⁸³ King, 'Hidden Fathers?', 36.

¹⁸⁴ Ferdynand Zweig, *The British Worker* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1952), 67.

¹⁸⁵ Photographs of Building Research sections of Live Architecture (1950), NA WORK 25/199.

¹⁸⁶ For example, Jacqueline Tyrwhitt's exhibit 'The Needs of the People' described the typical activity of a 40-year-old, factory foreman living on the Lansbury Estate as 'sitting back in a living-room with feet up' with the 'rest of [the] family about but not in the way', in Miss J Tyrwhitt, 'Festival of Britain 1951', *Script for Town Planning Exhibition* (March 1950), 6, NA WORK 25/28.

not necessarily promote a future where men spent their increased leisure time engaged in domestic activities *together* as a family; instead, science, technology and planning would create homes that satisfied men's desire for *privacy* within the communal family home.¹⁸⁷ This expression of masculine leisure reflected wider trends that associated individualism and planners' vision for postwar social order. As discussed in the previous chapter, neither the public nor planners wished to continue the collective spirit of the Second World War into times of peace.¹⁸⁸ Housing therefore had to offer male inhabitants environments to cultivate their individuality within broader networks of family and community.¹⁸⁹

Armchairs

Planners opened Lansbury's 14 Grundy Street and 2 Overstone House to the public during Live Architecture's run.¹⁹⁰ The CoID and LCS collaborated to design several model rooms in the shows houses, in a pedagogical style similar to BCMI, and visitors received an inventory of items displayed (should they wish to recreate the model lifestyles in their own homes).¹⁹¹ Each room included an information panel with photographs of actors engaged in everyday activities in the space and clearly showed visitors how inhabitants *should* use the rooms. In one example, arranged by George Brown, a furnished living room on the Lansbury Estate included a fireplace, television set, ashtray, tea cosy, fresh flowers and male model sat in a chair reading a book.¹⁹² The selection and description of objects in these model houses helps establish how planners understood Lansbury's working class occupants and the domestic activities they *should* perform. Designer Grace Lovat Fraser selected chairs for the model living room and,

¹⁸⁷ The popularisation of television presented men with a new leisure activity that would, over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, become central to how families spent their time together at home. By 1966, eight out of ten households had a television set - a monumental change in people's domestic leisure habits that planners could not foresee in the early postwar years, WV Hole and JJ Attenburrow, 'Houses and People: A Review of User Studies at the Building Research Station (Ministry of Technology)' (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), 60.

¹⁸⁸ See chap. 2, 64-65.

¹⁸⁹ Brooke, in agreement with Mort, Waters and Conekin, explains that among the working classes, a changed sense of self remained tied to some prewar notions around class and family and thus the overall influence on social change was 'partial, tentative, and uneven' in Stephen Brooke, *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 119.

¹⁹⁰ 'The Lansbury Estate, Poplar, Part 1: Meeting "the Needs of the People"', *Municipal Dreams* (13 August 2013), <https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2013/08/13/the-lansbury-estate-poplar-part-1/>, accessed 29 July 2015.

¹⁹¹ London Cooperative Society, *The 1951 Furnished Flat*. Also see Jonathan Woodham, 'Managing British Design Reform I: Fresh Perspectives on the Early Years of the Council of Industrial Design', *Journal of Design History* 9, no. 1 (1996): 61.

¹⁹² 'A Living-room in the Show-House Furnished by George Brown', *1951 Exhibition of Architecture Lansbury, Poplar* (23 May 1951), [NA WORK 25/209](#).

although organisers only opened two houses to the public, the display encouraged visitors to see Fraser's chairs as indicative of what they would expect to find in any home on the estate.¹⁹³ Fraser selected a 'Gent's Easy Chair' with 'comfort being the key note' and made it clear to visitors that men would use this chair, and the living room more generally, for leisure.¹⁹⁴ This differed from the 'Lady's Easy Chair', where the design gave 'firm support to the back and ample elbow room for sewing, knitting and the other spare-time occupations which fall to the lot of the housewife'.¹⁹⁵ The chairs also convey prescriptive ideas about inhabitants' class: Fraser's decision to describe the chairs as 'Gent's' and 'Lady's' seems at odds with the class identities of the lorry drivers, dockers, factory operatives and builders who constituted 90 per cent of Lansbury's first residents.¹⁹⁶ However, like BCMI's model masculine lifestyles, Fraser's selection of chairs conveyed an ethos found throughout Lansbury that social class should not determine a person's opportunity to enjoy a comfortable, well-planned home.

Megan Doolittle and Julie-Marie Strange locate similar gendered accounts of chair design in their studies of working class homes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁹⁷ As with Lansbury's model rooms, Strange observes how chair design promoted the living room as a location for men to sleep, read and relax.¹⁹⁸ Strange also notes that 'in households with multiple chairs, a hierarchy of seating operated: father had first claim on chairs, followed by older children in work while children still in school stood'.¹⁹⁹ Similarly, from her study of working class autobiographies and magazines, Doolittle observes 'differences between men's large and comfortable chairs suitable for leisure and rest' and the 'smaller, harder chairs' used by women while 'sewing or nursing babies'.²⁰⁰ Doolittle surmises, 'a father's chair was not just a masculine object' as 'it held a particular place in family life throughout [the Victorian] period, reflecting relationships of gender between husband and wife, and between

¹⁹³ London Cooperative Society, *The 1951 Furnished Flat*.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Westergaard and Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', 37–39.

¹⁹⁷ Megan Doolittle, 'Time, Space, and Memories: The Father's Chair and Grandfather Clocks in Victorian Working-Class Domestic Lives', *Home Cultures* 8, no. 3 (1 November 2011): 245–64; Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 92.

¹⁹⁸ Strange, *Fatherhood*, 92.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁰⁰ Doolittle, 'Time, Space, and Memories', 253.

generations of fathers and their children'.²⁰¹ Although Strange and Doolittle discuss the everyday practices of working class men in the previous century, whereas this chapter examines practices that planners *instructed* men to perform in the mid-twentieth century, their analysis illustrates the role of material objects in the performance of gendered activities in the home. In Lansbury, planners intended the location of kitchens, inclusion of televisions and selection of armchairs to materially impact the types of masculine performances conducted in the home. I assess the successes and failures of these interventions in the final chapter. However, what remains important is the belief among planners that the design and arrangement of domestic spaces and material objects could improve family life.

Place-specific masculinities

Architect Jacqueline Tyrwhitt's 'The Needs of the People', a series of displays created for Live Architecture's Town Planning Exhibition, presents a final insight into how planners' understood and represented masculine leisure.²⁰² Tyrwhitt, who wrote the scripts for Live Architecture, imagined the lives of seven model Lansbury residents (a baby, school child, young person, mother, single worker, married worker and elderly person) across six everyday settings (home life, working life, social life, individual life, civic life and open-air life).²⁰³ Tyrwhitt's exhibit conceptualised identity as something that changed over the course of the day and depended on a person's spatial location. The life of the male, married worker allows us to see how planners imagined men's everyday lives on the new estate. The character, aged around 40, worked as a factory foreman, had teenage children and spent his home life 'sitting back in a living-room with feet up' with the 'rest of [the] family about but not in the way'.²⁰⁴ Tyrwhitt's representation of masculine leisure concurs with my previous assessment of men's need for individual space within the communal home. The biographical information continued: he spent his social life 'drinking in the pub with friends', his civic life 'sitting on a committee', his individual life

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 252.

²⁰² Jacqueline Tyrwhitt's work fused the humanism of Patrick Geddes with the bold promises of modernism in an attempt to entertain, educate and make technical topics intelligible to the average citizen. For further discussion, see Ellen Shoskes, *Jaqueline Tyrwhitt: A Transnational Life in Urban Planning and Design* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Freestone, 'The Exhibition as a Lens for Planning History', 436.

²⁰³ Tyrwhitt, 'Festival of Britain 1951', 6, *NA WORK 25/28*.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

involved 'a bit of carpentry in garage of house' and his open-air life was 'playing cricket'.²⁰⁵ Again, like the BCMI examples, Tyrwhitt presents a masculine identity that stood-across class stereotypes: her imagined Lansbury resident felt equally at home in the pub or at a cricket match.

John Summerson's review of Live Architecture for the *New Statesman and Nation* labelled Tyrwhitt's exhibit a 'misuse of display' as it conveyed information that was 'commonplace and could better be conveyed in fifty lines of lucid prose'.²⁰⁶ Summerson's critique found 'The Needs of the People', and its representation of masculine identity as something that changed over the course of the day, *too similar* to visitors' everyday lives. Peter Bailey analyses this form of masculine performance in his 1979 study of nineteenth century working class respectability where he notes, 'how a working man at play could move through several different roles, all cohering into a single life-world, but each in turn likely to be interpreted by an outsider as the behaviour peculiar to a distinct, separate, and exclusive type within the working classes'.²⁰⁷ Bailey's segmented view of working class masculinity argues that men made 'a choice of role rather than a universal normative mode', an understanding of gender that continued into the mid-twentieth century Britain and beyond.²⁰⁸ Pat Ayers' study of Liverpool between 1945 and 1965 also discusses the concept of place-specific masculinities. Ayers explores 'the complexity of male identity' and shows 'that the demands attached to notions of manhood could be contradictory', men could only resolve these contradictions 'by regarding their respective responsibilities as flexible'.²⁰⁹

Similarly, Tyrwhitt's exhibit suggests that the ideal Lansbury inhabitant performed a range of characters - from breadwinner to affectionate father, proactive citizen to home-centred hobbyist - according to the specifics of time and location. Zweig presents an analogous account of masculine identity in *The British Worker* (1952) and calls for social science students to 'think of man primarily in terms of type-situations instead of a hypothetical average', as they 'are divided into so many types living in different

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ John Summerson, 'The Arts and Entertainment, Lansbury', *New Statesman and Nation* (16 June 1951).

²⁰⁷ Peter Bailey, "'Will The Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?'" Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability', *Journal of Social History* 12, no. 3 (20 March 1979): 341.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 343. Also see David Morgan, *Discovering Men* (London: Routledge, 1992), 47; John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, Issues in Cultural and Media Studies (Philadelphia: Open University, 2002).

²⁰⁹ Pat Ayers, 'Work, Culture and Gender: The Making of Masculinities in Post-War Liverpool', *Labour History Review* 69, no. 2 (August 2004): 155.

environments and situations, and each type responds and behaves in his own way'.²¹⁰ 'The Needs of the People' divided the life of a 'married worker' into six settings in a way that aligned with planners' use of ecological approaches to the home to more easily identify and remedy problems.²¹¹ The exhibit conceptualises masculinity as an active presentation of the self that varied according to time and place, an idea I develop further in the next chapter's account of men's lived experiences in well-planned homes.²¹²

Negotiating past, present and future

Planners imagined Lansbury as a permanent record of Britain's postwar housing and - aware of the project's historical significance - collected, catalogued and archived a substantial amount of photographs, plans and correspondence. These sources therefore present a conscious expression of how planners wished to frame the project rather than an accurate account of life in Lansbury. Of particular significance is a collection of over 40 photographs of the area taken by the planning team in 1950, around one year prior to the arrival of the Snoddy family in Lansbury. The collection, entitled 'The site as it was', draws particular attention to the monochromatic austerity of Poplar prior to redevelopment (such as numbers 74 to 79 Upper North Street, Poplar in figure 3.9). The photographs let us see the area through the eyes of planners tasked with its reconstruction and emphasise the environmental devastation of the area. Writing in 1960, architect Percy Johnson-Marshall, who worked as a senior planner at the LCC between 1949 and 1959, compared Poplar to TS Eliot's poem the *Waste Land*, as all that once stood was a 'ruined school, a shattered tree, and rows of derelict houses'.²¹³ These photographs differed radically from the technicolour posters produced to publicise Live Architecture and the opening of the Lansbury Estate, in which oversized arms literally raised family homes from the rubble of postwar London (figure 3.10). Most Londoners could see first-hand the environmental destruction of the Second World War, the detailed photographs therefore served purposes other than to inform postwar

²¹⁰ Zweig, *The British Worker*, 18.

²¹¹ Planners also broke down tasks such as domestic chores into their component parts to gain a better understanding, see chap. 2, 88-89.

²¹² This expression of masculinity prefigures Joan Scott who stresses the 'need to examine gender concretely and in context and to consider it a historical phenomenon, produced, reproduced, and transformed in different situations and over time' in Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 6.

²¹³ Percy Johnson-Marshall, *Rebuilding London* (London: University of Edinburgh Press, 1966), 30.

audiences. No record exists of the photographs on public display at Live Architecture or the Festival of Britain, it instead seems that planners' didactic intimations stretched beyond the education of exhibition visitors and produced the images as visual sources that would educate future generations on their achievements in Lansbury.²¹⁴

Poplar residents do not appear in any of the photographs. This differs from comparable, albeit later, visual accounts of communities on the brink of environmental change, such as the evocation of vibrant street life in Roger Mayne's Southam Street photographs.²¹⁵ Instead, the Poplar photographs present an area that existed without inhabitants, in the style of Le Corbusier's imagined 'tabula rasa'.²¹⁶ Although planners remained unconvinced of the efficacy of a complete erasure of history, and incorporated several historic East London elements into Lansbury's design scheme, this framing arguably made it easier for planners to construct a community with new values in this location.²¹⁷

The photographs also point towards a wider concern, among planners, over the power of the past to disrupt their vision of a postwar future. If, as I argue, planners used Lansbury to project new ideas about how men *should* use and experience the home, they first had to address the historical legacy of East London and its people. Writing for the *Daily Herald* in 1950, Peter Fryer described Lansbury as 'a bright oasis in the heart of East London' and explained that riverboats would transport visitors between the South Bank and Poplar, in an attempt to avoid the miles of dilapidated streets that circled the estate.²¹⁸ Planners feared that the journey through East London would taint visitors' visualisation of the nation's future housing. Planners' desire to construct a new urban future, but not fully erase an area's history, was a hard balance to strike. Frank Mort's study of 1950s London highlights how the Victorian city permeated into spaces of everyday modernity and resurfaced in several high-profile events, most notably the trial of Notting Hill murderer John Reginald Christie in the summer of

²¹⁴ Doreen Massey explains that space acquires meaning from how it differs from other, external spaces. It is therefore possible to argue that these images helped planners establish a sense of difference between the old community and the new estate, in Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place', in *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), 156.

²¹⁵ Brooke, 'Revisiting Southam Street'.

²¹⁶ See my discussion of Le Corbusier in chap. 2, 91-94.

²¹⁷ As previously noted, the Festival of Britain catalogue highlights planners' desire to maintain some 'traditions of the district' and build houses with 'buff stock bricks and grey slates, so characteristic of the London scene' in Festival of Britain, *Catalogue of Exhibits*, 13, [NA WORK 25/230](#).

²¹⁸ Peter Fryer, 'All East London Could Be Like This', *Daily Herald* (7 June 1950), 5.

1953.²¹⁹ Investigators located Christie's victims throughout his nineteenth century property at 10 Rillington Place and Mort describes how scandal around this event destabilised Britain's image as a 'post-Victorian' nation.²²⁰

Sociological accounts of residents' experiences in Lansbury in the early 1950s present a similar blend of past, present and future. Ruth Glass and John Westergaard's 1954 study noted that new buildings and green spaces stood alongside derelict houses and war rubble, and that Lansbury had not experienced a 'sharp break with the past, no rigid enclosure of the new neighbourhood'.²²¹ Glass and Westergaard's investigation reflected the intentions of Lansbury planners who never wanted to create a community that broke radically from the past.²²² Nicholas Bullock, in his historical account of postwar planning in Britain, also notes, 'paradoxically, what [people] wanted was a home which would not only bring back the familiar pre-war world with its colour and vitality, and without its faults, but would also offer the benefits of the new post-war world'.²²³ The development of plans in the 1940s and 1950s therefore struck an ambivalent position, with one eye towards the past and one eye towards the future.

Planners' attempt to negotiate the past, present and future had specific implications for men and the types of masculinity promoted on the estate. As men like Albert Snoddy departed their old homes and domestic practices of the past, planners used exhibitions to promote a new range of leisure activities and ways for men to use the home.²²⁴ At the same time, however, planners did not blindly force men to abandon *everything* they knew from their old homes. Writing for *Picture Post* in 1949, BS Townroe discussed the emergence of new estates and noted, '[c]are has to be taken to consider the feelings of local inhabitants, especially the older people who cling pathetically to their favourite pub or club, regardless of the grim surroundings'.²²⁵ Although the author makes his antipathy towards these pastimes clear, he does highlight the need to factor men's past experiences

²¹⁹ For example, Mort highlights the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, the Profumo Affair and the findings of the Wolfenden Committee to show the overlap between 'Victorian' and 'modern' values in postwar London, in Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of the Permissive Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), chap. 3.

²²⁰ Frank Mort, 'Scandalous Events: Metropolitan Culture and Moral Change in Post-Second World War London', *Representations* 93, no. 1 (1 February 2006): 132.

²²¹ Westergaard and Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', 36.

²²² Festival of Britain, *Catalogue of Exhibits*, 13, [NA WORK 25/230](#).

²²³ Bullock, 'Ideals, Priorities and Harsh Realities', 88.

²²⁴ For example, Do-It-Yourself featured at exhibitions as a masculine hobby suitable for new homes, noted in Ryan, *The Ideal Home*, 111.

²²⁵ BS Townroe, 'Housing: London Shows How', *Picture Post*, 22 January 1949, 33.

into the plans for new estates. It is vital to remember that around half of Lansbury's residents originated from London's East End and, as Glass and Westergaard reported, 'their birthplaces and workplaces, their family and social associations are in and around Poplar'.²²⁶ Although planners may have hoped to instruct families in environments devoid of external influences, the urban and historic location of Lansbury made this near impossible. Men's experiences undoubtedly changed as they moved from old neighbourhoods to new estates; however, as the final chapter will discuss, this did not mark a radical break from the past as many men found ways to continue the customs and traditions of previous generations.



Figure 3.9: 'The Site as it was: Nos. 74-79 Upper North Street' (21 June 1950), NA WORK 25/199.

²²⁶ Westergaard and Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', 37–38.

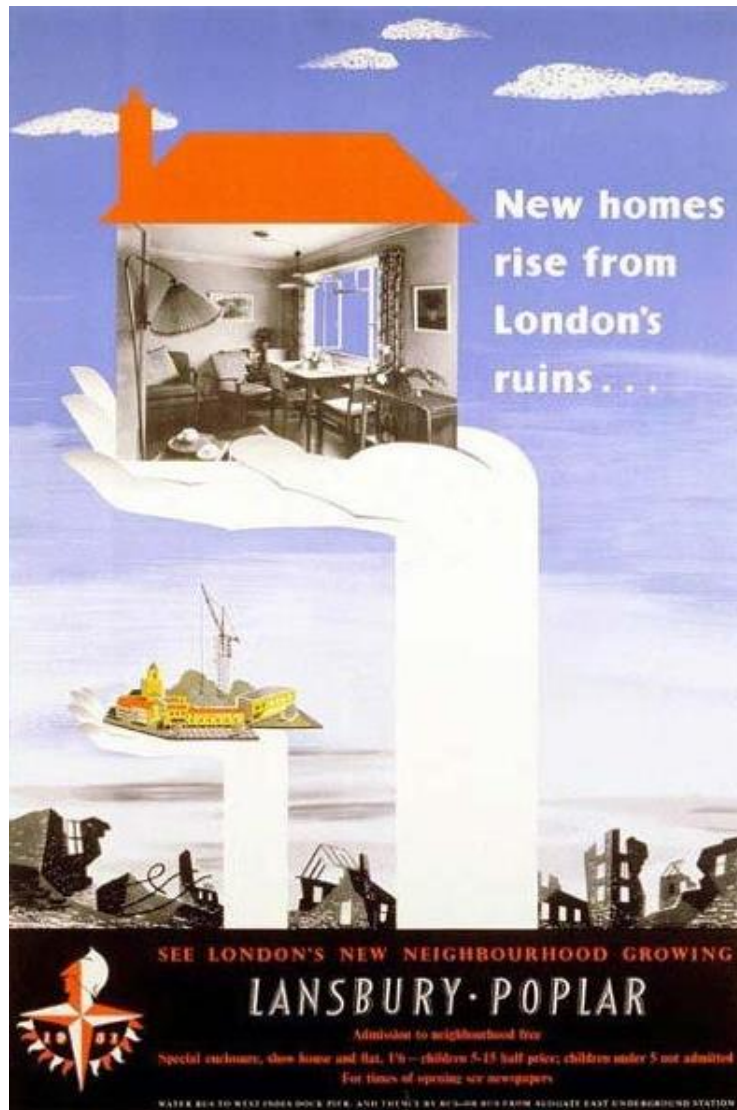


Figure 3.10: Promotional poster for Live Architecture (1951).

Public and private spaces

The vision of masculine leisure presented at Lansbury, in which men enjoyed individual activities within the communal home, relied on a demarcation of the private home from the public world outside. This had been the case for many middle class families for the past century; however, within working class homes, planners feared that a conflation of public and private spaces hampered men's willingness to change domestic actions and behaviours. Two particular photographs from 'The site as it was' collection indicate how planners understood 1940s Poplar and highlight this unease over past definitions of privacy. The photograph entitled 'A Look Through the Open Front Door', taken on 29 June 1950, shows the hallway of 33 Bygrove Street, Poplar, cluttered with drying clothes and a woman's

underwear dangling in the foreground (figure 3.11).²²⁷ The photograph illustrates how the private world of the home's occupants has literally spilled-out onto the street, with the family's underwear on display to a public audience. A second photograph of 33 Bygrove Street shows a corroded toilet in the property's outhouse, a scene more suggestive of 'Gremlin Grange' than a family's lived, everyday experience (figure 3.12).²²⁸ The photographs encouraged future viewers to interpret 33 Bygrove Street as an atavistic location, reminiscent of Victorian London, that stood in opposition to planners' attempts to build modern environments. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that photographers asked occupants for their consent, which further erased the family's personal account of life in Poplar prior to its postwar redevelopment. Planners' self-confidence in their expertise meant that viewers instead witness an account of Poplar's past, with blurred boundaries between public and private, and the family's domestic life framed as objectively wrong and in need of repair.



Figure 3.11: 'The Site as it was: No. 33 Bygrove Street, a Look Through the Open Front Door' (29 June 1950), NA WORK 25/199.

²²⁷ 'The Site as it was: No. 33 Bygrove Street, a Look Through the Open Front Door', 1951 *Exhibition of Live Architecture, Poplar* (29 June 1950), NA WORK 25/199.

²²⁸ 'The Site as it was: Sanitary Fittings at No. 33 Bygrove Street', 1951 *Exhibition of Live Architecture, Poplar* (29 June 1950), NA WORK 25/199.

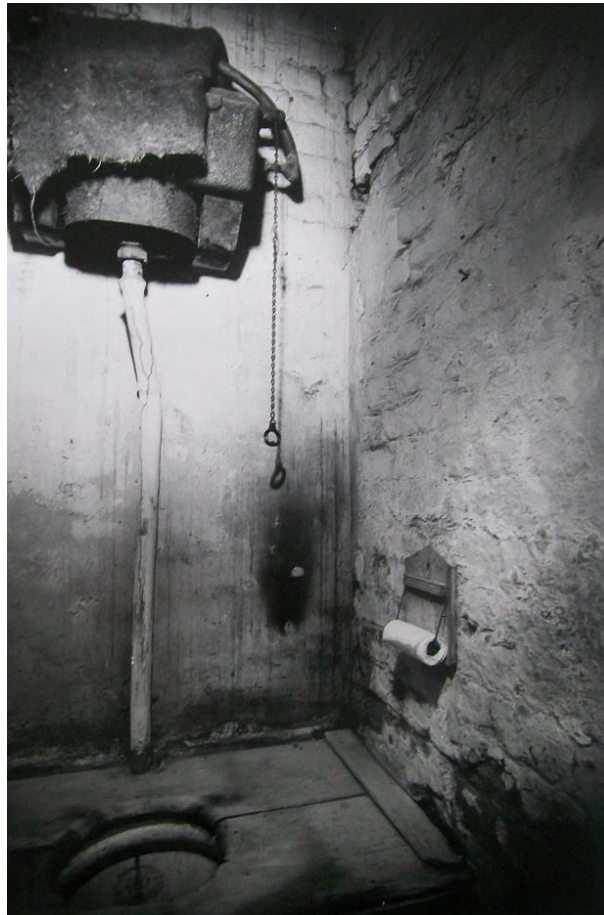


Figure 3.12: 'The Site as it was: Sanitary Fittings at No. 33 Bygrove Street' (29 June 1950), [NA WORK 25/199](#).

Sixty per cent of Lansbury residents previously shared dwellings with other families, with 40 per cent of families in houses with more than two people per bedroom.²²⁹ Similarly, 63 per cent of residents previously had no access to an inside toilet and 73 per cent had no access to a bathroom.²³⁰ This all changed on the new estate as all families enjoyed a home of their own with private, indoor toilet facilities. As Deborah Cohen highlights, concepts such as 'privacy' and 'secrecy' relate to specific historical moments and change their meaning over time.²³¹ The example of Lansbury allows us to see an attempt among planners to accelerate this process and bring, what they considered, traditional working class ideas about privacy into the 'modern age'.

²²⁹ 'The Lansbury Estate, Poplar, Part 2: "I Never Thought I'd See Such Luxury"', *Municipal Dreams* (20 August 2013), <https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2013/08/20/the-lansbury-estate-poplar-part-2/>, accessed 29 July 2015.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Shame and Privacy in Modern Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2013), chap. Introduction.

As the private home became an integral component of Britain's postwar reconstruction, planners expected men to take on different masculine roles in different rooms of the house, and therefore alter actions and behaviours according to spatial context, as presented in exhibits like 'The Needs of the People'. This emphasis on what men do in the home, rather than how they feel or self-identify, reminds us that inhabitants constructed gender through the repeated performance of quotidian practices of speech, gesture and movement.²³² If planners could design spaces that encouraged or discouraged the performance of particular practices they could therefore shape the types of masculinities constructed in new homes.

Working class agency and challenges to expert knowledge

I have so far demonstrated how planners used exhibitions to instruct men's use and experience of the postwar home. What remains undiscussed is the flow of knowledge in the opposite direction and whether working class men had any influence on how middle class planners represented their domestic lives. Selina Todd argues that opportunities existed for working class citizens to positively engage with civic plans for their local neighbourhood, town and city centre.²³³ In Liverpool, for example, Peter Shapely describes experts' efforts to address local meetings, involve the public in planning competitions and provide information for women's groups, business organisations and schools.²³⁴ Todd sets out to challenge 'existing scholarship that suggests that working-class people were the passive or unwilling recipients of postwar political and social reforms' and therefore, as Mark Llewellyn argues, complicates inaccurate portrayals of the planner-inhabitant relationship as 'oppositional'.²³⁵ Analysis of the knowledge exchange between planners and inhabitants not only helps establish the influence of planners' technical-minded and paternalist masculinities on the ideas showcased at exhibitions but also further illustrates the family-orientated masculine identities they wished to encourage in the home.

²³² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), chap. 1.

²³³ Todd, 'Phoenix Rising', 680–81.

²³⁴ Shapely, 'Civic Pride and Redevelopment', 315–16.

²³⁵ Todd, 'Phoenix Rising', 680–81; Mark Llewellyn, "Urban Village" or "White House": Envisioned Spaces, Experienced Places, and Everyday Life at Kensal House, London in the 1930s', *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 22, no. 2 (2004): 246.

Historiography of the relationship between planners and the people for whom they planned routinely cites public policy expert Sherry Arnstein's article 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969), which identifies manipulation, therapy, information, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and citizen control as the eight stages of citizen participation.²³⁶ 1940s housing exhibitions fall somewhere among the bottom four stages of this ladder. As Arnstein explains, 'manipulation' and 'therapy' describe levels of 'non-participation' where those with power attempt to 'educate' or 'cure' participants'; 'information' and 'consultation' are tokenistic and 'allow the haves to hear and to have a voice', but they continue to 'lack the power to insure that their views will be *heeded* by the powerful'.²³⁷ Nigel Taylor's research exposes the unwillingness of early postwar planners to consult with the public and explains that this stemmed from planners' belief in their professional judgements as apolitical and beyond dispute.²³⁸ Peter Larkham and Keith Lilley have expanded on Taylor's thesis and argue that although planners sometimes informed the public of their plans, and a rhetoric of consultation existed, efforts arrived 'too late in the process, too limited in scope, using inappropriate terms (seeking 'criticisms'), and there is little evidence that any views expressed were taken into account via modifying plans before implementation'.²³⁹ These arguments strengthen my view that although planners in the 1940s increasingly looked outwards and sourced the views of other experts, planning ideas continued to develop inside middle class, technocratic bubbles.

However, it is not the case that these masculine identities consciously acted against the wishes of the people for whom they planned – in most instances, planners genuinely believed that the public either had little interest or did not know what they wanted from their everyday environments. Writing in 1972, Walter Bor, who worked as an architect for the LCC Architects' Department in the 1940s, shared the view that 'until a decade or so ago people did not appear to care, or at least there was insufficient evidence that they were seriously concerned, about the

²³⁶ Sherry Arnstein, 'A Ladder Of Citizen Participation', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35, no. 4 (1969): 216–24. Larkham and Lilley write, 'virtually all recent work on public participation cites precedent in theory and practice' from Arnstein, in Larkham and Lilley, 'Exhibiting the City', 648.

²³⁷ Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', 217.

²³⁸ Nigel Taylor, *Urban Planning Theory Since 1945* (London: Sage, 1998), discussed in Marco Amati, 'Engagement and Exhibitionism in the Era of High Modernism: Otto Neurath and the Example of 1940s Bilston', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 149.

²³⁹ Larkham and Lilley, 'Exhibiting the City', 647.

planning of their environment'.²⁴⁰ Paul Rotha, the director of several social issue documentaries in the 1930s and 1940s, estimated that around 90 per cent of the population remained 'unaware of the social benefits that can arise from a scientifically planned approach to the business of living'.²⁴¹ MO, well-known for its efforts to increase consciousness among working class citizens of their everyday surroundings, similarly struggled to get respondents to think about planning,

People are mostly rather vague about whether they like their present home or not. They are often surprised at the question, as if it had never occurred to them to think about whether they liked it, or why. The vast majority have had no real *choice* in the matter of where they live at all, and this is probably one of the reasons why they are unused to considering their feelings about it at all.²⁴²

The authors of *An Enquiry into People's Homes* (1943) then stated, 'many people are passive-minded, letting things be done to them, hardly thinking of what they could get done'.²⁴³ The report illustrates MO's efforts to heighten the public's consciousness of planning issues so that people could decide for themselves the shape of their future environments.

Exhibitions offered an ideal medium for planners to share ideas with the public, as the dissemination of information at such a late stage in the process made it seem near-impossible for planners to alter their plans.²⁴⁴ This certainly proved true in Lansbury as residents did not experience a constructive relationship with the planners behind the project. The minute of a Festival of Britain Architecture Council meeting on 21 April 1949 highlights the LCC's proposal to organise an exhibition of Poplar plans and use a social survey to invite criticisms and suggestions from the public.²⁴⁵ The Architecture Council responded,

As the layout and schedule of accommodation for the site were now determined and the architects actually at work, a

²⁴⁰ Walter Bor, *The Making of Cities* (London: Leonard Hill, 1972), 67.

²⁴¹ Paul Rotha, 'Films for Planning', ed. Gilbert McAllister, *Town and Country Planning* 9, no. 35 (Autumn 1941): 87, [MO SxMOA1/2/1/5](#).

²⁴² Mass Observation, *An Enquiry into People's Homes* (London: John Murray, 1943), 53.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 208.

²⁴⁴ Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', 219. John Pendlebury and Peter Larkham also highlight the view of Thomas Sharp who, in a 1945 Presidential Address to the Town Planning Institute, argued that the public have the right to know about plans but that consultation should come after plans had been drawn up, in Peter Larkham and John Pendlebury, 'Reconstruction Planning and the Small Town in Early Post-war Britain', *Planning Perspectives* 23, no. 3 (July 2008): 314.

²⁴⁵ Extract from 'Festival of Britain. Architecture Council 49', 4th Meeting (21 April 1949), [NA WORK 25/28](#).

Social Survey would have no practical result [and may] have its dangers, in that the results of the Survey might show that local wishes were in conflict with what was in fact being provided.²⁴⁶

The minute shares the Architecture Council's worry that it may not prove possible 'to comply with local wishes, which often express an ideal beyond practical realization'.²⁴⁷ Rather than risk hearing local suggestions that countered expert knowledge, planners went ahead with the assumption that they knew what working class inhabitants wanted from their Lansbury homes. Harriet Atkinson argues that planners from the interwar period onwards grew increasingly conscious of the need to consult with the public.²⁴⁸ For example, Bor told the 1994 *Seizing the Moment: London Planning 1944-1994* conference that he tried to involve local people in the planning process but the LCC disapproved of this approach.²⁴⁹ However, in reality, planners' confidence in their own knowledge and paternalist approach meant that even when planners made an effort to speak to local residents these conversations rarely shaped the direction of planning ideas.

As time passed, criticisms of Lansbury increasingly appeared in newspapers and oral history interviews with residents. As early as 1954, Glass and Westergaard found that residents recognised 'deficiencies in the interior design of their dwellings' such as 'shoddiness of thought in design, and of detail and finish, particular in some of the blocks of flats' and 'the provision in some terraced houses of a 'dining' recess in the living room, which is so located and so small that it can serve no useful purpose'.²⁵⁰ Criticisms continued and in 1961 the *Daily Herald* published an article that looked back on Lansbury ten years after the Snoddy family received their keys. Reverend Jack Andrews, of the estate's Trinity Congregational Church, told the newspaper that the community's 'old folk talk almost all the time about old Poplar' and that 'they miss their tiny backyards, where they used to sit' as 'they can't sit on communal lawns; they'd look untidy'.²⁵¹ Daisy Jarrett lived in Poplar before, during and after the Second World War,

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Atkinson, *The Festival of Britain*, 159.

²⁴⁹ Walter Bor, speaking at *Seizing the Moment: London Planning 1944-1994* in London (1994), cited in Allen, 'Contested Understandings', 125.

²⁵⁰ Westergaard and Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', 40-41.

²⁵¹ Jack Lucas, 'New Town Is Growing Up', *Daily Herald* (8 April 1961).

she described interwar Poplar as 'infinitely preferable to the post-war one' and bemoaned the lost 'benefits of the pre-war community'.²⁵²

The most damning critique of Lansbury came from one of the estate's 'First Citizens'. In a 1984 interview Alice Snoddy bemoaned Lansbury's lack of community spirit,

I think it was because families lived together more [in interwar Poplar], children got married and they took a couple of rooms in somebody else's house until they eventually got a house of their own and everybody knew one another, they'd all gone to school together, grown up together and when they started pulling everything down we all got separated into different flats in different parts of the borough.²⁵³

In an interview with Jennifer Allen in 1992, Alice explained that her 'husband definitely didn't want to come in a flat. No way, he was used to his shed and he'd go in there and bang and hammer and do whatever he wanted to. No way did he want to. We'd never been in a flat, neither of us'.²⁵⁴ Albert missed his Yatton Street shed and the space it provided him, within the home, to do as he wished. Although Alice stayed in Gladstone House the remainder of her life, her recollection contests romantic accounts of the period and highlights the need for more rigorous analysis of how men experienced 'moving home'.²⁵⁵

Todd's research rightly encourages historians to scrutinise the relationship between planners and the people for whom they planned. However, Lansbury shows that, at least in the 1940s and early 1950s, planners remained generally unreceptive to the ideas and opinions of the working class residents who would live on the estate. Some planners also expressed concern over the interventionist direction planning took in the 1940s and questioned whether the state should attempt to reconfigure human behaviour. In a 1951 special of BBC radio's *Third Programme* on Poplar's reconstruction, architect and town planner William Holford expressed concerns over the type of planning showcased at exhibitions.²⁵⁶

²⁵² Allen, 'Contested Understandings', 198.

²⁵³ Paul Addison, *Now the War Is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-1951* (London: BBC Books, 1985), 77.

²⁵⁴ Allen, 'Contested Understandings', 130.

²⁵⁵ For example, these problems do not feature in films such as Ken Loach, *The Spirit of '45* (2013).

²⁵⁶ 'The Stepney/Poplar Reconstruction Scheme', *The Third Programme* (London: BBC, 4 March 1951), [THA 700.2](#).

Holford, who worked as principal advisor for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning between 1943 and 1947, questioned planners' blind faith in statistical models to construct housing developments that understood residents' actions and behaviours as modular, predictable units.²⁵⁷ This meant that planners ignored the complexities of the human condition and simply added 'human units' into developments in the same manner as electrical sockets or floor-space. Exhibitions showcased experts' ability to define, explain and remedy physical problems found in the home. Intellectual cracks in planners' powers emerged when they attempted to move beyond physical problems, such as leaking roofs and draft exclusion, to address social problems found in the home, such as the relationship between fathers and children. The criticisms of the Snoddy family and other Lansbury residents documents the existence of an alternative account of postwar planning, in which the masculine identities of planners as technical, paternalist and omniscient continued to trump the opinions of the people for whom they planned.

Conclusion

Albert Snoddy's departure from Yatton Street for his new home at Gladstone House signified a key moment in British history. His experience as the 'First Citizen' of Lansbury came with high expectations from planners who imagined the estate as an emblem of Labour's reconstructionist housing programmes and blueprint for the nation's future. This chapter has highlighted planners' use of exhibitions and publications to convey ideas about how men *should* use and experience domestic space, and how this took place within the wider context of a changing postwar society. Didactic methods at the Modern Homes Exhibition, BCMI, Ideal Home Exhibitions and the Festival of Britain presented idealised accounts of domestic space and masculine inhabitants. The quiz, walk-through, anti-model and model masculine lifestyles normalised a culture of expert knowledge led by technical-minded planners, enabled exhibition visitors to learn about planning mistakes made in the past and efforts to remedy these problems in the present.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

Lansbury brought specific attention to the home's function as a site of masculine leisure and planners' struggle to accommodate men's need for individual space within the communal context of the family home. This depended on a delimitation of private and public spaces in order to construct a multi-layered postwar masculine identity, which continued customs from the past but also facilitated new family-orientated practices.²⁵⁸ Finally, as Tyrwhitt's 'The Needs of the People' exhibit demonstrates, the masculine ideal promoted through Lansbury also required men to perform a number of identities that varied according to time and place.

On first impression, the model masculine lifestyles presented seem middle class; however, on closer inspection, the men's hobbies, employment and financial status presented an ambiguous definition of class, which stood outside traditional categories, and remained open to all visitors regardless of their own class background. As Michael Roper, John Tosh and others have argued, prescriptive sources cannot accurately describe how men lived in reality.²⁵⁹ I therefore used exhibition materials to analyse how planners envisaged ideal homes and men's domestic actions. Planners' presentation of model masculine lifestyles fits within a postwar ethos, among politicians and the public, where working class people should have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential. Planners believed that badly-planned homes had impeded this aspiration. Pedagogical methods also illustrate the exchange of ideas from middle class to working class men in mid-twentieth century Britain, and highlight issues that faced planners as they attempted to prescribe how working class inhabitants should use and experience their home. Unlike Selina Todd's account of town planning between 1945 and 1967, this chapter has evidenced a limited flow of knowledge from inhabitants to planners and widespread indifference among planners towards pre-existing working class actions and behaviours.²⁶⁰ Yet, planners' vision for how male inhabitants *should* use and experience domestic space enables us to see wider concerns among policymakers in twentieth century Britain over the nature of family life, gender relations and the role of the state in citizens' everyday lives.

²⁵⁸ A conclusion that concurs with Frank Mort, Chris Waters and Becky Conekin's description of the postwar decades as 'a hybrid affair' that brought together ideas from the past, present and future, in Conekin, Mort, and Waters, *Moments of Modernity*, 3.

²⁵⁹ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 198; Roper, 'Slipping Out of View', 67.

²⁶⁰ Todd, 'Phoenix Rising', 680–81.

Chapter Four: Men's Uses and Experiences of the Home

The life of Robert Williamson, born in Bradford in 1910, spans a period of great change in British housing, in which movement into well-planned homes made it easier for some men to perform family-orientated roles. Robert, who worked as a millworker for Bradford Dyers Association but also experienced periods of unemployment, met his wife Hetty at the town's Pavilion de Luxe Picture House and married on 19 December 1931.¹ Hetty gave birth to their only child, Norma, in 1932 and in 1938 the family moved from their rented one-up-one-down house near Bradford to a new estate in Shipley on the town's outskirts. Leaving his old neighbourhood for a semi-detached council house marked a fundamental moment in Robert's life history,

People don't realise what things were like. The things you'd been missing all those years, you see we had to go to the public baths for a bath – they pulled them all down now... life took on another meaning.²

Robert described how his old house in Bradford had 'wonky' sash windows that let in draughts, stone floors that 'used to get all the dirt off yer boots', no hot running water and shared four outdoor toilets with 20 other families on the street.³ He marvelled at the improvements found in his new home: it 'was like heaven' and 'everything was a bonus' from the 'electric lights' to the 'baths, hot and cold water'.⁴ Robert used his indoor bathroom as a location to spend more time with his young daughter. He fondly recalled how his 'wife would run the bath and when the bath was ready then I'd start splashing [Norma] all over, then I'd croon a tune then I'd sing'.⁵ Robert also recounted the joy of two bedrooms rather than one and reading Norma bedtime stories before she fell asleep.⁶ Robert's well-planned home made it possible for him to father his daughter differently than men from previous generations, whom Robert thought spent too long in the pub and viewed themselves as 'Lord and Master'.⁷ Joanna Bourke describes how unemployment left many men in a 'delicate position', as more time spent at

¹ Robert Williamson (1993), TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163.

² *Ibid.*, 24.

³ *Ibid.*, 7, 9, 11, 12.

⁴ Steve Humphries and Pamela Gordon, *A Labour of Love, The Experience of Parenthood in Britain 1900-1950* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1993), 99; Williamson, 71, TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26, 48.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

home could unsettle gender roles.⁸ This anxiety did not appear to faze Robert who enjoyed his domestic life and the opportunities it presented to spend time with Hetty and Norma.

Robert's relocation to new housing reflected the experiences of many other working class men in mid-twentieth century Britain. In 1966, sociologists WV Hole and JJ Attenburrow conducted a review of people's domestic practices for the Ministry of Technology. They noted that in the past forty years working class families had become less likely to conduct the 'daily routines of cooking, eating, sleeping and washing' in the 'same two or three rooms as birth, sickness, family quarrels and celebrations'.⁹ Families enjoyed more space as the average number of households per dwelling dropped from three households per two dwellings in 1931 to five households per four dwellings in 1951.¹⁰ Local authorities also built more houses. For example, 900,000 houses were built between 1945 and 1951, almost two thirds of the total amount built in the previous thirty years.¹¹ Family sizes also decreased. The average completed family size in 1957 consisted of 2.10 children, a drop from 2.42 in 1934.¹² This contributed to a greater sense of space within homes, even among those who lived in old accommodation.

This chapter analyses experiential sources in order to compare them with planning ideas and didactic representations, discussed in previous chapters, and assess points of overlap between expert knowledge and men's lived experiences in the home. As more working class men moved into well-planned homes, men found ways to use domestic space to help perform new identities as fathers and husbands. Likewise, the movement from 'slum housing' to 'new estates' removed families from extended kin networks and upset the routine of everyday life, which made it easier for men to adopt practices that differed from life in their old community.

⁸ Joanna Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994), 95.

⁹ WV Hole and JJ Attenburrow, *Houses and People: A Review of User Studies at the Building Research Station* (Ministry of Technology, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), 1.

¹⁰ Peter Willmott and Michael Young, *Family and Class in a London Suburb* (London: New English Library, 1976), 13.

¹¹ J Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1978), 249, 286.

¹² 'Statistical Bulletin: Cohort Fertility: 2010', *Office for National Statistics* (16 December 2011), <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/bulletins/cohortfertility/2011-12-16>, accessed 26 February 2016. These statistics do not highlight class differences and the difficulties working class couples found in accessing information on contraceptives and birth control methods, discussed in Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class* (London: John Murray, 2014), 196.

I expand my analysis to include domestic experiences between the late 1930s and early 1960s. This longer period recognises that working class men's domestic experiences changed *before* and *after* the public dissemination of planning ideas discussed in previous chapters. For instance, although Robert's 1938 move to Shipley presented new opportunities to practice the role of an active father, many more working class men relocated to well-planned homes after the environmental destruction of the Second World War.¹³ This chapter does not therefore establish direct causation. However, it does demonstrate the parallel development of planning ideas and family-orientated masculine practices.

This chapter consists of two main sections. Section one uses oral history testimonies, sociological reports, newspaper and magazine articles to examine men's experiences of demobilisation in the late 1940s, class on new estates and influences of the past on domestic lives. The identities and experiences of the men I discuss differ, yet they share a common belief that domestic space proved instrumental in their ability, or inability, to perform particular masculine actions or behaviours. The second section takes us inside the home and examines domestic space as a collection of areas and material objects that shaped men's individual experiences. I show how men used living rooms, dining spaces, bedrooms, gardens and sheds as locations to interact with wives, children and adopt hobbies such as Do-It-Yourself. However, alongside new opportunities, working class men also encountered a number of difficulties as they attempted to continue traditional customs in their new homes, such as visits to the local pub.¹⁴ I draw particular attention to men's performance of housework and how well-planned homes helped solidify notions of public and private space. A development that gave male inhabitants more opportunities to engage in activities without the fear of neighbours or friends casting negative judgements.

Yet, the gulf between middle class, technocratic knowledge and pre-existing cultures of working class life, first addressed in previous chapters, continued to create homes that sometimes failed to match inhabitants' everyday practices. In a number of instances, men's experiences and uses

¹³Jon Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, 1930–64', *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 2 (1 June 2013): 285.

¹⁴ McKibbin notes that some local authorities, most notably Liverpool, enforced a complete ban on pubs on council estates, in Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 194.

of the home mirrored the ideals found in planning publications and at exhibitions. For example, some men used the living room as a location for individual leisure and interactions with children; others adopted hobbies such as DIY. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, male inhabitants as often subverted the expectations of their home and used the space to craft masculine identities that balanced past traditions with progressive family-orientated ideals.

Men's experiences of returning home

On 6 November 1941, 29-year-old Robert joined the armed forces where he served as a driver in the Royal Signals and spent most of the war in the Middle East and India.¹⁵ Robert shared an emotional account of seeing his daughter again in 1946 following the end of the Second World War: '[w]ell I think we both cried, tears of joy, the only occasion I've cried is tears of joy, I felt like crying, you get a lump in your throat'.¹⁶ He explained that on his return home his daughter looked 'as big as me' and was pleased to discover that she had learnt to play the piano in his absence.¹⁷

Families repeated this experience across the country as 2.25 million married men returned to their homes and the challenge of rebuilding relationships with wives and children.¹⁸ Men's time away made them think about 'home' in new ways. For example, on 3 March 1943 anonymous male MO respondents explained that they 'never appreciated home before the war as much as [now]' and described their homes as 'all that I should be fighting for', 'a garden to potter about in, a nice warm cosy room in winter with all my family seated around the fire', 'a haven of quiet and privacy' and the 'opposite of army life'.¹⁹ William Shebbeare, a *Daily Herald* journalist and London Labour councillor, served in France in the Second World War and wrote about what men expected on their return home. His middle class, domestic vision included, 'meals at his own table without queuing, an armchair by the fire, a lie-in on a Sunday morning. He will want to have a home of his very own, where he has privacy and is not

¹⁵ Humphries and Gordon, *A Labour of Love*, 252.

¹⁶ Williamson, 32, TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁸ Alan Allport, *Demobbed: Coming Home After the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 52.

¹⁹ Respondents BRA10 and MAS4, 'Some Psychological Factors in Home Building' (3 March 1943), 3, 8, MO SxMOA1/1/8/3/3 - File Report 1616.

overcrowded'.²⁰ Shebbeare died in the Battle of Caen in July 1944 and never returned home.²¹

For other men, the idea of 'setting-up home' helped placate any sadness about the end of life in the armed forces. Portsmouth resident Mr Francis described his wartime experience as 'marvellous, hectic, euphoric' but understood that demobilisation marked its end.²² He married during the war but had seen little of his wife, his postwar concerns therefore focused on his home and its material objects: '[i]t was the little things, I think, of setting up home, staining the floor, getting the carpets down, hanging curtains – all those kind of things which began at last to make it all seem worthwhile'.²³ In this instance, the home's materiality excited Mr Francis – more so than reuniting with his wife. Historian Martin Francis uses film and other cultural representations to highlight a 'reluctance among some returning servicemen to give up the all-male camaraderie of military life' and argues that a desire for 'an alternative male-only "family"' continued as a potent cultural motif and excited men's imaginations throughout the postwar decades.²⁴ My analysis goes further than Francis as it uses men's testimonies, in which they discuss their domestic experiences after demobilisation, to highlight some men's mixed enthusiasm towards the idea of returning home.

Men's ambivalence may have reflected marriage troubles that awaited some men on their return home. The 'last dance' atmosphere of 1939 and 1940 created a marriage boom where many young couples wed: three in every ten brides were aged under 21, but barely knew each other.²⁵ Many quickly realised their incompatibility after the war ended and in England and Wales divorce rates leapt from 9,970 in 1938 to a postwar peak of 47,041 in 1947.²⁶ In a 1946 letter to the *Daily Mail*, one wife complained she was 'always building castles for the future' during her husband's service overseas, but upon his return she found herself 'hating him', as he was 'ill-

²⁰ William Shebbeare, *A Soldier Looks Ahead* (Labour Book Service, 1944), cited in Allport, *Demobbed*, 74.

²¹ 'Shebbeare, William Godolphin Conway', *Winchester College at War* (2016), <http://www.winchestercollegeatwar.com/archive/shebbeare-william-godolphin-conway/>, accessed 10 February 2016.

²² Paul Addison, *Now the War Is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-51* (London: Pimlico, 1995), 22–23.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Martin Francis, 'A Flight from Commitment? Domesticity, Adventure and the Masculine Imaginary in Britain after the Second World War', *Gender & History* 19, no. 1 (1 April 2007): 167–68, 176.

²⁵ Steve Humphries and Pamela Gordon, *Forbidden Britain* (London: BBC Books, 1994), 57.

²⁶ Addison, *Now the War Is Over*, 1995, 17.

mannered in company, bad-tempered' and 'shows off'.²⁷ Businessman Arthur Egerton-Savory discussed his experiences as an army officer and the stresses war placed upon working and middle class marriages in the 1985 BBC television series *Now War is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-1951*,

I was frequently having soldiers coming to me because they thought their wives had gone off with the milkman or somebody or other. Very often this was a figment of their imagination, but very often, of course, it was true and many marriages were on the rocks, which wasn't surprising really. Men had been away from their homes, especially abroad, for years and years and years and there'd been an influx of Americans and Poles and so on, all of whom were only too keen to get themselves involved with the various ladies who were around.²⁸

Many men did not experience demobilisation as a moment of familial bliss but as a collection of challenges unique to the mid-1940s. The quality and availability of housing on their return home made the situation worse and denied many young men the opportunity to start their adult life. By the mid-1940s, around three million houses, which accommodated around ten per cent of the population, had fallen below acceptable standards.²⁹ A Gallup survey from the autumn of 1945 calculated that one third of the population were looking for somewhere new to live.³⁰ In London, the London County Council's Housing Committee had 140,000 families on its waiting list in 1945, a demand for housing that would take a very long time to satisfy.³¹ *Picture Post* highlighted the gendered effects of the housing situation on men in a letter from an ex-serviceman in July 1945,

I am 27 years old and have just been discharged after 5 years in the Service. I intend getting married in May, and settling down to start a family. For the last six months I have been trying to find a house, a flat, anything, where we could live. But nothing doing... Well, I have decided with my fiancée that after being engaged for three years, we are going to keep on being engaged till we get somewhere to live. We don't want to live with her parents or mine. We have seen too many marriages go wrong that way. And we

²⁷ 'Letter to the Editor', *Daily Mail* (4 July 1946), 2, cited in Allport, *Demobbed*, 58.

²⁸ Paul Addison, *Now the War Is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-1951* (London: BBC Books, 1985), 17.

²⁹ Alan Holmans, 'Housing', in *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends*, ed. AH Halsey and Josephine Webb (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 469–510.

³⁰ George Gallup, ed., *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls: Great Britain 1937-1975* (London: Random House, 1976), 119, cited in Allport, *Demobbed*, 75.

³¹ Nicholas Merthyr Day, 'The Role of the Architect in Postwar State Housing. A Case Study of the Housing Work of the London County Council 1939-1956' (University of Warwick, 1988), 104.

aren't going to bring up our children, living in furnished rooms.³²

The author of this letter implies a wider point: that housing threatened to stunt men's entry into adulthood and, if young people refused to marry and have children, to handicap Britain's recovery. The *Picture Post* journalist added, 'it is a national responsibility to ensure that every person has the opportunity of obtaining accommodation which will give him the privacy, the comfort, the hygiene and the surroundings necessary not only for his personal happiness but also for the total well-being of the nation'.³³

Many couples separated. However, some persevered with the hope that access to a good home in the future would fix any cracks in their relationship. Optimism in the power of good housing to remedy marriage problems continued throughout the postwar period. For example, Claire Langhamer shares the story of Henry and Joyce Harris who featured in a 1954 'real-life' article in *Woman*, a best-selling women's magazine with weekly sales of around three million in the early 1960s.³⁴ The article, entitled 'The house that mended a marriage', explains how their marriage survived through the experience of building a home together and Henry's staunch belief that, '[i]f only we could get our own house, our marriage would be a success. There was nothing wrong with our love'.³⁵ The article made it clear to readers that housing had an environmental impact on the success or failure of marriages, a belief commonly expressed in other publications and public information films from the period.³⁶

In the 18 months following Victory in Europe, Sunday newspapers shared horror stories of marital assaults or even murders after couples discovered wartime infidelities.³⁷ As divorce rates peaked, it became clear that the British government had given little thought to the social impacts of men's absence on home life. Member of Parliament for Birmingham Erdington, John Allan Cecil Wright, wrote to *The Times* on 16 June 1943 to share his fears for the nation's fathers, '[w]hen legislation conscripting the manhood of

³² 'How to Get the Houses: The Outline of a Plan', *Picture Post* (14 July 1945), 16.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Robert Millar, *The New Classes* (London: Longmans, 1966), 235.

³⁵ 'The House That Mended a Marriage', *Woman* (15 May 1954), 53, cited in Claire Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (1 April 2005): 350.

³⁶ For example, 'What It Means to Live in a Good House', *Picture Post* (1 January 1944); Jill Craigie, *The Way We Live* (1946).

³⁷ Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race', and National Identity, 1945-64* (London: UCL Press, 1998), 84.

the nation was passed hurriedly by Parliament in the face of a deadly menace to our national existence, no thought was taken for the fathers of families'.³⁸ Organisations, such as the National Marriage Guidance Council, published advice manuals to help ease men's return home. These included George Pratt's *Soldier to Civilian: Problems of Readjustment* (1944), Kenneth Howard's *Sex Problems of the Returning Soldier* (1945) and Phoebe and Laurence Bendit's *Living Together Again* (1946).³⁹ Problems did not quickly ease and in 1948 the Home Office, following an investigation led by civil servant Sir Sidney Harris, began to support the NMGC with state funding.⁴⁰ The publications share quasi-psychological interpretations of domestic problems and offer advice on how best to acclimatise men to the postwar home. For example, the Bendits noted,

The casualties of war may be counted not only in the killed and wounded, but in the thousands of broken or battered homes where its repercussions have been felt... But now we are faced with the problem of building-up again not only the houses, but the relationships which make them homes.⁴¹

The Bendits shared the case of married couple David and Megan. After three years in a prisoner of war camp, David returned to his home in Wales but seemed restless and unable to settle back into domestic life. David's only enjoyment came from 'roaming the hills, and wandering from inn to inn drinking all the beer he could get'.⁴² One afternoon, Megan organised a tea party for David and his army friends but this descended into chaos as the men grabbed at the loaf and tore it to pieces, a common practice in their camp. When they realised their mistake, David apologised, 'I'm sorry, but we can't remember we're not in that – camp any more'.⁴³ The Bendits diagnosed David and his friends as 'people who had been thrown back by their experiences into primitive behaviour'.⁴⁴ As the landscape of expert knowledge expanded in the 1940s, advice manuals framed domestic troubles as a threat to national reconstruction. However, with the right training and domestic opportunities, experts could devise solutions to these problems.

³⁸ JA Cecil Wright, 'Letter to the Editor, Priority for Fathers', *The Times* (16 June 1943), 5.

³⁹ George Pratt, *Soldier to Civilian: Problems of Readjustment* (London: Whittlesey House, 1944); Kenneth Howard, *Sex Problems of the Returning Soldier* (London: S Pemberton, 1945); Phoebe Bendit and Laurence Bendit, *Living Together Again* (London: Gramol Publications, 1946).

⁴⁰ Francis, 'A Flight from Commitment?', 163.

⁴¹ Bendit and Bendit, *Living Together Again*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

More worrying psychological concerns lay behind men's demobilisation. Writing for the *Journal of Medical Science* in 1947, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Thomas Main warned that one quarter of all demobilised men might face serious social and psychological difficulties on their return to civilian life.⁴⁵ Alan Allport's history of demobilisation shares experiences of men who returned home but found themselves unable to eat with cutlery or sleep in a normal bed.⁴⁶ The limited availability of psychiatric help and lack of knowledge about posttraumatic stress meant that men simply had to get on with life. The expanded terrain of expert knowledge, particularly an increased interest among psychologists in psychoanalysis, brought some respite but these advances took many years to trickle-down into most men's everyday lives.⁴⁷

Sociologists and newspaper commentators also worried about the effect of men's absence on millions of children who grew up without a father figure.⁴⁸ An expanded culture of expertise, outlined in chapter two, fuelled fears that absent fathers had destabilised normal patterns of child development and increased the likelihood of homosexuality, teenage delinquency and other deviant behaviours.⁴⁹ Demobilised men therefore had to quickly adapt to their role as father in order to safeguard family relations and guarantee the success of the nation's recovery. As many fathers missed the early years of their children's upbringing, their return home could seem like the arrival of a stranger. Marjorie Crane told the BBC in 1985 that when her husband, Peter, returned from war his children refused to recognise him,

They just stared at him, round-eyed you know, and when he kept saying, 'Don't do this', and 'Don't do that', they said, 'Mum, who's that man that keeps coming in our house and

⁴⁵ Thomas Main, 'Clinical Problems of Repatriates', *The Journal of Medical Science* 93 (1947): 355, 363.

⁴⁶ Allport, *Demobbed*, 61.

⁴⁷ For further discussion of psychoanalytic narratives in the 1950s, particularly in relation to homosexuality, see Chris Waters, 'Wilde in the Fifties', in *Sex, Knowledge, and Receptions of the Past*, ed. Kate Fisher and Rebecca Langlands (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 278, 283.

⁴⁸ Laura King argues that newspapers promoted the idea of 'involved fathers' to counter the destabilising social effects of war and ease the return to normal family life, in Laura King, "'Now You See a Great Many Men Pushing Their Pram Proudly': Family-Orientated Masculinity Represented and Experienced in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain", *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 4 (1 December 2013): 602.

⁴⁹ For the link between absent fathers and homosexuality see Michael Schofield, *A Minority: A Report on the Life of the Male Homosexual in Great Britain* (London: Longmans, 1960), 65, discussed in Matt Cook, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London*, Gender and Sexualities in History (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 125. As an example of the link between absent fathers and teenage delinquency, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that '[t]he absence of so many fathers serving with the forces' had increased the burden on mothers and grandparents and contributed to a 'slackening of parental control', in 'Juvenile Delinquency in Manchester: Some Causes of the Heavy Increase', *The Manchester Guardian* (7 March 1941), 6.

staying all night?' I said, 'It's your father'. 'Well, we don't know him – who is he? Tell him to go away'.⁵⁰

Some fathers faced tough competition from their children for mothers' attention. For example, Geordie Todd, a fisherman from North Shields born in 1912, returned home in 1945 after three years away and found it difficult to dislodge his six-year-old son Peter from his marital bed. Peter had shared his mother's bed in Geordie's absence and, on his first night home, Peter burst into the bedroom shouting, '[y]ou, out, that's my mam's bed, not yours, out'. Geordie responded, '[w]ell, I'm yer dad, I'm supposed to stay here' but Peter did not understand and all three shared the bed that night.⁵¹ In men's absence, women had also taken on more roles in the home. And for men like Jo Mary Stafford's father, who served as a sergeant and 'prospered in the army' through 'years of barking parade-ground orders at luckless Tommies', his return home stripped him of 'his perks and his authority' and left him feeling emasculated.⁵²

Demobilisation in the mid-1940s brought the relationship between the home and men's identities as fathers and husbands into focus. At the same time, an expanded welfare state further changed gender roles within the home.⁵³ The welfare state brought many gains for working class families but, with its specific support for mothers and children, also reshaped the status of the male 'breadwinner'.⁵⁴ In 1945, the Population Committee of the Fabian Society recommended a reform of 'masculinity and the boundaries of the breadwinner ideal' as fathers had to adopt a joint role in children's lives, a requirement that could not be 'discharged by the father merely by his earning all the income'.⁵⁵ Johnny Bell, writing on the 1950s, also notes that although earning an income remained 'the fundamental responsibility of men', ideal masculine identities relied on more than the 'old model of fatherhood'.⁵⁶ As men's status as workers changed so too did women's involvement in the labour market: between 1931 and 1951 the proportion of

⁵⁰ Addison, *Now the War Is Over*, 1985, 22.

⁵¹ Steve Humphries and Pamela Gordon, *A Man's World, from Boyhood to Manhood 1900-1960* (London: BBC Books, 1996), 188.

⁵² Jo Mary Stafford, *Light in the Dust: An Autobiography* (Crief: Trustline, 1990), 20–21.

⁵³ Georgene H Seward, 'Sex Roles in Postwar Planning', *The Journal of Social Psychology* 19, no. 1 (February 1944): 163.

⁵⁴ On the significance of the Family Allowance and its support for mothers and children, see Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State* (London: Longman, 1982), 228.

⁵⁵ 'Evidence Submitted to the Royal Commission on Population by the Population Committee of the Fabian Society' (June 1945), paras. 69, 71–3, 95, 105–109, [LSE FSP K35/4](#), cited in Stephen Brooke, *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 126–27.

⁵⁶ Johnny Bell, 'Putting Dad in the Picture: Fatherhood in the Popular Women's Magazines of 1950s Australia', *Women's History Review* 22, no. 6 (December 2013): 905.

women aged 35 to 59 in employment increased from 26 per cent to 43 per cent.⁵⁷ Women's increased presence in the job market unsettled assumptions about families' reliance on male breadwinners and, in some families, shifted some of the burden of housework and childcare to men. These issues crystallised in the late 1940s as Britain ended the Second World War victorious but weary, and many men returned home to discover a new set of domestic troubles.

Men's experiences of returning home allow us to see that although well-planned homes and family-orientated masculinities predated the 1940s, the uniqueness of the postwar situation brought these themes closer together. As argued in chapters two and three, planners presented the spacious and private home as an environment to rebuild family life and, ultimately, reconstruct the nation. However, upon men's return home, this domestic ideal did not always match the reality. Housing shortages, marriage troubles and relationship difficulties with children meant that many men's experiences of the mid-1940s home stood at odd with the ideals promised in planning publications and at housing exhibitions.

Men's experiences of class on new estates

Historians have long-argued over the effect of families' relocation from inner-city housing to new estates, in suburbs and New Towns, on working class identity.⁵⁸ Jon Lawrence, among others, has contested the embourgeoisement thesis of postwar social investigators and identifies two definitions of class – one built on socio-economic conditions, the other on culture - which can change independently of each other.⁵⁹ Although the incomes and living standards of some working and middle class men grew more similar, this did not necessarily signal a convergence of class

⁵⁷ Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, 99.

⁵⁸ Most notably in Trevor Blackwell and Jeremy Seabrook, *A World Still to Win: The Reconstruction of the Post-War Working Class* (London: Faber & Faber, 1985), 89, 110; Stuart Laing, *Representations of Working-Class Life, 1957-1964* (London, 1986), 18-20; Mark Clapson, 'The Suburban Aspiration in England Since 1919', *Contemporary British History* 14, no. 1 (March 2000): 157.

⁵⁹ Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life', 273. Bourke also writes, '[m]en and women calling themselves 'working class' were drawing upon an identity based not only on their current position within society, but also on a position inherited from their parents and grandparents', in Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, 25. Angela Davis adds that social investigations of the 1940s and 1950s suffered from the zealous optimism of those who conducted the studies, which exaggerated divisions between class groups and made it appear as if domestic life on postwar estates broke radically from the past, in Angela Davis, 'A Critical Perspective on British Social Surveys and Community Studies and Their Accounts of Married Life c. 1945-1970', *Cultural and Social History* 6 (2009): 48-49.

identities.⁶⁰ Investigators often ignored the unsteady foundations upon which these lifestyles took root, with many families reliant on credit and hire purchase.⁶¹ Furthermore, many working class families found ways to continue past cultures on new estates.

I use the experience of Jimmy Wright, born in 1913, and his relationship with his son Brian, born in 1934, to support Lawrence's distinction and demonstrate the continuation of working class cultures on new housing estates. By examining Jimmy as a father, rather than a worker, this section draws a parallel between class identities on new estates and popular perceptions about fatherhood in mid-twentieth century Britain. Jimmy worked for the James Deuchar Brewery in Sunderland and moved to a community of new, self-contained council flats in the town's Millfield area in the mid-1930s.⁶² On the estate, Jimmy met other young working class fathers with children the same age as his son Brian. Jimmy nurtured a strong relationship with Brian through their attendance at Sunderland Association Football Club matches at Roker Park,

I used to carry him on me back and we used to go to the same spot at the local park, what they called the Fullwell and you met the same people standing in the same spots in a sixty thousand crowd... and they used to look forward to Brian and they used to help me with Brian.⁶³

Jimmy explained how he 'wasn't alone in taking Brian to the football match' and 'there was quite a number of children went with their parents to the football'.⁶⁴ Many men preferred to bring children into their social world and Jimmy's friends embraced Brian as 'one of the boys'.⁶⁵ Although the father-son relationship formed outside the home, and involved a masculine pastime that stretched back to the late nineteenth century, Jimmy understood the activity as related to his life on the new estate. He explained that his neighbours 'were all in our age group with the result that they had children in the same age group as Brian'.⁶⁶ Jimmy's new

⁶⁰ Sociological research in the 1960s also began to challenge this thesis, such as Margaret Stacey, *Tradition and Change: A Study of Banbury* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 156; John Goldthorpe, *The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour* (CUP Archive, 1968). For further discussion, see Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life', 288–89.

⁶¹ Millar identified the reliance of the 'technicist class' on credit and wrote, '[w]ithout credit they would never be able to buy their own houses, their washing machines, refrigerator and other symbols of social status', in Millar, *The New Classes*, 254.

⁶² Jimmy Wright (1993), 19, [TFC C590/01, Rolls 208-211](#).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

environment gave him more freedom to do as he wished as a father, ignore the social customs associated with old neighbourhoods and follow the actions of other young fathers.⁶⁷ His experience aligned with Ferdynand Zweig's finding that working class families' relocation to new estates broke 'some of the old habits, as the whole environment is so different, and has changed social perspectives'.⁶⁸

One of the biggest changes for men like Jimmy was the age of his neighbours. Since the interwar period new estates had become known as communities of young people. During the 1920s and 1930s, the LCC embarked on large-scale house building programmes at several sites on the capital's fringes such as Becontree, Watling and Roehampton. Becontree was particularly ambitious and, on its completion in 1934, became the biggest public housing development in the world.⁶⁹ Ross McKibbin reports that in the 1930s the average age on the estate was 23.7, with around half of the residents aged under 18.⁷⁰ The situation did not change after the war: for instance the New Town of Harlow reported 35 births per 1,000 people in 1952, which was twice the national average.⁷¹ Movement to a new estate also meant higher rents and a number of unforeseen costs, which encouraged many men to stop or curtail past habits such as smoking, drinking and gambling.⁷² The socio-economic environment of the new estate differed from most men's experiences of their old neighbourhood. However, this development did not necessarily mean that men's working class identities as fathers and husbands became 'classless' or more middle class.

Although there exists a continuum between the interwar and postwar decades, Andrzej Olechnowicz highlights Becontree's association with bad planning that failed to evoke a sense of community and the working class homogeneity of its residents.⁷³ Postwar planners took heed of these criticisms and attempted to build estates that answered these problems. In

⁶⁷ For example, many families wished to move away from the neighbourhood gossip of their old area, in Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970*, Family, Sexuality, and Social Relations in Past Times (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 218; Todd, *The People*, 177.

⁶⁸ Ferdynand Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London: Heinemann, 1961), 5.

⁶⁹ Andrzej Olechnowicz, *Working-Class Housing in England Between the Wars: The Becontree Estate*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 2.

⁷⁰ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 194.

⁷¹ Judith Atfield, 'Moving Home: Changing Attitudes to Residence and Identity', *The Journal of Architecture* 7, no. 3 (2002): 251.

⁷² Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), 118.

⁷³ Olechnowicz, *Working-Class Housing*, 4.

an attempt to remedy the class homogeneity of estates like Becontree, Labour's 1949 Housing Act signified the party's belief in mixed-class housing projects. Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health (1945-1951) with a responsibility for housing, imagined future neighbourhoods as mixed developments 'where the doctor, the grocer, the butcher and farm labourer all lived in the same street'.⁷⁴ Bevan's ideal community in fact represented a return to his childhood experience in a South Wales mining village rather than a radical leap into a classless future. Also, although estates would accommodate single people, couples and families from working and middle class backgrounds, different housing types ensured that inhabitants remained aware of their differences.⁷⁵

For some social investigators, men's experiences on new estates symbolised a move towards a middle class lifestyle. A nationwide study of the 1950s found that 28 per cent of working class families lived within five minutes' walk of other relatives, compared to 18 per cent of middle class families.⁷⁶ Peter Willmott and Michael Young described working class families' relocation away from parents as a 'middle class view'.⁷⁷ This simplistic analysis of new estates fails to accurately explain the actions and experiences of men like Jimmy. It only becomes possible to make sense of Jimmy's masculine identity when we look beyond the estate and examine how popular perceptions of fathers changed in mid-twentieth century Britain.

⁷⁴ Michael Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, vol. 2, 1945–1960 (London: Davis-Poynter, 1973), 72.

⁷⁵ For examples from the LCC Sheerwater Estate, see Day, 'The Role of the Architect', 243.

⁷⁶ Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English Character* (London: The Cresset Press, 1955), 45.

⁷⁷ They noted, 'working-class people do, by and large, live closer to their parents' and found that in their Woodford sample 26 per cent of middle class subjects and 42 per cent of working class subjects lived in the same borough as their parents, in Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 37, 71.



Figure 4.1: 'In time Fathers make Splendid Mothers' from 'How to Be a Father', *Picture Post* (29 July 1939).

We can learn more when we position the ostensible 'classlessness' of mixed developments, imagined by planners in the 1940s, alongside understandings of fatherhood found in newspapers, magazines and sociological studies. Two examples further illustrate this point. The *Picture Post* article 'How to be a Father' (1939) presents an image of men's attendance at mothercraft training classes in London. The article notes how men 'learn the theory of mothercraft, as well as its practice' and 'how to dress and undress the baby, what clothes to give him, and what to do about him when he seems unwell'.⁷⁸ An accompanying photograph shows two fathers and daughters with the caption, 'In Time, Fathers make Splendid Mothers' (figure 4.1).⁷⁹ *Picture Post's* depiction of men as second mothers stood in contrast to the interwar fathercraft movement, discussed in Tim Fisher's research, which stressed differences between male and female parenting roles.⁸⁰ It also seems anomalous to men's understanding of fatherhood in the 1930s and 1940s as something distinct from the feminine practices of motherhood.⁸¹ More importantly, in terms of how this relates to the classlessness of new estates, the feature explains that men's

⁷⁸ 'How to Be a Father', *Picture Post* (29 July 1939), 55.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Tim Fisher, 'Fatherhood and the British Fathercraft Movement, 1919–39', *Gender & History* 17, no. 2 (1 August 2005): 451.

⁸¹ King writes, '[t]he twentieth century was by no means a time of linear progression towards a convergence of the sexes; whilst many questions were raised about this matter, the emphasis on the differentiation between male and female parenting remained', in Laura King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, 1914-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 193.

ability to be a good father did not depend on class and notes, 'every kind of profession or trade is represented' and that 'lawyers, electrical engineers, cleaners, and even builders have nimble fingers when it comes to doing up tiny buttons and untying ribbons'.⁸²

Fatherhood as a classless identity continued as a popular representation among sociologists and the media into the 1950s. From his study of working class men in the early 1950s, Zweig wrote: '[w]orkers make as good sons, husbands, and fathers as men of other classes; the family bond is as strong as, if not stronger than, it is in other classes; and the environment plays as big a part in their attitude to their families and in their relationships as they do anywhere else'.⁸³ Zweig's assessment matched the views of those who organised the YMCA's first Father and Son week at Lake Windermere in 1955. The *Manchester Guardian* reported that 100 fathers and sons came from across the country to spend the week together and organisers stressed that class backgrounds should not impede fathers' abilities.⁸⁴ The YMCA worried that the 'distractions of town life' had upset the relationship between fathers and sons and promoted this 'experiment' as an answer to family troubles.⁸⁵ Whether or not fathers and sons faced a crisis in 1955, the article most insightfully describes the fathers involved,

Dressed in camping clothes, the barristers, doctors, musicians, clerks, labourers, looked much alike and mixed together as easily as characters in a propaganda film about democracy. None of the men I asked knew each other's job – 'They're just Tom or Dick to me', as one man put it.⁸⁶

The newspaper wished to make clear that class had no impact on men's effectiveness as fathers, a message identical to the *Picture Post* article 16 years earlier. The YMCA described the week as an 'overwhelming success' with plans to continue the Father and Son Week at future national camps.⁸⁷ These examples help illustrate perceptions of fatherhood as a classless identity that did not depend on particular socio-economic contexts. They also align with the wider belief that although class

⁸² 'How to Be a Father', 55.

⁸³ Ferdinand Zweig, *The British Worker* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1952), 63.

⁸⁴ Our Special Correspondent, 'Bringing Fathers and Sons Closer Together: An Experiment Succeeds', *The Manchester Guardian* (2 September 1955), 5.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Lord Mathers, President of Edinburgh YMCA, wrote to the Glasgow Herald in 1956 to express his belief that 'Scottish fathers might welcome a similar opportunity' and that a Father and Son Programme would run at Dunbar House that August, in George Mathers, 'Letter to the Editor', *Glasgow Herald* (20 January 1956), 6.

hierarchies continued throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, environments like housing estates gave working class men more *opportunities* to succeed as fathers than previously found in their old accommodation.

Writing in 1958, sociologist Norman Dennis explained, 'housing estates represent that exaggerated result of processes that are common to our society'.⁸⁸ As with the Lansbury Estate in East London, discussed in the previous chapter, Dennis understood life on housing estates as a magnified account of changes that policymakers hoped would emerge across the nation. Matt Cook, in his assessment of queer domesticities, draws a comparable distinction between central London's overcrowded bedsits and new suburban developments of the interwar and postwar decades.⁸⁹ Cook explains that the design of new estates reflected and entrenched 'prevailing ideas about normative and nominally middle-class home and families' and came to represent 'postwar domestic ideals and aspirations in ways that the bed-sitters of central London decidedly did not'.⁹⁰

Working class men like Jimmy represented a form of masculinity that planners hoped would proliferate in the middle decades of the twentieth century.⁹¹ Jimmy's experiences allows us to see how young men, brought together in communities of new social housing, found ways to perform active forms of fatherhood that stood outside traditions associated with their old neighbourhoods. But although these young fathers enjoyed improved socio-economic conditions they did not abandon past working class customs. In Jimmy's case, he enjoyed time spent with his son and his friends at football matches.⁹² Their attendance is not remarkable in itself, as fathers and sons watched football together prior to the Second World War. Of greater significance is how Jimmy understood his actions as a father as being similar to other young men who lived on the estate, rather than a reproduction of his own father or previous generations.

⁸⁸ Norman Dennis, 'The Popularity of the Neighbourhood Community Idea', *The Sociological Review* 6, no. 2 (1 December 1958): 197–98.

⁸⁹ Cook, *Queer Domesticities*, 151.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ For examples, see the model masculine lifestyles discussed in chap. 3, 123–131.

⁹² The late 1940s witnessed a renewed enthusiasm for traditional leisure activities; with attendance at football matches reaching a peak. It was also common for fathers and sons to go together, in Stephen Humphries and John Taylor, *The Making of Modern London, 1945–1985* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1986), 29.

Men's experiences of past, present and future

Men's experiences of demobilisation and new estates changed domestic lives and men's roles as fathers and husbands in many ways. However, as previous chapters have highlighted, framing these developments as a radical break from the past constructs a history at odds with many inhabitants' domestic experiences.⁹³ This assumption also falsely mythologises 1945 as a historical turning-point, when in fact men's experiences of domestic change stretched from the 1930s to the 1960s.⁹⁴ Joanna Bourke has questioned the 'newness' of men's postwar domestic roles, arguing that '[m]en did not necessarily do *more* childcare, cooking, or cleaning between the 1890s and the 1950s. In fact, with declining family size, running water, and gas stoves, they may have been doing less of these three activities'.⁹⁵ Although this study does not quantify men's domestic activities across historical periods, Bourke arguably underplays the extent of changes in men's domestic roles in mid-twentieth century Britain. Other works, such as Elizabeth Roberts' study of family life in Barrow-in-Furness, Lancaster and Preston between 1940 and 1970, found that 'fathers were much more involved with their children than was the case in the previous generation'.⁹⁶ She adds, 'there does not appear to be any one explanation for this development', and therefore leaves unaddressed the effect of improved domestic conditions on men's role as fathers.⁹⁷ More convincingly, Claire Langhamer writes that a 'postwar narrative of new beginnings and historically-distinct lifestyles neglects significant aspects of pre-war domestic life across social classes' and that '[w]hile home life in the 1950s was not an unproblematic return to earlier patterns, neither was it sufficiently distinct from interwar experiences to be viewed as a 'new' model of living'.⁹⁸ For Langhamer, although the roots of the home-centred society, whether real or imagined, first appear in earlier decades, postwar affluence 'enabled modern domesticity to be actualised'.⁹⁹ This final section uses the lived experiences of working class Salford residents Ray Rochford and

⁹³ For example, see chap. 2, 91-94 and chap. 3, 141-144.

⁹⁴ Philippa Levine makes this observation and calls upon historians of twentieth century Britain to further scrutinise continuity and change across the pre and postwar decades, in Laura Nym Mayhall et al., 'Roundtable: Twentieth-Century British History in North America', *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 3 (1 September 2010): 398.

⁹⁵ Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, 84.

⁹⁶ Roberts, *Women and Families*, 38.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁹⁸ Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', 360, 362.

⁹⁹ Claire Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 1 (March 2007): 179. Also see Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain'.

Frank Davies to build-upon Langhamer's argument and illustrate the effects of the past on men's domestic lives in the mid-twentieth century.

Many historians agree that the traditional gender roles of male breadwinner and stay-at-home wife continued in mid-twentieth century Britain.¹⁰⁰ Ray, born in 1925, married and became a father in the late 1940s and provides an example of how some men continued masculine roles from the past. Ray started work as a mill hand at age 14, joined the navy three years later and served in the Far East for most of the Second World War.¹⁰¹ On his return home, he married in 1947, settled in Salford and fathered five children between 1948 and 1967.¹⁰² Although Ray's wife spent all day with 'a load of kids around her feet', he defined a man's role as 'master of the house' and expected an evening meal on the table when he came home.¹⁰³ Ray justified his actions as they mirrored the domestic practices of his father,

When he used to come in she'd undo his boots and sometimes she'd wash his feet and he always sat at the head of the table and when I got married I carried on the same things and my wife accepted this cos she was brought up by her mother that the man was the main thing in the house.

Ray's father worked as a slaughterman for the Co-operative Grocer and died in 1933, leaving Ray's mother to raise the family alone on her small earnings from cleaning jobs.¹⁰⁴ Ray spoke about this period of his life in the early 1990s. The passage of time encouraged Ray to re-evaluate his actions as a husband and father and consider why he acted in this manner. He explained that his treatment of his wife came from what he saw in his childhood, 'we used to watch this as kids and that's the way we was indoctrinated and that's the way a man lives'.¹⁰⁵ Although Ray's domestic roles seem far removed from men like Robert and Jimmy, all three men used the past to make sense of their domestic lives in the present, albeit in different ways.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship', 195; Brooke, *Sexual Politics*, 119, 140, 141; King, *Family Men*, 26.

¹⁰¹ Humphries and Gordon, *A Labour of Love*.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Ray Rochford (1993), 11, [TFC C590/01, Rolls 47-49](#).

¹⁰⁴ Humphries and Gordon, *A Labour of Love*.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Unlike Ray, Robert and Jimmy defined their actions as fathers in contrast to previous generations and the men who lived in their old neighbourhoods.

Frank, born in 1921, lived in Salford and worked as an engineer. Unlike Ray, he wanted to give his daughter Val, born in 1953, a father who differed from his own,

I wanted to be different to how me own father treated us. Well, I thought, well you know you're responsible for this new life. So I was determined to be the father, to do everything you know, everything that's expected of you. I wanted to be there and let them talk to me if they wanted to and listen to all the problems and do all that's necessary so that they can look upon me as a father, not as some remote man that brings money in every week.¹⁰⁷

Frank constructed his identity as a father in relation to his own paternal experiences but understood the past as a negative model rather than something to replicate in the present.¹⁰⁸ Social investigators found this view increasingly common in their studies of families in the 1950s. Elizabeth Bott, for example, noted how interviewees described their current approach to parenting in contrast to concepts such as 'the older generation' and 'Victorian families'.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Zweig's respondents explained, '[m]y father had power over us; I can't boss [my children]', '[m]y father never bothered with us' and 'I suppose I am a better father than my own'.¹¹⁰ Pat Ayers' study of Liverpool's North End describes how men exhibited elements of new and old masculinities,

Understandings of manhood shifted to accommodate post-war changes and there is evidence of the emergence of new, home-focused constructions of masculinity in some parts of the city. However, traditional features persisted alongside the new and were woven into gendered identities of local men.¹¹¹

As men returned from war and a lucky few moved into new homes, many thought about their masculine identity not as something predetermined by class or social factors but as something they could actively shape. John Tosh and Michael Roper describe the transfer of power from one generation to the next as 'one of the most precarious moments in the

¹⁰⁷ Humphries and Gordon, *A Man's World*, 198.

¹⁰⁸ Connell also highlights the centrality of 'negative examples' as they enable men to source meaning by distancing themselves from these identities, RW Connell, *Masculinities*, Second Edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 167.

¹⁰⁹ Elizabeth Bott, *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms, and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families*, Second Edition (New York: Free Press, 1957), 206.

¹¹⁰ Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, 22–23.

¹¹¹ Pat Ayers, 'Work, Culture and Gender: The Making of Masculinities in Post-War Liverpool', *Labour History Review* 69, no. 2 (August 2004): 154.

reproduction of masculinity', and that men face the option to 'take on the older generation's gender identity without question' or 'mount a challenge'.¹¹² The traditional exchange of masculine knowledge between fathers and sons, which came with men working together in the same occupation, became less likely. Willmott and Young's sociological study of Bethnal Green in the mid-1950s calculated that only ten out of the 45 men in their sample followed the same occupation as their father.¹¹³ Although unable to identify the extent of this change, Willmott and Young surmised the decline of this feature of working class life.¹¹⁴ This meant that men were less likely to live with 'family and workplace intertwined' as 'men who work with fathers or brothers naturally see them every weekday, and often see a good deal of them off work as well'.¹¹⁵ As young families relocated to housing estates and found themselves no longer in daily contact with parents and extended family, a typical feature of old neighbourhoods, men looked to their male friends and neighbours for guidance on how to act and behave as fathers and husbands.¹¹⁶

As previously noted, Lynn Segal argues that two opposing faces of masculinity emerged in the 1950s: the forward looking 'family man', content with home and garden, and the 'wartime hero' who put freedom before family.¹¹⁷ Although a generation gap certainly seems to have widened in the late 1950s and 1960s, Segal's rigid division fails to highlight that *all* men used the past to inform their masculine identities, whether they chose to replicate or repudiate the practices of previous generations.¹¹⁸ Frank Mort, Chris Waters and Becky Conekin more accurately describe the period 1945 to 1964 as 'a balancing act between innovation and tradition'.¹¹⁹ Like expert knowledge and the housing exhibitions discussed in previous chapters, men's gendered identities stood between concepts of past,

¹¹² Michael Roper and John Tosh, 'Introduction', in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, ed. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), 17.

¹¹³ Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Penguin, 2007), 97. Zweig also found that fewer than 13 per cent of men interviewed worked in the same or a similar trade than their father, in Zweig, *The British Worker*, 139.

¹¹⁴ Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, 2007, 102.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 37, 71.

¹¹⁷ Lynn Segal, 'Look Back in Anger: Men in the Fifties', in *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, ed. Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988), 88.

¹¹⁸ Bourke supports Michael Schofield's view that, '[t]here are clear signs of alienation between the young people of today and the adult generations' in Michael Schofield, *The Sexual Behaviour of Young People* (London: Prentice Hall, 1965), 6–7, discussed in Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, 46.

¹¹⁹ Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters, *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain, 1945-1964* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1999), 20.

present and future that made new practices possible, but restricted any radical break from traditional customs.

Even though Robert, Jimmy, Ray and Frank came from similar working class backgrounds, the men that moved into well-planned houses found opportunities to interact with wives and children in new ways. Robert and Jimmy's homes did not transform them into 'new men', and of course many patriarchal men lived in well-planned homes, but they offered environments that made it easier for them to be the type of father and husband they wished to become. As Langhamer rightly observes, the subjectivities of generation, occupation, social identity and individual relationship networks makes it impossible to put forward a universal account of domesticated masculinity.¹²⁰ Instead, as I argue in this chapter, men used the home to perform family-orientated masculine identities in ways that ran parallel to changes in how planners thought about gender and the home.

Inside the home

The remainder of this chapter brings us inside the home and establishes what we can learn when changes in masculine actions and behaviours are viewed alongside planning ideas detailed in previous chapters. I analyse the home as a collection of distinct areas and objects to show how men's movement into well-planned homes provided the space and privacy required to perform family-orientated identities. This approach builds upon Julie-Marie Strange's examination of Victorian and Edwardian working class fathers and her argument that even small, working class homes contained multiple sites that 'held specific, but also fluid, gender-, age- and affect-related meanings'.¹²¹ A spatial and material approach also redresses Martin Francis's criticism that historical studies of men have overly focused on elite, homosocial environments that fail to capture everyday, working class experiences.¹²² This section therefore focuses on men's use of living rooms, dining spaces, bedrooms, gardens and sheds to perform new identities as fathers and husbands. Unlike Strange, I articulate the

¹²⁰ Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', 354–55.

¹²¹ Julie-Marie Strange, 'Fathers at Home: Life Writing and Late-Victorian and Edwardian Plebeian Domestic Masculinities', *Gender & History* 27, no. 3, Special Issue Men at Home (November 2015): 704.

¹²² Martin Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity', *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (22 November 2002): 639.

influences of class and view men's lived experiences alongside planners' prescriptions for what inhabitants *should* do in their homes. I therefore not only document inhabitants' reception of planning ideas but also assesses their agency to appropriate space to fit their everyday needs.

Housework and privacy

Observers and inhabitants often discussed men's domestic presence in relation to their performance of household chores. As becomes clear, men's justification for helping around the home relied on a number of gender and class expectations. However, underlying class and gender influences, physical space also impacted men's willingness to help.

The Mass Observation directive 'Domestic Male' (1948) asked upper-working and lower-middle class male respondents how much they helped with housework and the reasons behind their willingness or unwillingness to help. The vast majority responded positively and shared detailed lists of tasks performed, with only one in 25 of the belief that men should not help with domestic duties.¹²³ Frank Herbert Ogilvy Birnie, a 27-year-old insurance clerk, understood his help as a 'sign of sex equality and comradeship' but listed tasks such as 'answering the front door bell' and 'fetching the milk in from the door', which somewhat belied his account of domestic egalitarianism.¹²⁴ Twenty-year-old JW Alger listed more substantial chores such as 'moving coal, helping with painting and decorating, electrical repairs, gardening' and stressed the need to share domestic work 'so that the housewife can have some time to herself'.¹²⁵ He added that if men fail to help, 'their home life just becomes a commercial proposition', in which men pay wives to run the home.¹²⁶ Another respondent, Mr Sehey, explained, 'I know of only one case where the husband gives no help and that is the case of a farmer who works very hard physically all day'.¹²⁷ Sehey felt comfortable in his role and jokingly noted how his male friends compare domestic work and need a 'Husbands Trade Union' to counter their wives' unfair demands.

¹²³ 'Domestic Male', in *Mass-Observation Bulletin No. 18* (1948), 4, [MO SxMOA1/1/13/6/9](#).

¹²⁴ Frank Herbert Ogilvy Birnie, 'Directive Replies March-April 1948', [MO SxMOA1/3/111](#).

¹²⁵ JW Alger, 'Directive Replies', [MO SxMOA1/3/111](#).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Mr Sehey, 'Directive Replies', [MO SxMOA1/3/111](#).

'Domestic Male' presents a window into respondents' domestic lives and indicates how men understood their role in the home. Some respondents described tasks as naturally masculine and framed housework as a component of traditional masculinity. For example, Mr Chapman, a 42-year-old married yarn agent, explained, 'I feel that a few jobs about the house should be done by me, such as have always been men's jobs', and interestingly offers the example of help 'with the children when time or occasion presses'.¹²⁸ Others understood their assistance in terms of class. For example, Robert Williamson, in his interview with Steve Humphries and Pamela Gordon, justified his actions as part of his working class identity,

I think everything should be shared in family life, especially... in that environment where we were brought up, you know, working class environment. I mean, they're born to the other type in the highest echelons aren't they, to have servants and things like that to do these menial tasks.¹²⁹

Robert advised, 'a good basis for a good married life is help with the chores, especially the menial ones. Don't interfere with the cooking. If she's a good cook let her carry on being a good cook but you be a good washer upper and you'll have a happy life'.¹³⁰ He espoused an attitude towards housework similar to the views of working and middle class MO respondents, in which class did not determine a man's ability to help with domestic chores but could serve as a means to justify one's actions.

Contrary to the experiences of Robert and most MO respondents, Ray Rochford claimed that, among his working class friends, 'men did no housework whatsoever'.¹³¹ He explained that his friends' unwillingness to help came from the risk of other men seeing,

The husband would never go shopping, no way, and as for polishing and cleaning the windows you daren't be seen... You might do it secretly; he might hang the washing out for his wife in the backyard but never in the front street because he'd lose face.¹³²

Ray added, '[f]ace was very important in them days. It was such a close knit community and you had to abide by the rules. You see, he would lose

¹²⁸ Mr Chapman, 'Directive Replies', MO SxMOA1/3/111.

¹²⁹ Williamson, 41, TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Rochford, 11, TFC C590/01, Rolls 47-49.

¹³² *Ibid.*

his manly image if he was seen cleaning the front step. They'd take the mickey out of him, they'd have a laugh'.¹³³ When Robert's interviewer told him that some men, like Ray, claimed to offer no help, he responded, 'these men are lying because you could see 'em with their shopping lists in their hands'.¹³⁴ Robert's testimony explored events that took place more than fifty years ago and therefore most likely reflected contemporary public discourses about masculine roles, a process Kate Fisher and Simon Szreter describe as a 'dialogue with the present'.¹³⁵ However, regardless of the context within which Robert evoked these ideas, what remains important is his focus on the effect of 'being seen' on men's willingness to perform particular actions such as helping wives with shopping.

Group interviews on housework conducted for Elizabeth Bott's sociological study *Family and Social Network* (1957) support Robert's claim that men covertly helped wives with domestic tasks. One male respondent stated, '[a] lot of men wouldn't mind helping their wives if the curtains were drawn so people couldn't see'.¹³⁶ Fisher and Szreter encountered an identical narrative in their interview with Grace, born in Hertfordshire in 1922, and her account of her husband Colin and his friend Chris,

Colin wasn't a bit domesticated. Not a bit... Colin would dry the dishes and he used to say 'Look sharp as our Chris knocks at door'. He said, 'I don't want him watch- catching me drying the dishes'.¹³⁷

Elizabeth Roberts' investigation of family life in northern England also found that men rarely helped with jobs such as window-cleaning or donkey-stoning (scouring the front steps) as this 'exposed them to the sight and therefore the mockery of passers-by'.¹³⁸ Although Ray and his friends stood against the family-orientated ideals of planners, their unwillingness to help related to the home's physical design. For men, helping around the house did not necessarily create problems – the greater threat came from people, external to the family, seeing men perform domestic chores that brought into question their masculine identity.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Williamson, 45, *TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163*.

¹³⁵ Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England 1918-1963* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11–13.

¹³⁶ Bott, *Family and Social Network*, 70–71.

¹³⁷ Szreter and Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution*, 209.

¹³⁸ Roberts, *Women and Families*, 37.

Two things changed in well-planned homes that made men more willing to help with housework: good design lessened the risk of others witnessing men as they helped with chores; and customs on new estates solidified a greater distinction between public and private spaces. The previous chapter described planners' use of photographs to emphasise differences between the Lansbury Estate and the old community of Poplar. The photographs drew particular attention to how inhabitants' private lives spilled-out onto the street in Poplar and suggested that a more rigid division between public and private spaces on the new estate would help remedy problems that hampered family life in the past.

Men in urban, high-density housing found access to privacy particularly difficult. Mr Dudley lived in Houghton, a postwar working class neighbourhood on the outskirts of Coventry, and told sociologist Leo Kuper in 1953 how he felt under continual observation in his badly-planned home,

There is no privacy... You look at the houses there – they must feel as though you are looking at them. You look out of the bedroom windows into their bedrooms... You turn the corner coming home and everybody's eyes are on you.¹³⁹

Although recently built, planners' misguided arrangement of high-density housing meant that Mr Dudley could not escape the gaze of his neighbours. Whether or not Mr Dudley's neighbours watched him from afar did not matter as he felt under constant observation and therefore acted in a particular way. Stephen Whitehead identifies arguments from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1977) that allow us to more fully understand men's experience of privacy and housework.¹⁴⁰ He explains, 'we regulate our own bodies in the knowledge and presence of the authoritative gaze... whereby the discursive subject comes to discipline and manage her/his body as self-surveillance'.¹⁴¹ In badly-planned homes and unsure if anyone is watching, men like Mr Dudley self-censored their actions and behaviours accordingly. Although planners obviously did not articulate their ideas in the language of Foucault, they appear to have

¹³⁹ Leo Kuper, 'Blueprint for Living Together', in *Living in Towns*, ed. Leo Kuper (London: The Cresset Press, 1953), 22–23.

¹⁴⁰ Most notably, the concept of permanent visibility and Jeremy Bentham's imagined prison design, the Panopticon, in Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

¹⁴¹ Stephen Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions* (Wiley, 2002), 195.

understood that bad housing designs, which offered minimal protection from the gaze of others, inhibited men's actions within the home.

Planners also hoped that customs on new estates, which more clearly established public and private spaces, would reduce the likelihood that neighbours would visit unannounced and catch men in the act of housework. Several male interviewees told Ferdynand Zweig that neighbours restrict a man's freedom and privacy as, '[w]e won't be able to get rid of them if we are too friendly'.¹⁴² Kuper's Coventry inhabitants shared similar annoyances,

In the prefab, I used to come home and find people in every night; that got me wild. I was rude to one woman in particular. I told her straight out that it was time she went but she thought I was being funny, and said: 'Isn't he a card'.¹⁴³

Traditional customs in old neighbourhoods, such as leaving the front door open or unlocked and 'on the latch', changed as men moved to well-planned homes on new estates.¹⁴⁴ John Jones, who moved to Lansbury as a child in the mid-1950s and remained on the estate the rest of his life, told the *Guardian* in 2001 'that people's lives did become exclusive; everyone stopped leaving their front doors open or leaving the key dangling through the letterbox. It was just that no one really knew each other any more'.¹⁴⁵

Joanna Bourke questions the extent to which working class lives, like John's, changed as families moved to new estates and highlights informal methods to demarcate public/private space in old neighbourhoods, such as an unwritten rule among children that upstairs in friends' houses remained out-of-bounds.¹⁴⁶ However, Bourke also recognises that '[i]mprovements in working-class housing probably had the biggest impact on manly housework'.¹⁴⁷ Social investigators also found evidence of this change in the 1950s. JM Mogey examined the domestic lives of 60 families from the Oxford area in 1955: one half lived in St. Ebbes, described as a 'tightly

¹⁴² Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, 117.

¹⁴³ Kuper, 'Blueprint for Living Together', 59.

¹⁴⁴ Dennis Chapman, *The Home and Social Status* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), 69.

¹⁴⁵ John Crace, 'Keys to the Future', *The Guardian* (11 July 2001), <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2001/jul/11/communities.urbandesign>, accessed 12 October 2015.

¹⁴⁶ This example comes from Elizabeth Blackburn, *In and Out the Windows: A Story of Changes in Working Class Life 1902-1977 in a Small East Lancashire Community* (Burnley: FH Brown, 1979), 15, cited in Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, 143.

¹⁴⁷ Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, 84.

packed together [neighbourhood] condemned by the local authority and about to be cleared away'; the other half lived in Barton, 'a post-1945 municipal housing project'.¹⁴⁸ Residents in the two samples shared similar occupations and class backgrounds.¹⁴⁹ Mogey reported that 65 per cent of households in St. Ebbes rigidly divided housework between husbands and wives, whereas husbands in Barton helped more with cooking, cleaning and general chores and only 20 per cent reported a rigid division of labour.¹⁵⁰ Peter Willmott and Michael Young reached similar conclusions in their comparative study of Bethnal Green and Woodford, a suburban town in North East London.¹⁵¹ In Woodford, 82 per cent of the 92 couples surveyed said that husbands regularly helped their wives with housework, such as Mr Hammond who 'washes up the dishes every night and lays the breakfast for the morning', Mr Clark who hovers for his wife 'while she does a bit of washing' and Mr Davis who 'polishes the floor and helps to make the beds at the week-ends, and during the week takes the dog out for one of his twice-daily walks'.¹⁵² The situation differed in Bethnal Green as only 47 per cent of the 98 couples interviewed reported regular help from husbands.¹⁵³

Residence in a well-planned house does not fully explain why some men helped with domestic chores whereas others did not. We do not know whether men like Ray would have helped more if they lived in homes that guaranteed greater protection from the gaze of others. However, MO responses, oral history interviews and sociological investigations all highlight the importance of privacy for men's willingness to help around the home. These experiential accounts also align with planning ideals discussed in previous chapters, in which well-planned, private homes made it easier for men to perform family-orientated identities.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ JM Mogey, 'Changes in Family Life Experienced by English Workers Moving from Slums to Housing Estates', *Marriage and Family Living*, Housing and Community Development, 17, no. 2 (May 1955): 123–25.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Research took place between 1957 and 1959, Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 30.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ For example, the experience of Mr Citizen who spent his Saturday evening at home with family, discussed in chap. 3, 130.

Living rooms

Social investigators observed differences in men's use of the living room in well-planned homes. Zweig, for instance, reported that working class families on new estates had adopted a 'living-room mentality' that replaced a 'kitchen mentality'.¹⁵⁵ The orientation of family life around the living room helped dilute traditional associations of domestic space with kitchens and femininity, and therefore made homes more inviting locations for men to spend their spare time.¹⁵⁶

Of course, living rooms existed before the 1940s. However, as discussed in chapter three, planners promoted this space at postwar exhibitions as a location for fathers and children to spend time together, even if this only involved presence in the same room at the same time.¹⁵⁷ Elizabeth Roberts notes a number of other factors that changed families' use of the living room.¹⁵⁸ Most significantly, the arrival of the television in working class homes in the 1950s provided a convenient and cost-effective evening activity that brought family members together in one room.¹⁵⁹ As homes became more inviting, children also spent less time outdoors and used the living room to complete homework, which occupied more of their time in the postwar decades.¹⁶⁰

Robert Williamson's living room played a particular role in his relationship with his daughter Norma. Robert described how they spent evenings in the living room playing 'simple games like Snap and Draughts'.¹⁶¹ Robert also supported his wife and daughter's passion for knitting, 'my job was to get these hanks of wool and wind 'em into balls you see, there was knitting going on at every given opportunity at our house'.¹⁶² Jimmy Wright similarly remembered Sunday as 'a day of rest and recreation' and recalled how he

¹⁵⁵ Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, 5.

¹⁵⁶ Willmott and Young observed that working class men in Bethnal Green felt a greater sense of domestic exclusion than men on the Woodford Estate, in Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 61. The CoID also noted that some homes are 'so delicately feminine in style that men and children are restricted and uncomfortable in them', in Council of Industrial Design, *Design for a Housewife's Home, New Home 2* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1948), 2–3, [DCA /32/2/1/66](#).

¹⁵⁷ For example, see Frank Austin and Neville Ward's model living room at the 1949 Ideal Home Exhibition (figure 3.5).

¹⁵⁸ Roberts, *Women and Families*, 41.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Dennis Chapman found that in summer months most children completed homework in the sitting-room or parlour (29 per cent); in winter months most children worked in the kitchen-living room (40 per cent) with only a small number going to their bedrooms (six per cent), in Chapman, *The Home and Social Status*, 78. Roberts highlights children's increased amount of homework, in Roberts, *Women and Families*, 41.

¹⁶¹ Williamson, 48, [TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163](#).

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

often spent time at home playing Ludo or Snakes and Ladders with his wife and son Brian in the living room.¹⁶³

The living room as a location for family games transcended class. The architect Anthony Cox (1915-1993) designed public buildings in London after the war and lived in the affluent suburb of Hampstead with his wife, Susan, and two daughters, Joanna and Sarah. Joanna shared her memories of home life in the 1950s with researchers from the Geffrye Museum in 2004 and fondly recalled her father's involvement in board games in the living room,

I remember certainly playing things like Heads Bodies and Legs with Daddy, and of course he was brilliant at that, he used to make very witty contributions to Heads Bodies and Legs.¹⁶⁴

The class backgrounds of Robert, Jimmy and Anthony differed but all three used the living room as a space to play with their children. These examples illustrate how some men used living rooms to play an active role in their children's lives, which aligned with the family-orientated domestic ideals promoted in planning publications and at housing exhibitions.

However, planners' ideal vision of the living room as a location for family activities did not always materialise as imagined and created problems for many families. One young man told psychiatrists Phoebe and Laurence Bendit,

There are so many of us in the house you can hear the others think... And as for ever being able to rest, it is always a toss-up whether the wireless, young John's recorder played out of tune, or the banging of the bathroom door make the most row. In fact... it's a sort of Bedlam, yet most people would say we are a quiet household.¹⁶⁵

Jill Craigie depicts similar problems in the realist, planning film *The Way We Live*.¹⁶⁶ The film, set in Plymouth, follows the working class

¹⁶³ Wright, 3, TFC C590/01, Rolls 208-211.

¹⁶⁴ Transcript of Louise Brodie talking to Joanna Cox and Sally Cox at 5 Bacons Lane (23 August 2004), 80, DHC 83/2008-10.

¹⁶⁵ Bendit and Bendit, *Living Together Again*, 61.

¹⁶⁶ For more detailed analysis of *The Way We Live*, see Mark Tewdwr-Jones, 'From Town Hall to Cinema: Documentary Film as Planning Propaganda in Post-War Britain', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

Copperwheat family as they await information on a new home after their previous address was destroyed in the Blitz. Craigie chose to cast local residents in the main roles to enhance the film's realism and best depict families' everyday domestic experiences. The Copperwheats find temporary accommodation in spare rooms of Mrs Hines but George Copperwheat, played by dockyard worker Francis Lunt, particularly struggles to readjust. He misses his old home as his 'father lived there and his father before him' and spends his evenings in the small living room in the company of his wife, daughters and mother-in-law.¹⁶⁷ He attempts to read and listen to the wireless but his daughter demands silence to complete her homework and the noise of his wife's knitting distracts everyone.¹⁶⁸ Although George spent his evenings at home, accordant with planners' family-orientated masculine ideal, he found himself unable to relax and his leisure time restricted (figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2: George Copperwheat spending his evening at home with his family, in Jill Craigie's *The Way We Live* (1946).

Although *The Way We Live* presents a fictional representation of problems that could emerge when all family members spent evenings together in the living room, and depicts temporary rather than permanent accommodation, Craigie sought to realistically convey the postwar experiences of working class families in Plymouth. The film contradicts the ideal vision for living rooms that planners disseminated at housing exhibitions, in which families

¹⁶⁷ Craigie, *The Way We Live*.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

came together in the living room to engage in individual activities that did not impinge upon other family members.¹⁶⁹ Craigie uses the character of George to draw particular attention to the potential conflict between this planning ideal and men's desire to use the living room as a location for leisure.

Sociologists WV Hole and JJ Attenburrow captured the root of the problem when they noted that although families 'were accustomed to multiple use of rooms in old accommodation... a clear distinction seemed to exist in their thinking between behaviours in a tenement – 'You had to make the best of it' – and behaviour considered proper in a new house. Multiple uses of rooms was associated with overcrowding and old fashioned living conditions'.¹⁷⁰ Planners failed to foresee that some working class families would feel uneasy using living rooms for multiple purposes as it reminded them of living arrangements in overcrowded properties.

Among those lucky enough to move into new accommodation, planners' design and arrangement of living rooms could fail to fit how family's wanted to use the space. For instance, in 1951 some residents in the New Town of Harlow took issue with the 'hole in the wall for a fireplace' and wanted a mantelpiece for ornaments and a clock – a design feature that did not fit with the Harlow's modern aesthetic.¹⁷¹ As homes failed to provide an adequate space for families' traditional display of trinkets and keepsakes, inhabitants found ways to appropriate the space that created a version of modernity that differed from the designers.¹⁷² Kuper also reported that among the people he met in Coventry, many disliked the absence of a parlour in their new homes.¹⁷³ Many planners considered parlours old-fashioned and impractical, as families' desire to save the space for ceremonial events, such as birthdays and funeral wakes, meant that it remained unused the majority of the time.¹⁷⁴ Mogy's Oxford study similarly highlights inhabitants' dissatisfactions but adds that some families on the new Barton Estate had erected temporary partitions in their living

¹⁶⁹ For example, see planners' promotion of living rooms as locations for mixed activities at BCMI, chap. 3, 125-128.

¹⁷⁰ Hole and Attenburrow, *Houses and People*, 29–30.

¹⁷¹ EE Naylor, of the Harlow Development Corporation, quoted in Mark Llewellyn, "'Urban Village" or "White House": Envisioned Spaces, Experienced Places, and Everyday Life at Kensal House, London in the 1930s', *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 22, no. 2 (2004): 164.

¹⁷² Judith Attfield, 'Bringing Modernity Home: Open Plan in the British Domestic Interior', in *Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, ed. I Cieraad (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 73.

¹⁷³ Kuper, 'Blueprint for Living Together'.

¹⁷⁴ Attfield writes that modernist planners promoted 'open plan' designs as a means of 'killing-off the parlour', in Attfield, 'Moving Home', 252.

rooms to recreate parlours. This made two separate living spaces but required families to take down the partition ahead of every visit from the rent collector.¹⁷⁵ As reported in the sociological observations of Hole, Attenburrow, Kuper and Mogey, working class identities shaped how some men used and experienced their living rooms in well-planned homes. The provision of better quality housing unsettled some men's class identities and made it possible for men like Robert and Jimmy to use their living rooms for family activities. For other men, however, planners' promotion of family togetherness through the design and use of well-planned living rooms infringed working class customs.

Men's use and experience of the living room also impacted how men thought about spaces outside the home. For some men, the living room existed as the antithesis of the pub. Robert, for example, told his interviewer how he distanced himself from other men who 'spent much needed family money at the bar' as these men 'were robbing home to do these things... and there's no medals given for doing that'.¹⁷⁶ For Robert, the pub represented an atavistic hangover tied to past generations of men from which he wished to depart. This view continued throughout the postwar decades. In 1960 the *Guardian* published an article entitled 'Good and Bad Husbands', with 'bad husbands' described as those 'who persisted in patronising 'pubs' regularly at all stages of family development' and remained happy to continue 'their indulgence even when the family grew larger'.¹⁷⁷ As the article suggests, casual and infrequent pub visits did not necessarily create problems; troubles only arose when the pub took precedence over family life.

It remained possible for men to construct a respectable identity that struck the correct balance between past leisure traditions and family-orientated practices associated with the well-planned home. For example, Doris Rich interviewed 112 working class families in the town of Coseley, near Dudley, for her 1953 sociological study. She made the following observations of one family,

¹⁷⁵ JM Mogey, *Family and Neighbourhood: Two Studies in Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956). Daniel Miller, in a study of inhabitants on a North London council estate built in the early 1970s, also found that in homes without parlours, 'two-thirds of tenants who mentioned this subject kept a special area in the main room for their best, brought out at Christmas if at all', in Daniel Miller, 'Appropriating the State on the Council Estate', *Man* 23, no. 2 (1988): 365.

¹⁷⁶ Williamson, 37, 38, TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163.

¹⁷⁷ 'Good and Bad Husbands: Survey of Habits', *The Guardian* (24 March 1960), 6.

The evening passes with the wife knitting or sewing and her husband playing with the children, resting (sometimes sleeping) and reading the newspapers. The wireless may be on in the background... At about 9pm the husband may go to his usual public house... leaving his wife to put the children to bed or continue with her knitting.¹⁷⁸

Frank Davies told Humphries and Gordon a similar story about his experience of domestic life with his wife Joan and daughter Val in Salford in the early 1950s,

When you'd done all your chores or it was a nice quiet night. I'd say, 'I'll go down to the pub, you know, and have a pint and I'll bring you a bottle back'. It was a regular routine. I used to go and you'd see yer mates in there who you'd normally have a drink with. They'd expect you to be there for the night and I used to say, 'I can't stop I'm just having a pint and I'll get a bottle for Joan'.¹⁷⁹

These examples show how some men found ways to bridge their identities as domesticated men and maintain links with friends in the homosocial environment of the pub. The practice of going for a drink after completing domestic chores also featured in the national press. For example, the *Manchester Guardian* reported in 1949 that 12,050 people had signed a petition that called on Blackburn Brewster Sessions, the annual meeting that decided liquor licenses in the area, to extend pub opening hours in the town by thirty minutes to 10.30pm.¹⁸⁰ Many of the signatories noted the need for longer opening hours as they wished to join friends in the pub after an evening spent at home.

The ability to juggle these two aspects of masculine identity became difficult for some men who moved to new estates. For instance, Wilmott and Young reported that 'bricklayers, dockers, and motor fitters' who moved from Bethnal Green to Woodford in the mid-1950s felt uncomfortable in the new estate's 'pseudo-Jacobean style' pub, 'where the landlords wear crested blazers and call their customers 'old boy', and where the drinks are much more often pink gins or whiskies and soda than pints of mild and bitter'.¹⁸¹ Bott also shared the story of the Newbolt family from

¹⁷⁸ Doris Rich, 'Spare Time', in *Living in Towns. Selected Research Papers in Urban Sociology of the Faculty of Commerce and Social Science, University of Birmingham*, ed. Leo Kuper (London: The Cresset Press, 1953), 323.

¹⁷⁹ Humphries and Gordon, *A Man's World*, 200.

¹⁸⁰ 'Husbands Who Stay in Late', *The Manchester Guardian* (11 March 1949), 5.

¹⁸¹ Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 85.

Bermondsey, London.¹⁸² Mr Newbolt worked a semi-skilled manual job at a local factory and lived with his wife and three small boys.¹⁸³ Bott explained that Mr Newbolt joined other men for drinks in the local pub one or two evenings a week.¹⁸⁴ Like many other working class families in central London, the Newbolts wanted to leave their 'old-fashioned, inconvenient and crowded' house for a modern flat on a new estate.¹⁸⁵ However, with the reduced provision of pubs and increased cost of living on the new estate, Bott thought it unlikely that Mr Newbolt would continue his evening pub visits.¹⁸⁶

Some men found it possible to juggle family-orientated practices with masculine customs associated with their old neighbourhood, such as visits to the local pub. In viewing the living room alongside the pub, I strengthen Martin Francis's claim that men could 'both simultaneously embrace and reject the tropes of domestic manliness'.¹⁸⁷ He argues that there existed 'a yearning for, and attempt to reclaim, the emotionally satisfying aspects of wartime male bonding after the Second World War' and 'that this was most likely to take place at the level of (individual and collective) fantasy, transposed into the cultural artefacts of popular film and literature'.¹⁸⁸ The experiences of men like Frank Davies and Mr Newbolt demonstrate some men's ambivalence towards domestic life. However, contrary to Francis, these sources illustrate lived experiences and not fantasies, and suggest that men used the pub as a way to continue past homosocial traditions rather than recover the camaraderie of army life.

Dining spaces

Planners' optimistic vision for how families would eat meals together at the dining table equally failed to translate into an everyday reality. Roberts describes how families in the 1940s understood meal times and the dining table as an *appropriate* setting for fathers to converse with children.¹⁸⁹ This built upon a long history of the dining table as a location to socialise

¹⁸² Bott, *Family and Social Network*, 63–64.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 66–67.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁸⁷ Francis, 'A Flight from Commitment?', 165.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁸⁹ Roberts, *Women and Families*, 43.

children and an association between a family's class status and where they ate their meals.¹⁹⁰ In reality, MO's *An Enquiry into People's Homes* (1943) found 'nearly all working-class people ate in their kitchens as a matter of course'.¹⁹¹ Even in 1961, Hole and Attenburrow reported, 'it rarely happens that the whole family sit down to table at the same time, for their meal-times depend on hours of school and work'.¹⁹²

Planners and observers held the belief that badly-planned and overcrowded accommodation exacerbated working class families' erratic dining patterns and inability to eat together at the table. For example, Mrs Lowrie told Willmott and Young that the small size of her former home in Bethnal Green forced the family to eat meals separately.¹⁹³ The *Design of Dwellings* report also highlights this concern: '[w]e do not think it is generally realized how frequently separate meals have to be prepared for a working family, where meal-times depend on hours of work and school and where on week-days it rarely happens that the whole family can sit down to table at the same time'.¹⁹⁴

However, as families moved into new properties - with ample space for family dining - many attempted to continue traditional customs from their old homes. Mogeys' comparative study of St. Ebbes and Barton found that families on the new estate disliked their narrow kitchens, as the design forced families to eat meals in the home's dining area – a new and unwelcome experience for many.¹⁹⁵ Hole and Attenburrow, reporting on the mid-twentieth century reception of planning ideas, also shared the story of one family with four young children who chose to eat in their cramped kitchen rather than at their dining table in the living room,

Even the smallest kitchens of 65ft² were used for everyday meals by some families. How they managed to do this is best illustrated by citing the example of one family: four children between the ages of 4 and 8 were fed from the top of a washboiler whilst their parents ate off a draining board,

¹⁹⁰ Norbert Elias, among others, traces this view from sixteenth century Europe onwards, discussed in David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat* (London: Routledge, 1997), 63. Some sociologists in the 1960s continued to believe they could judge a family's class status by where they ate their meals, discussed in June Norris, *The Human Aspects of Redevelopment* (Birmingham: Midlands New Towns Society, 1961).

¹⁹¹ Mass Observation, *An Enquiry into People's Homes* (London: John Murray, 1943), xii.

¹⁹² Hole and Attenburrow, *Houses and People*, 12.

¹⁹³ Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, 1957, 103.

¹⁹⁴ Central Housing Advisory Committee, *Design of Dwellings* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1944), 13.

¹⁹⁵ Mogeys, 'Changes in Family Life', 128.

reserving the dining table in the living room for use when they had visitors.¹⁹⁶

Marjorie Bruce-Milne, who assessed inhabitants' everyday lives on the Kensal House Estate in North Kensington in 1942, shared the dining experiences of a working class interviewee,

We nearly always eat in the kitchen so as to keep the sitting room tidy. When there are five of us at home, three of us sit in the kitchen and two just bring their dinner into the sitting room and have it on their laps.¹⁹⁷

Working class Kensal House residents traditionally ate meals in the kitchen and one third continued this practice in their new homes, even though planners designed the space to specifically discourage this custom.¹⁹⁸

Ruth Glass and John Westergaard reported comparable complaints from Lansbury residents who disliked the 'provision of small, unheatable 'working' kitchens' but found that many families continued to eat meals in the kitchen, rather than the living room's dining recess as planners intended.¹⁹⁹ Inhabitants' use of dining spaces in well-planned homes seemed irrational to planners and observers. As early as 1951, researchers from the Festival of Britain's Homes and Gardens section found that 11 out of 12 families did not use their home's dining space as planned.²⁰⁰ By the 1960s, it had become clear to planners that building small kitchens would not stop families from eating meals in this space. *Homes for Today and Tomorrow*, published in 1961, criticises the prescriptive approach of earlier planners and argues that inhabitants should have the power to choose where to eat in the home, noting that '[w]e have heard it said on more than one occasion that the kitchen should be planned so that it is impossible to take meals in it, with a view to raising the social and living standards of the occupiers'.²⁰¹ The report denounces this approach as 'an unusual motive on which to choose a plan'.²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Hole and Attenburrow, *Houses and People*, 13.

¹⁹⁷ Marjorie Bruce Milne, 'What the Tenants Think of Kensal House' (Warrington: Gas Light and Coke Company, National Gas Archive, 1942), 9.

¹⁹⁸ Llewellyn, "'Urban Village' or 'White House'", 240.

¹⁹⁹ John Westergaard and Ruth Glass, 'A Profile of Lansbury', *The Town Planning Review* 25, no. 1 (April 1954): 40–41.

²⁰⁰ Council of Industrial Design, 'Homes and Gardens Section: Introductory Theme' (1949), <http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=164299&sos=9>, accessed 16 June 2015, [DCA 14B/5181](#).

²⁰¹ Parker Morris Committee, *Homes for Today & Tomorrow (Department of the Environment)* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961), 10.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

Planners' preoccupation with where families ate their meals makes sense when one considers the long historical association between dining spaces, men's domestic presence and class identities. For example, Julie-Marie Strange observes how the 'tea table' in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century home operated as an 'interface for the working father's return to the domestic' and as a 'transitional space where they could offload the working day'.²⁰³ Mark Llewellyn, in his study of subversive practices on the Kensal House Estate, identifies the influence of 'class-based identities' on inhabitants' willingness to follow the planning expectations of their new accommodation.²⁰⁴ He argues, 'people were aware of the 'appropriate' way to use the space, but felt that their whole identity as working class did not fit with the way these rooms had been designed, and they were left to find the "right way of doing things"'.²⁰⁵ As also observed with living rooms, working class identities complicated the link between how planners wanted men to use domestic space and men's practices in reality. For one third of Kensal House residents, the idea of eating meals in any room aside from the kitchen seemed at odds with previous class customs. Llewellyn's analysis reinforces the dissonance between middle class expert knowledge, as outlined in the previous two chapters, and working class domestic cultures. Planners' interest in men's presence in dining spaces continued throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, yet the planning ideal of nightly conversations between fathers and children at the dining table never became a reality in many homes, even among families that moved into well-planned housing with ample space to practice this custom. Regardless of planners' efforts, working class customs continued to shape how people ate meals at home and inhabitants' maintained agency over some domestic practices.

Bedrooms

Well-planned homes offered many families their first experience of separate bedrooms for adults and children.²⁰⁶ Improved housing provided families with more rooms and also utilised technological advances - such as

²⁰³ Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 87, 90.

²⁰⁴ Llewellyn, "Urban Village" or "White House", 241.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Among those who moved to Lansbury in the early 1950s, 60 per cent had previously shared dwellings with other families and 40 per cent had lived in houses with more than two people per bedroom, in 'The Lansbury Estate, Poplar, Part 2: "I Never Thought I'd See Such Luxury"', *Municipal Dreams* (20 August 2013), <https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2013/08/20/the-lansbury-estate-poplar-part-2/>, accessed 29 July 2015.

heating, sound proofing and insulation that made rooms more private and usable for daytime activities.²⁰⁷ These developments had a specific impact on the relationship between fathers and daughters. One mother explained to Hole and Attenburrow that her daughters' relationship with their father had improved since moving into a new home,

Here we feel so free, even the girls (aged eighteen and sixteen) are freer with their father, I don't know why. In the other place we were always shutting doors and saying don't come in. Now there's more privacy here and it is much less of a strain.²⁰⁸

The absence of privacy and competition for space between fathers and daughters in overcrowded accommodation also features in *The Way We Live*. George's teenage daughter, Alice, expresses annoyance that their small home made it impossible to invite friends round and dreamed of a future where she had a room of her own, a dream echoed by her two sisters.²⁰⁹ Overcrowded and badly-planned housing also created problems for adolescents unable to bring partners into the domestic circle of family life.²¹⁰ As part of her research for the Ideal Home Exhibition in the mid-1940s, Millicent Frances Pleydell-Bouverie listened to the domestic woes of one mother with three daughters aged 15 to 19 and a badly-planned home,

If they want to invite their boyfriends in, it means that I have to stop doing needlework or ironing and the children have to go out or to bed, because there isn't room for everyone. If the older girls are at home the younger children can't do their homework. Talking and wireless take their minds off their sums. There is never an evening when the living-room is not in a state of upheaval.²¹¹

Experts in the 1940s and 1950s focused attention on adolescent privacy, as worries over the morality of unhealthy bedrooms and risk of incest eased.²¹² JM Mackintosh, public health expert at the University of London,

²⁰⁷ For example, Live Architecture's Building Research Pavilion highlighted these developments, see chap. 3, 120, 134.

²⁰⁸ Hole and Attenburrow, *Houses and People*, 25.

²⁰⁹ Craigie, *The Way We Live*.

²¹⁰ Although moral customs made it unlikely that parents would condone adolescents' use of the home for casual sex, advice manuals from the 1940s and 1950s suggest a relaxation in parental attitudes towards courting, see Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 123.

²¹¹ Millicent Pleydell-Bouverie, *Daily Mail Book of Post-War Homes* (London: Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition Department, 1944), 54. MO respondent F60D, who lived on the Ash Estate, also complained, '[w]e've only one sitting-room. It's very difficult, with a courting couple and all that sort of thing' in Mass Observation, *An Enquiry into People's Homes*, 106.

²¹² The historical association between bad housing and the risk of incest is discussed in Glen McAllister and Elizabeth McAllister, *Town and Country Planning* (London: Faber & Faber, 1941), 127–28. Mackintosh also noted, '[t]he effects of overcrowding in the production of sexual irregularities are well

went further and blamed poor housing for young people's engagement in sex acts outside the home, a trend that '[spoiled] the gracious harmonies of sex'.²¹³

In 1944, *Picture Post* ran two articles, 'What it Means to Live in a Good House' and 'What it Means to Live in a Not-So-Good House', which further support a link between the provision of more bedrooms and better family relations. David Davies lives in the 'good house' on a modern housing estate with his wife Lillian and daughters Phyllis, Gladys, Marian and Vivian. The article explains how the family have experienced 'lean times, they've lived in cramped places; but now they have the first essential of a decent life – a comfortable house'.²¹⁴ The journalist draws particular attention to the importance of private rooms,

There's room for Father and Mother to have a bedroom to themselves – a rarity in overcrowded districts. There's room for the girls to entertain in one room while Dad and Mother read or work in peace in another... Because they're not crowded on top of each other in this household, family life thrives.²¹⁵

The provision of three bedrooms and a parlour, where the girls can entertain friends without interrupting their parents' leisure activities, feature as a key element in *Picture Post's* positive assessment of the Davies' domestic life. The parlour also provides David with a space to play with his two youngest daughters, Marian and Vivian (figure 4.3). The experiences of the Davies and Copperwheats, as well as testimonies from Pleydell-Bouverie, Hole and Attenburrow, illustrate that as smaller families moved into larger houses the separation between private and semi-private spaces within the home became more defined. And, for some families, relocation to a well-planned home with separate bedrooms for adults and children reduced family stresses and positively reshaped father-daughter relations.

recognised' and '[t]he inevitable lack of space and privacy makes it extremely difficult to preserve normal standards of decency', in JM Mackintosh, *Housing and Family Life* (London: Cassell and Company, 1952), 112.

²¹³ Mackintosh, *Housing and Family Life*, 73.

²¹⁴ 'What It Means to Live in a Good House', 22.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*



Figure 4.3: David Davies plays with his daughters in the parlour of his house on a modern housing estate, in 'What It Means to Live in a Good House', *Picture Post* (1 January 1944).

Yet, contrary to planners' expectations, social investigators were surprised to discover that some families continued to share bedrooms in new houses that provided enough rooms for everyone. Hole and Attenburrow described this as 'habituation to sleeping in the company of others' and found that 23 per cent of parents with two children or more did not use their third bedroom, and instead preferred to share their room with a child or for children to share a bedroom.²¹⁶ As with the removal of parlours from some well-planned homes, some families considered the idea of family members sleeping in separate bedrooms at odds with past traditions. Hole and Attenburrow's social investigation highlights the pervasive influence of working class customs on how families used well-planned homes, and planners' difficulty in overwriting practices that families brought with them from old accommodation.

Between the 1930s and 1960s, as more men and women moved into homes of their own and no longer shared bedrooms with other family members, couples welcomed the marital improvements that came with a

²¹⁶ Hole and Attenburrow, *Houses and People*, 24.

bedroom of their own.²¹⁷ Several of Fisher and Szreter's working class interviewees shared the joys of a private bedroom, which led the authors to surmise 'the importance of privacy to intimacy within marriage especially in relation to the expression of sexuality'.²¹⁸ In 1957, sociologist Helen Hacker also noted that men's 'ability to perform the sexual act has been a criterion for man's evaluation of himself from time immemorial'.²¹⁹ For some men, overcrowded and badly-planned homes had made this component of masculine identity hard to satisfy.

The MO directive 'Love-making in Public' (1949) highlights issues related to intimacy and men's access to private space. For the MO respondents, public space meant 'any situation where the lovers are not completely alone and enclosed by four walls', which included isolated fields, parks and commercial venues such as cinemas.²²⁰ Respondents offered an equally elastic definition of 'love-making', described as the normal activities of lovers that would not invite the attention of a police officer.²²¹ For some middle class couples, already more likely to have a room of their own, increased access to a motorcar presented opportunities for mobile privacy such as love-making in the vehicle at a remote location or an illicit night at a boarding house outside of town.²²² But for most working class couples, the home remained the most realistic location for intimacy.

An unmarried, male respondent told MO that he disliked the idea of making love in public but, with overcrowding and housing shortages, 'it is a question of lack of opportunity'.²²³ He suggested, 'some day a philanthropist will start a centre of courting rooms' where couples who cannot find privacy in their own homes can go to maintain a healthy relationship.²²⁴ Middle class respondents generally expressed sympathy towards working class couples who struggled to find private space for intimacy and seemed 'more tolerant towards the kissing and cuddling of others than they are towards their own behaviour'.²²⁵ Tellingly, the report

²¹⁷ As previously noted, 40 per cent of residents on the Lansbury Estate had previously lived in accommodation with more than two people per bedroom, in 'The Lansbury Estate, Poplar, Part 2'.

²¹⁸ Szreter and Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution*, 2.

²¹⁹ Helen Hacker, 'New Burdens of Masculinity', *Marriage and Family Living* 19, no. 3 (August 1957): 231.

²²⁰ 'Love-Making in Public' (February 1949), MO SxMOA1/1/14/2/2 - File Report 3086.

²²¹ Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship', 192.

²²² Eliot Slater and Moya Woodside, *Patterns of Marriage: A Study of Marriage Relationships in the Urban Working Classes* (London: Cassell, 1951), 94, cited in Langhamer, *The English in Love*, 112.

²²³ 'Love-Making in Public', 9, MO SxMOA1/1/14/2/ - File Report 3086.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ 'Love-making in Public', 5, MO SxMOA1/1/14/2/ - File Report 3086.

adds, 'since the middle classes do not often suffer from this lack of privacy themselves, they find it easy to tolerate those who are less fortunate'.²²⁶ MO made it clear that working class couples found it most difficult to find private space, whether inside or outside the home, for love-making.

Well-planned homes addressed these concerns and sought to provide working class men with greater privacy so that they could engage in intimate practices with their wives, whether it be kissing or sexual intercourse, and reaffirm their sense of masculine identity. Aside from the provision of separate bedrooms for adults and children, planners also wanted well-planned homes to offer bedrooms with improved sound insulation – a concern highlighted in exhibitions, such as Live Architecture's Building Research Pavilion.²²⁷ Sociological investigations of the 1950s revealed the negative effects of poor privacy and sound insulation on men's relations with their wives. An awareness that neighbours could eavesdrop on their bedroom conversations forced men to change how they acted and behaved in this space. During Kuper's 1953 study of working class families in Houghton, he heard how thin walls made it possible to 'entertain a neighbour's wife by playing her favourite records with the gramophone tuned to loud, or to mind her child or invite her to tea, all through the party wall'.²²⁸ Kuper's amusing observation took a serious turn when one man described the noises heard from his neighbour's bedroom,

You sometimes hear them say rather private things, as, for example, a man telling his wife that her feet are cold. It makes you feel that *you* must say private things in a whisper.²²⁹

Kuper's subject required aural privacy, as well as visual privacy, in the home. His subject continued, '[i]t does make you feel a bit restrained, as if you ought to walk on tiptoe into your bedroom at night'.²³⁰ Kuper concluded, '[w]hat are the consequences of the particular standards of insulation against sound for the personality development of the residents?'²³¹ The investigation identified a link between well-planned homes and men's domestic actions: men knew that neighbours could

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ See chap. 3, 120, 134.

²²⁸ Kuper, 'Blueprint for Living Together', 14.

²²⁹ Ibid., 15.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., 16.

'listen-in' through thin party walls and therefore acted and behaved in a particular way in their own home. Matt Houlbrook and Matt Cook, among others, have documented the private home's emergence as a focal point for same-sex intimacy in the twentieth century.²³² A similar development becomes apparent when we consider the impact of well-planned homes and the provision of private bedrooms on the marital relations of 'heterosexual' men.

Gardens

Access to a private garden had a profound impact on working class men's lives. The 1949 *Hulton Readership Survey* of 13,000 people found that 41.6 per cent of men and 21.8 per cent of women gardened regularly, with around 70 per cent of gardeners described as manual workers.²³³ From his research, Zweig observed, 'since the war gardening has become much more popular than it was, and the emphasis is on vegetables rather than flowers'.²³⁴ LCC sociologist Margaret Willis, who helped plan the Lansbury Estate, also explained that gardens gave men 'something to do in the evenings instead of sitting cooped up indoors or spending money down the pub'.²³⁵ She identified the promise of 'a house with a garden', alongside better air quality, as the two main reasons why young families wished to move to a new district.²³⁶

Gardens not only introduced men to the joys of outdoor life but provided a space for fathers, regardless of class background, to spend time with their children. Robert Williamson described how his garden on the new Shipley Estate differed from his old home: 'I'd never had a garden before and I never thought I'd be able to garden... another horizon you know, having never had anything like that before it made all the difference'.²³⁷ For Robert, the garden brought 'a new dimension to life' as it enabled him to adopt new hobbies, such as growing plants and vegetables, and also

²³² Matt Houlbrook, 'Cities', in *The Modern History of Sexuality*, ed. Harry Cocks and Matt Houlbrook (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 148; Cook, *Queer Domesticities*, 6, 144–45.

²³³ JW Hobson and H Henry, *The Hulton Readership Survey 1949* (London, 1949), 42, cited in McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 197.

²³⁴ Zweig, *The British Worker*, 153.

²³⁵ Margaret Willis, 'Living in High Flats' (London: London County Council, 1951).

²³⁶ Margaret Willis, 'The Sociologist in the Town Planning Team', *Planning Outlook Series* 5, no. 1 (1959): 22.

²³⁷ Williamson, 24, [TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163](#).

presented a new space for him to play with his daughter Norma.²³⁸ Robert recalled that their 'nice big lawn' made it possible to play many different games 'with balls and bats and shuttlecocks and battledores'.²³⁹ He added that time spent in the garden together 'made us feel more private' and described how he planted an additional hedge that 'sheltered us from the main road'.²⁴⁰

The MO publication *Meet Yourself on Sunday* (1949) describes another everyday example of one father's experience in his private back garden. The authors explain that 'asking people how they spend Sundays is one way of finding out what they do' but in order to establish a 'true picture' it is best to 'watch them whilst they are unaware that they are observed'.²⁴¹ *Meet Yourself on Sunday* served a number of purposes: it gave readers, increasingly fond of stories that explored the 'human condition', an entertaining anecdote and, more importantly, held a mirror to society that allowed male readers to see *themselves* on a Sunday afternoon.²⁴² The publication's covert study of Mr and Mrs B, their four-year-old son and one-year-old daughter presents further evidence of how men used gardens as a space to interact with other family members,

Mr B intended to spend Sunday afternoon reading in the garden and an early meal was laid on for this purpose (wife wanted to do so as well). There was a deck chair in the shade and in the early afternoon B started to read through all Sunday papers (four of them).

The report opens with a traditional Sunday activity. However, the father's decision to read in the garden created unplanned opportunities for interactions between family members, only made possible in their own garden,

Four year old son had been playing with one year old daughter but wanted father to play with him as soon as B came into garden. B refused saying that he wanted to read the paper. Boy carried on playing but then started asking

²³⁸ Ibid, 25.

²³⁹ Ibid, 25, 68.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 68.

²⁴¹ 'Meet Yourself on Sunday' (July 1949), 7, [MO SxMOA1/2/81/1 - File Report 3142](#). MO co-founder Tom Harrison also noted, '[t]he only satisfactory way of finding out what their home means to people is to see exactly what they do in them', in Mass Observation, 'People and Homes' (April 1943), 8, [MO SxMOA1/2/1/4/1 - File Report 1651](#).

²⁴² Richard Hoggart notes the increased popularity of working class cultural works that made no attempt to 'escape from ordinary life' and instead assumed its intrinsic interest, in Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1957), 86.

questions, which B answered. Then came up behind chair and started pulling B's hair. This gave him an idea and he started going through the motions of giving B's hair a shampoo, rubbing and ruffling the hair. B had no objection and went on reading. Boy then had further bright idea of using real water for shampoo, ran inside and found an old scent bottle and let water out drip at a time. When entire bottle was emptied drip by drip on B's hair counter measures were necessary and B started reaching behind him (still reading) and trying to catch boy. This was the beginning of a game which went on in this way for some time.

Mr B features in this story as a playmate for his children, a popular representation of fathers that dates back to the Victorian period, and uses the garden in a similar manner to how men like Robert and Jimmy used their living rooms.²⁴³ Elizabeth Bott's sociological research also evidences father's involvement in the fun elements of parenting. She explains that interviewees stated that fathers and mothers held joint responsibility for their children's welfare.²⁴⁴ However, when Bott questioned the Newbolt family on the specific division of parenting tasks, she found that 'Mrs Newbolt carried out most of the actual tasks of caring for the three boys' and Mr Newbolt helped 'entertain them in the evenings and on Sundays'.²⁴⁵ MO's study of Mr B's Sunday afternoon tells a similar story. After chasing each other round the garden, Mr B caught his son and went to dip him in the bath,

But as he lent over bath, wife came up from behind having picked up watering can and emptied over B's head. Shrieks of laughter, lots of horseplay with the towel, and rest of afternoon spent floating boats on the bath. Papers did not get read until after the nine o'clock news.²⁴⁶

Mr B's attempt to read the Sunday newspapers in the garden grew into an afternoon of outdoor fun that involved all four members of the family. In this instance, the garden allowed Mr B to fool around in a manner that brought the family together. Both Mr B and Robert used their private gardens as a performance space for practices of active fatherhood. Laura King explains that these family activities seemed impossible in 'older, cramped working-

²⁴³ John Tosh notes that for middle class men in the Victorian period, 'above all, fathers were licensed to play' and that the association of fatherly fun with holidays, particularly Christmas, was 'merely an intensification of familiar patterns of play', in John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 88.

²⁴⁴ Bott, *Family and Social Network*, 71.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ 'Meet Yourself on Sunday', 5, [MO SxMOA1/2/81/1 - File Report 3142](#).

class housing in which children were forced to play in the streets'.²⁴⁷ I use the examples of Mr B and Robert to go further with King's suggestion and argue that a link existed between men's ability to perform family-orientated masculine identities and access to well-planned domestic space.

Meet Yourself on Sunday intended to hold a mirror to society and relay MO's findings back to readers so that they examined, and perhaps even changed, their everyday actions and behaviours.²⁴⁸ When we analyse the domestic experience of Mr B within an expanded landscape of expert knowledge, discussed in chapter two, men's greater awareness of the 'self' becomes apparent. In particular, men's understanding of their role as fathers as an aspect of masculine identity over which they had personal control.²⁴⁹ In a personal study of family relations, Frank Mort, born in the 1950s, contrasts his own masculine identity with that of his father, born in the 1910s.²⁵⁰ He writes that his father 'refused the reflexive self in all its forms - therapeutic, literary, sociological' and lived a life governed by 'a set of socially prescribed norms of conduct that dictated how individual lives were to be lived'.²⁵¹ Unlike his father, Mort's masculine identity came from a 'reflexive form of selfhood' developed from identities such as 'grammar school boy', 'consumer' and 'homosexual' that proliferated in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁵² Mort's discussion of masculine identities within his own family reminds us of the link between men's experiences and the expanded landscape of expert knowledge. MO's account of Mr B's Sunday afternoon primarily illustrates how men used domestic spaces to perform practices of active fatherhood. But it also showcases reflexive methods used by experts to promote new ways for individuals to think about themselves, which, in turn, attempted to shape men's use and experience of the well-planned home.

Sheds, hobbies and Do-It-Yourself

²⁴⁷ King, *Family Men*, 54.

²⁴⁸ MO's founding remit was to offer an 'anthropology of ourselves', noted in Charles Madge and Tom Harrison, *Mass-Observation* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1937), 10.

²⁴⁹ Conekin, Mort, and Waters, *Moments of Modernity*, Introduction. Also see Frank Mort, 'Social and Symbolic Fathers and Sons in Postwar Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 3 (1 July 1999): 353–84.

²⁵⁰ Mort, 'Social and Symbolic Fathers and Sons', 364–65.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 364.

Sheds further demonstrate how men used spaces in the home to perform actions and behaviours that aligned with planners' vision of a family-orientated masculine identity. In her study of the period 1865 to 1914, Julie-Marie Strange explains that the shed's location outside 'the kernel of family life' but 'within the larger boundaries of domestic-family space' made it a popular location for working class men.²⁵³ Sheds provided men with space to store personal items and a masculine location removed from 'the bustle of domestic activity' but more socially acceptable than the pub.²⁵⁴ A link between sheds and men's sense of identity continued into the postwar decades. George Copperwheat, for example, expressed dislike for his temporary accommodation as he could no longer escape to the refuge of his shed: 'I'm sick of the whole place, sick of being cooped-up here with not a shed to work in... I'm telling you this is no life for a man'.²⁵⁵

Sheds also played a particular role in the lives of some men who faced family problems upon their return from war. *Living Together Again* tells the story of a father and his son, William, who struggled to bond after demobilisation.²⁵⁶ At first, 'William was so shy that he would not do any of the proper things'. However, his 'father understood children, and realised that William's confidence needed to be won, just like that of any other animal'. So William's father began working in his shed and William's curiosity soon brought him into the garden and 'gradually he crept nearer the door. And when he saw that his father was making what looked like a boat, it was too much for him, and he came right close'. His father 'casually handed him a piece of stick meant for a mast, and said: 'Just hold this for me for a minute''. The authors reported that William helped his father construct the boat and 'in an hour or so William and his father were best of friends and might never have been away from one another all their lives'. The shed features as an essential character in this story of father-son bonding and provides the location for William's father to showcase his woodwork skills that brings the two together.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Strange, *Fatherhood*, 108.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 107–8.

²⁵⁵ Craigie, *The Way We Live*.

²⁵⁶ The following quotes come from Bendit and Bendit, *Living Together Again*, 41.

²⁵⁷ These encounters also occurred in other spaces and my focus on individual family experiences makes it impossible to draw universal conclusions about domestic interactions between fathers and children. Instead, this example, and others from this chapter, offer a flavour of men's individual domestic experiences that sit within the wider context of planning in mid-twentieth century Britain.

While the movement into new homes provided some men with new spaces to interact with their children, relocation could also make it difficult to continue certain hobbies that men enjoyed in their old accommodation. For example, Martin Johnes describes how the movement to new estates created problems for the once-popular pursuit of pigeon racing.²⁵⁸ The hobby required outdoor cages or converted loft space but, as Johnes explains, some local authorities labelled pigeons ‘dirty, unhygienic and a nuisance’ and established rules on new estates that banned the keeping of birds.²⁵⁹ The president of the National Pigeon Association grew concerned with the effect of new housing on pigeon racing and stated, ‘[t]here are cases where the breeding and exhibition of Pigeons have been the lifelong hobby of men now forced to leave their old homes and live on Housing Estates, and the enforced termination of their hobby had caused them acute stress’.²⁶⁰ George Orwell also highlighted the problem in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) and noted that local authorities’ restrictions left ‘something ruthless and soulless’ about men’s relocation into improved housing.²⁶¹ Well-planned homes thus had a dual effect on men’s identities, bringing new opportunities for some men but also restricting the performance of certain practices that men had previously enjoyed.

New domestic environments also contributed to the popularisation of certain hobbies, such as DIY, among working class men from the 1940s onwards. The 1945 advice manual *Tomorrow’s House* describes hobbies as ‘a peculiarly modern activity’ that arrived in the home as ‘the result of increased leisure’.²⁶² The manual explains that ‘wherever a hobby requires space – say photography or woodworking – the plan of the house must be modified’.²⁶³ John Madge, sociologist and brother of MO co-founder Charles Madge, made a similar argument in *Rehousing Britain* (1945) and called for the construction of homes that make ‘proper provision... for the carrying out of hobbies’.²⁶⁴ Social investigators further confirmed the gendered uptake of hobbies. Fifty five per cent of men and 25 per cent of

²⁵⁸ Martin Johnes, ‘Pigeon Racing and Working-Class Culture in Britain, 1870–1950’, *Cultural and Social History* 4, no. 3 (1 September 2007): 375–76.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *National Pigeon Association to Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries* (8 January 1936), [NA HLG 52/129](#), quoted in *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Harmondsworth, 1966), 63, quoted in Johnes, ‘Pigeon Racing’, 375–76.

²⁶² George Nelson and Henry Wright, eds., *Tomorrow’s House. A Complete Guide for the Home-Builder* (London: The Architectural Press, 1945), 3.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ John Madge, *The Rehousing of Britain, Target for Tomorrow* (London: The Pilot Press, 1945), 7.

women in Doris Rich's 1955 study of Coseley actively followed a hobby.²⁶⁵ Men had traditionally spent more leisure time than women engaged in hobbies.²⁶⁶ However, during the early postwar decades, men increasingly understood the home as a location to pursue hobbies, such as gardening (mentioned by 78 per cent of men in Rich's study), decorating and repairs.²⁶⁷ For social observers like Zweig, hobbies represented a window into a man's identity. From his interviews, he reported, '[w]orking men will tell you that 'without a hobby you might as well be dead''.²⁶⁸ He then listed interviewees who 'had no hobbies... had lost the joy of life, and were drifting through it'.²⁶⁹

Working class men's interest in DIY in the late 1950s demonstrates how hobbies became a component of some men's domestic identities.²⁷⁰ Willmott and Young, in their study of Woodford, observed men's performance of DIY as a means to test their skills at craft and production, as 'quite often [the modern husband] can pick up a good layman's knowledge of at least some of these trades, mainly through trial and error, partly by reading do-it-yourself and gardening magazines, partly under instruction from relatives and other men at work'.²⁷¹ The sociologists enthusiastically proclaimed, '[t]he husbandman of England is back in a new form, as horticulturist rather than agriculturist, as builder rather than cattleman, as improver not of a strip of arable land but of the semi-detached family estate at 33 Ellesmere Road'.²⁷² Willmott and Young's research had uncovered, what they considered, a new masculine identity, open to working and middle class men, that revolved around DIY and the family home.

The purpose of DIY stretched beyond the physical modification of domestic space. Its greater meaning came from its use as a way for men to construct a masculine identity in the home. *Illustrated Do It Yourself News*, with an obvious interest in self-promotion, describes the postwar DIY craze 'as catching as the measles' and that 'in the homes of Britain's Home

²⁶⁵ Rich, 'Spare Time', 324.

²⁶⁶ This uneven division continued through the postwar decades. In 1962, for example, Mark Abrams calculated that men spent 31 minutes per day engaged in handicrafts, hobbies and study, whereas women spent seven minutes, cited in Millar, *The New Classes*, 231.

²⁶⁷ Rich, 'Spare Time', 324.

²⁶⁸ Zweig, *The British Worker*, 150.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, 91.

²⁷¹ Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 32.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 33.

Handymen, draughts are never felt, doors never squeak, pipes don't burst, boilers always work. Positive comfort is everywhere'.²⁷³ The magazine's promotion of an ideal home reflects an optimism that omniscient experts could resolve the home's physical faults, as promoted at exhibits such as Live Architecture's 'Gremlin Grange' and Building Research Pavilion.²⁷⁴ *Ideal Home Exhibitions* similarly showcased the benefits of DIY. For instance, the 1957 exhibition included a series of live shows that promoted DIY as a way to save money as well as a form of masculine therapy, in which make-do-and-mend projects could remedy psychological imbalances that came with the process of moving home.²⁷⁵

Men's interest in DIY predated the 1940s: during the interwar period, for example, middle class men took a greater interest in home improvements and some used domestic crafts as a therapeutic escape from memories of the First World War.²⁷⁶ However, working class uptake accelerated in the postwar decades as more men moved to new estates, became homeowners and spent more leisure time inside the home.²⁷⁷ MO's 'Pilot Survey on Home Decorating and Repairing' (1948) found that 75 per cent of the 137 working and middle class men surveyed had undertaken decorating or repair work in the previous six months.²⁷⁸ Almost all married men under 40 had completed a household painting job or indoor repair but, more surprising, less than one quarter of single men had performed any DIY in the previous six months, even among those who owned their own home.²⁷⁹ Willmott and Young suggested reasons as to why some men embraced DIY. As most families in Bethnal Green rented their homes, 'men were only just beginning to paper their walls and whitewash the lavatories in their backyards [as] they were reluctant to undertake any

²⁷³ *Illustrated Do It Yourself News, Special Edition for the Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition*, 2 (London, 1954), 1.

²⁷⁴ I discuss planners' ability to *know* and therefore *avoid* the home's physical and social problems in relation to Live Architecture's 'Gremlin Grange', in chap. 3, 120-22.

²⁷⁵ Deborah Ryan, *The Ideal Home Through the 20th Century* (London: Hazar, 1997), 111.

²⁷⁶ Bourke explains that the conditions for DIY's popularity in the 1950s emerged in earlier decades such as the opening of specialist stores, availability of plywood and publication of cheap DIY books, in Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, 91. Alison Light defines the retreat to home as characteristic of interwar British culture and signalled a departure from heroic and aggressive modes of masculinity, in Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), 200.

²⁷⁷ In 1953, 54 per cent of tenants rented privately, 18 per cent rented from local authorities or new town corporations and 28 per cent of properties were owner occupied. By 1960, the proportion of owner-occupiers had increased to 44 per cent, with a further 25 per cent renting from councils or other public bodies, figures from Marion Roberts, *Living in a Man-Made World: Gender Assumptions in Modern Housing Design* (London: Routledge, 1991), 10. See fn. 167 on pg. 33 for further information on the reduction men's working hours and increased leisure time at home.

²⁷⁸ 'Notes on a Pilot Survey on Home Decorating and Repairing' (December 1948), 2, [MO SxMOA1/1/13/12/1 - File Report 3065](#).

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

repairs or improvements: they regarded these as the responsibility of the landlord much more readily than he did himself'.²⁸⁰

The situation differed on new estates, even among those who rented their homes. Len White, a social development officer at Harlow Development Corporation, explained that newcomers spent their increased leisure time 'turning a house into a home and a building site into a garden'.²⁸¹ Some Harlow residents compared their relocation to the 'challenge of a frontier society' and saw themselves as 'pioneers'.²⁸² However, social investigations also document men's unhappiness over bureaucratic rules that impeded men's DIY projects on new estates. One Woodford resident, who rented his property from the local authority, told Willmott and Young,

Everything you want to do – you have to submit plans before the Council before you can even build a side-gate. On the rent-book there's a great long list of what you can and can't do. I wanted to keep chickens. There was a regulation for the size of the hut. The man came down from the Council and he said, no it was going to be four inches too high, four inches! So I had to take out the bricks at the bottom of it.²⁸³

In 1948, a 45-year-old railway clerk told MO a similar story. He explained, '[a]s I only rent the house I live in, and the landlady is an exceptionally mean person, I have no interest in doing more than is absolutely essential to keep the place straight. When I had my own house before the War, I took a keen interest in it, and the garden. But in somebody else's house, there is not the same feeling'.²⁸⁴

Men's performance of DIY therefore hinged on two factors: home ownership and marriage. The link between DIY and home ownership is self-evident: men were less willing to spend money and time improving a building that someone else owned. The relationship between DIY and marriage is more illustrative. Willmott and Young identified this association between marriage and DIY in their study of suburban Woodford: '[the man who performs DIY] can identify himself with his house and feel that as he improves it he is also in a sense adding to his own stature, in the eyes of

²⁸⁰ Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 30.

²⁸¹ Frederick Gibberd, *Harlow: The Story of a New Town*, ed. Jane Morton (Stevenage: Publication for Companies, 1980), 126.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 30–31.

²⁸⁴ 'Notes on a Pilot Survey', 7, [MO SxMOA1/1/13/12/1 - File Report 3065](#).

his wife and his children, his neighbours and himself'.²⁸⁵ Steven Gelber's study of DIY in the United States identifies its two purposes for men: firstly, as a conjugal activity involving husbands and wives it degendered domestic space and brought couples closer together; secondly, when men performed DIY alone, it constructed a specifically masculine role within the home that showcased craftsmanship skills.²⁸⁶ Unlike jobs such as washing clothes or looking after children, which women had traditionally performed in the home, men's performance of DIY replaced the work of male professionals such as carpenters or plumbers and therefore adhered to pre-existing ideas about masculine identity.²⁸⁷ However, Gelber fails to identify an important element of DIY, whether performed as a couple or individually, that Willmott and Young note from their observations. Although men enjoyed the privacy of the well-planned home to assist more freely with domestic chores, men still required an audience and the judgement of others to construct some aspects of their masculine identity.

Performing masculinities in the home

The home's function as a location to perform hobbies, such as DIY, tells us more about how men constructed masculine identities. The 1960 *Guardian* article 'Wives See for Themselves: An Eye on Husbands at Work' describes an experimental project at Thomas Potterton Ltd., a Warwick-based manufacturer of central heating boilers, that elaborates on this argument. Ernest Thorne, the works manager, invited his employees' wives to watch them work for the day, telling his guests, 'I'm sure you will agree, ladies, that men like being watched'.²⁸⁸ Thorne explained the benefits he saw in wives watching their husbands work,

'It makes them feel well, you know...' he said, puffing out his chest and tensing his biceps. 'They like showing their wives what they can do. They will be up to the mark; and that sort of thing lasts, you know – creates an atmosphere'.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 31.

²⁸⁶ Steven Gelber, 'Do-It-Yourself: Constructing, Repairing and Maintaining Domestic Masculinity', *American Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1997): 79–81.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 67, 73.

²⁸⁸ Our own Reporter, 'Wives See for Themselves: An Eye on Husbands at Work', *The Guardian* (6 May 1960), 5.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Thorne hoped that when wives saw their husbands perform physical skills first-hand it would improve men's domestic lives and productivity at work. One tinsmith approved of this idea as his wife falsely believed he was on 'a proper cushy number' and did not 'do any work at all'.²⁹⁰ Thorne's experiment indicates men's ongoing need for the viewership and judgement of others in order to construct a masculine identity. Even as men moved into well-planned homes that provided greater privacy, and made it easier to help with domestic chores, tasks such as DIY only became meaningful when performed in sight of others.

Men's performance of DIY in magazine advertisements and illustrations further strengthen this claim. Although these representations do not necessarily convey men's lived experiences, they exemplify an association between DIY and masculinity that advertisers and journalists thought would make sense to readers at the time. For example, the 1959 *Do It Yourself Annual* includes an advertisement for Congowall vinyl wall covering that shows a husband measuring his bathroom wall as his wife watches; a second advertisement for Bantam scaffolding depicts a married couple atop a scaffolding tower, the gaze of the wife again fixed on her husband.²⁹¹ The annual even describes the mundane task of laying linoleum tiles in a manner that evokes marital bliss,

Here's the way to harmony in the home! *Her* flair for colour plus *his* practical skill blend perfectly in the most satisfying of all do-it-yourself jobs. So design and lay your own floors for colour harmony with Staines Colourama Linoleum Tiles.²⁹²

The popular monthly DIY magazine *Practical Householder*, published in Britain between the early 1950s and late 1960s, continues this theme but also shows how Gelber's two definitions of DIY - a conjugal and individual activity - came together in the postwar home.²⁹³ The front cover of the July 1959 edition depicts a man applying vinyl tiles to his bathroom wall as his wife watches (figure 4.4). The image of the husband taking the lead on a DIY project, with his wife by his side, repeats across most *Practical Householder* front covers. As in the example below, the wife is poised to pass equipment, hold a ladder or assist in some way or another. Daniel

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ David Johnson, *Do It Yourself Annual*, 1 (London: Link House Publications, 1959), 90, 102.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Gelber, 'Do-It-Yourself', 79–81.

Miller goes further and contests that the performance of DIY required females to both direct the work-at-hand and also act as recipients of male efforts.²⁹⁴ Men's performance of DIY in the postwar home, advertisers proclaimed, allowed couples to engage in a conjugal activity while also showcasing men's craftsmanship skills.



Figure 4.4: The front cover of *Practical Householder* (July 1959) shows a man covering his bathroom wall as his wife watches.

This analysis supports Rosie Cox's view that '[a]s couples choose new finishes and designs, their house comes to materially represent their relationship' and that we need to understand DIY not as an end but 'as a process which cements the couple's relationship and manifests it in

²⁹⁴ Miller, 'Appropriating the State', 367.

space'.²⁹⁵ This understanding of DIY also mirrors the experience of married couple Henry and Joyce Harris, discussed earlier, who hoped to save their relationship through the mutual act of building a home together.²⁹⁶

Richard Hornsey highlights an additional dimension of DIY and describes how male neighbours watched each other perform DIY as a means to self-consciously evaluate their own actions and behaviours in the home.²⁹⁷

DIY's homosociality also encouraged neighbourly interactions between men, such as tool sharing or mutual assistance with jobs. George Hunter, in an interview with historian Stefan Ramsden in 2010, explained how he painted his neighbours' rooms throughout the 1950s and 1960s in exchange for token payments of tobacco.²⁹⁸ Men most commonly interacted over DIY projects on estates, as new houses presented a fresh canvas for home improvement, and found ways to foster friendships in their new environment.²⁹⁹ Willmott and Young observed the 'almost endless opportunities for work' found in new houses, from 'cleaning windows, washing down walls, interior painting, repairing house and furniture'.³⁰⁰

Male homeowners took the lead in these activities, with women expected to 'admire her husband's skill and, occasionally, if a son is not at home, to stand at the bottom of a ladder handing up his power-tool, a pail of size or a box of Rawlplugs'.³⁰¹

These themes coalesce in the example of Leslie Samuels, an unemployed father of five from Bethnal Green. He unexpectedly found himself the focus of a covert 1946 MO study of working class life, which provides an insight into how men could use DIY to construct a masculine, domestic identity.

MO co-founder Tom Harrisson invited Judith Henderson, the niece of Virginia Woolf and a recent graduate in anthropology from the University of Cambridge, to undertake the study.³⁰² Henderson already lived and worked

²⁹⁵ Rosie Cox, 'Materials, Skills and Gender Identities: Men, Women and Home Improvement Practices in New Zealand', *Gender, Place & Culture* 23, no. 4 (2 April 2016): 575.

²⁹⁶ 'The House That Mended a Marriage', 53, cited in Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', 350.

²⁹⁷ Richard Hornsey, 'Homosexuality and Everyday Life in Post-War London' (University of Sussex, 2004), 204, 208.

²⁹⁸ Stefan Ramsden, 'Remaking Working-Class Community: Sociability, Belonging and "Affluence" in a Small Town, 1930–80', *Contemporary British History* 29, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 14–15.

²⁹⁹ Melanie Tebbutt challenges the view that housing estates were anti-social environments, in Melanie Tebbutt, *Women's Talk: A Social History of Gossip in Working-Class Neighbourhoods, 1880-1960* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), 154. Todd also explains, on new estates '[a]s neighbours got to know each other, some turned into friends. Their spacious houses took the place of streets in social life', in Todd, *The People*, 184.

³⁰⁰ Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 31.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² James Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 334.

in the area, as part of a project that gave professionals an anthropological understanding of local culture, and quickly found an ideal family for her study.³⁰³ The neighbouring Samuels family lived at 31 Chisenhale Road and matched Harrison's brief to secretly 'document the inner workings of working-class family life'.³⁰⁴ The family had also recently attended BCMI, which gave MO a further opportunity to assess the impact of the exhibition on this family. Henderson kept a detailed record of the family's everyday life, with a particular focus on the father, Leslie, and his relations with his wife, Doreen, and young sons.³⁰⁵ Recently unemployed, 32-year-old Leslie previously worked as a machine-tool maker and fitter. Henderson's notes describe him unfavourably as a 'thinnish man of medium height... wears glasses and appears somewhat nervous', who suffered from stomach troubles that stopped him from wartime service. Leslie's unemployment, poor war service, bad health and meek demeanour fail to match traditional ideas of masculinity or convey an image of domestic authority. Yet, contrary to this expectation, Henderson describes Leslie as 'very useful in the house, making and repairing furniture, dealing with lighting and plumbing' and 'when at home, he sees a lot of the children'.³⁰⁶ Leslie's passion for DIY and handyman skills created a masculine identity that cast him in the eyes of his wife and children as a useful member of the household and a good father and husband. As friendship flourished between the Samuels and Hendersons, anthropological observations swiftly decreased.³⁰⁷ Henderson's study, however, helps illustrate how men like Leslie, regardless of their physical health, wartime service or employment status, could use DIY as an alternative means to construct a positive, family-orientated identity.

'The new man stays at home'

³⁰³ JL Peterson ran the project, which was called *Discover Your Neighbour*, in Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Hinton describes how Harrison planned two unrealised MO projects, 'Projected Study of Youth' and 'Why People Marry', that would involve investigators living in family households as lodgers, participating in family life and reporting on any problems that arise, in Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Judith Henderson, 'Notes on the S Family' (2 December 1946 - 24 April 1947), 1, MO SxMOA1/2/26/5/K/2.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ This example raises ethical questions over the relationship between middle class researchers and their working class subjects as the Samuels remained unaware of the MO project until 1978 when Nigel Henderson, Judith's husband, used extracts from her diary in a photographic exhibition, noted in Victoria Walsh and Peter Smithson, eds., *Nigel Henderson: Parallel of Life and Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 54–55, 148.

By the end of the 1950s a new definition of the 'good husband' had emerged. Social scientist Mark Abrams, writing in *The Listener* magazine in 1959, explained the relationship between men's new identity and developments in the home,

The good husband is now the domesticated husband... The new man stays at home, and he is likely to find burdensome and repugnant any activities or interests that force him to leave the family circle and forgo part of his domestic privacy and comfort.³⁰⁸

Most significantly, this change took place across the middle *and* working classes. Abrams added, '[f]or the first time in modern British history, the working class home, as well as the middle class home, has become a place that is warm, comfortable and able to provide its own fireside entertainment'.³⁰⁹ Men's memories of home life in the 1950s also support this view. One male respondent told MO: '[o]ur interests lay entirely in our home which we had just moved into and our marriage which had just begun... our own entertainment was family games and the wireless programmes, our home and garden were all-consuming'.³¹⁰

The patriarchal practices of men like Ray Rochford seemed increasingly outdated in comparison to the family-orientated identities of men like Robert Williamson and Jimmy Wright. A married woman from Woodford explained to Willmott and Young how gender roles had changed in the first half of the twentieth century and how these changes reflected new ideas about the home,

In the old days... the husband was the husband and the wife was the wife and they each had their own ways of going on. Her job was to look after him. The wife wouldn't stand for it nowadays. Husbands help with the children now. They stay more in the home and have more interest in the home.³¹¹

However, for some postwar critics, men's 'domestication' came at a cost. Wendy Webster highlights how anxieties about men's 'home-centredness' became particularly pronounced when this clashed with men's class

³⁰⁸ Mark Abrams, 'The Home-Centred Society', *The Listener* (26 November 1959).

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ 'Television and Images of the 1950s and 1960s' (Spring 2003), *MO Directive Response - Men no. G2134*, quoted in Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', 353.

³¹¹ Willmott and Young, *Family and Class*, 29.

identity.³¹² Working class communities, predominantly in the north of England, feared that men's increased time at home may inversely reduce attendance at public, traditionally male-only events, such as working men's clubs, pubs and trade union meetings.³¹³ Charles Curran observed in 1956 that 'the public meeting has all but died out' and, writing in the *Guardian* in 1960, journalist Caroline Brown noted a change in men's interests as homes had become more inviting,

Men used to go to working men's clubs, to trade union and political meetings, to church activities, to the cinema. All of these organisations report a falling-off in attendance and various investigators have tried to discover the reasons why. My own findings, for what they are worth, show that homes are now so comfortable that once men have returned from work they don't want to go out again.³¹⁴

To some extent, middle class worries about a decline in traditional, working class forms of political and civic engagement were anecdotal.³¹⁵ It is more plausible that men reconfigured how they used their home as a means to continue working class cultures and blend together elements of the past with new family-orientated practices that looked towards the future.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined men's use and experience of the home between the late 1930s and early 1960s, and established a relationship between family-orientated masculine identities and well-planned homes. Reciprocity between gender and housing predates and extends beyond the middle decades of the twentieth century. However, a unique set of historical problems emerged in the 1940s that brought men's relationship to the home more clearly into focus. Most notably, for many families, demobilisation did not bring domestic bliss but presented new challenges. Poor housing compounded the situation as men's unwillingness to marry and have children, without a home of their own, threatened to handicap Britain's recovery. Among those who moved to new estates, men found

³¹² Webster, *Imagining Home*, 74.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, xiv.

³¹⁴ Charles Curran, 'This New England: The Passing of the Tribunes', *Encounter* (6 June 1956), 20–21; Caroline Brown, 'Now Father Is at Home', *The Guardian* (12 October 1960), 6.

³¹⁵ For examples of how these customs continued into the 1990s, see Ruth Cherrington, *Not Just Beer and Bingo! A Social History of Working Men's Clubs* (Authorhouse, 2012).

opportunities to pursue ways of life that differed from their parents but did not fully abandon working class traditions. These debates highlight changes in many men's domestic lives in the middle decades of the twentieth century, but the nature of these changes did not signal a radical break from the past as men found ways to look forwards as well as backwards when constructing identities as fathers and husbands.

Analysis moved inside the home and examined how men used living rooms, dining spaces, bedrooms, gardens and sheds as spaces in which to trial family-orientated masculinities. Concepts of privacy and visibility underpin my understanding of how inhabitants constructed gender in the mid-twentieth century home. The designs of well-planned homes and changed customs, which more rigidly demarcated public and private spaces, reduced the risk of people outside the family seeing inside the home and increased men's willingness to help with housework. At the same time, aural privacy allowed men to do as they wish when at home without fear of being overheard by neighbours. Yet, as well-planned domestic space made it easier for men to perform family-orientated identities in private, men still required ways to showcase their gendered identity to others. Men's performance of DIY satisfied this requirement as it not only chimed with the postwar enthusiasm for self-improvement and domestic leisure promoted at housing exhibitions, but also gave men like Leslie Samuels a way to improve his masculine status in the eyes of his family.

In many cases, men used their home as planners' imagined and as represented in planning publications and at housing exhibitions. However, Hole and Attenburrow found that 'familiar habits and attitudes formed in old and overcrowded accommodation die hard and it takes time for the family to accustom themselves to the increase in spatial separation offered by the new accommodation'.³¹⁶ Differences between pre-existing working class cultures and expert ideas about how families *should* use their homes meant that not all families used domestic space as planners expected. Some families chose to eat meals at their kitchen draining board rather than use the dining table, other families shared bedrooms even when their new home gave everyone a room of their own and some even erected makeshift partition walls to subdivide large living rooms. Postwar investigative studies

³¹⁶ Hole and Attenburrow, *Houses and People*, 26.

document the ongoing influences of class and families' continued agency over their use and experience of domestic space. Although it is possible to report instances of spatial subversion, for most families the move into well-planned housing marked a positive development in their lives. JM Moge, for instance, found very few families that had moved from St. Ebbes to Barton who preferred their old inner-city homes.³¹⁷ And among men who moved into new houses, many found it possible to balance the demands of family life with traditional customs such as visits to the pub or attendance at football matches.

Planners wished to create homes that gave all men, regardless of class background, the opportunity to succeed as fathers and husbands. As men moved into well-planned homes they found space and privacy that better allowed them to perform individual, family-orientated identities. For instance, Jimmy Wright liked how his new estate brought together several young fathers and normalised leisure activities with his son that seemed impossible in his old neighbourhood.³¹⁸ Robert Williamson enjoyed opportunities to play with his daughter in the bathroom, living room and private garden, spaces unavailable in his old home.³¹⁹ And although Ray Rochford's actions as a father and husband stood against the family-orientated model promoted by planners, he also expressed the need for domestic privacy so that husbands would not lose status if they helped wives with household chores'.³²⁰ Regardless of whether men accepted, subverted or rejected planners' domestic ideals, this chapter has brought into focus the influences of domestic space on masculine identities in mid-twentieth century Britain and the connection between well-planned homes and men's performance of family-orientated practices.

³¹⁷ Moge, 'Changes in Family Life', 126.

³¹⁸ Wright, 19, TFC C590/01, Rolls 208-211.

³¹⁹ Williamson, 25, 68, TFC C590/01, Rolls 157-163.

³²⁰ Rochford, 11, TFC C590/01, Rolls 47-49.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

This thesis has examined the significance of masculinities in debates about planning the home in mid-twentieth century Britain, the dissemination of domestic ideals in planning publications and at housing exhibitions, and men's experiences of these ideals in reality. My focus on the complex exchange of values between men who planned homes and men who lived in them attributes agency to *all* actors in the planning process and reveals the effects of class on the efficacy of planning ideas. Regardless of whether men accepted, subverted or rejected planners' domestic ideals, this study brings into focus the pervasive influence of normative masculinities and illustrates connections between men's access to well-planned homes and their ability to perform family-orientated practices.

Movement into well-planned homes did not impact the domestic identities of all men. Nor can this experience fully explain the reasons behind mid-twentieth century changes in men's identities. Moreover, a chronology of twentieth century Britain in which working class men's desire for a greater emotional investment in their home and family predated the 1940s. However, building on Claire Langhamer's study of working class domestic ideals and Laura King's account of the popularisation of the 'family man', I argue that the postwar context - and the movement of working class men into well-planned homes - enabled these domestic and family-orientated ideals to be actualised in particular, historically-specific ways.¹

So what, then, does masculinity have to do with domesticity? I have approached this question - posed by John Tosh - from the perspective of planners, observers and inhabitants in an attempt to reach conclusions that reveal more than the autobiographical experiences of individual men.² The rational, technocratic and omniscient identities of planners, their family-orientated vision for how working class men *should* use and experience the home and working class men's ambivalent responses to these ideals broadens the search for masculinities in the past. Furthermore, my examination of masculinities as expert prescriptions, in didactic and

¹ Claire Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (1 April 2005): 342-43; Claire Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 1 (March 2007): 179; Laura King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, 1914-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 15.

² John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 1.

representational sources, as well as experiential accounts, in oral histories and sociological reports, addresses Michael Roper's concern that histories of masculinity overly focus on interpretations of text and images rather than reconstructions of events and experiences.³

Above all, this study adds to a growing field of scholarship that examines normative masculinities in the past.⁴ The intellectual roots of this project come from the pioneering scholarship of feminist and queer historians who first analysed gender as a power structure that shaped people's everyday lives.⁵ This study of masculinities therefore does not diminish the historical significance of women or marginal sexualities, but instead examines masculinities as a means to underscore the power of gender in history more broadly. Michael Kimmel writes, 'the invisibility of gender to those privileged by it reproduces the inequalities that are circumscribed by gender'.⁶ The male, white, able-bodied, 'heterosexual', working-middle class subjects of my historical study often enjoyed the 'privilege of invisibility'.⁷ Yet, to ignore normative gender identities presents an account of past events that fails to challenge dominant power structures. Simply because masculinities are harder to locate than feminine or queer identities should not absolve them from historical scrutiny.

Chapter two discussed the intellectual context of 1940s Britain and identified the influences of masculinities upon how planners studied and conceptualised the home and its male inhabitants. Analysis of planning texts, such as *Living in Cities* and *County of London Plan*, redressed an oversight in existing historiography that overlooks men's role as gendered actors in planning discussions. The work of Caitríona Beaumont uncovers the contributions of women's organisations to 1940s planning debates and argues that 'women's knowledge' of the home supplemented the masculine

³ Michael Roper, 'Slipping Out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal* 59, no. 1 (1 March 2005): 59. Also see Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1997), ix; John Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept?', in *What Is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. John Arnold and Sean Brady (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25.

⁴ Recent examples include King, *Family Men*; Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁵ For instance, writing in 1976, Natalie Zemon Davis noted, 'it seems to me that we should be interested in the history of both women and men, that we should not be working only on the subjected sex any more than the historians of class can focus exclusively on peasants' in Natalie Zemon Davis, "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case', *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 3/4 (1 April 1976): 90. For further information on this study's use of queer histories, see fn. 64 on p. 24 and the wider discussion in chap. 1, 22-26.

⁶ Michael Kimmel, 'Invisible Masculinity', *Society* 30, no. 6 (September 1993): 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

views of mid-twentieth century planners.⁸ This chapter therefore analysed influences on planning ideas, from natural world analogies to understanding the home as ‘a machine for living in’, to demonstrate how planning the home, and what inhabitants did within the home, became interlinked with issues of national reconstruction.

This chapter described 1940s planners in ways that devote greater attention to their masculine identities. Joel Sanders argues that we tend to think of the architect-planner as ‘unencumbered by politics and ideology’.⁹ Yet the planner emerges from my research as a technocratic, rational and paternalist figure quick to seize opportunities that followed the environmental destruction of the Second World War. The planners discussed in this chapter understood their masculine identities as removed from traditional bourgeois experts and distinct from the ‘individual genius’ of high-modernist figures like Le Corbusier. However, even when planners understood themselves as different from past manifestations of experts or European counterparts, their continued paternalism meant that they remained at a distance from the working class inhabitants for whom they planned.

Chapter three examined the Snoddy family and the Lansbury Estate, which further established the home and its inhabitants as emblems of Britain’s postwar future. Albert and his family represented a linear vision of change, in which the state gave working class families the opportunity to depart from old accommodation, and its associated customs, for a modern way of life. The chapter documented planners’ use of pedagogical methods - the quiz, walk-through, anti-model and model masculine lifestyle – at Britain Can Make It, the Festival of Britain, Live Architecture and in planning publications to present ideal visions for how men *should* use and experience the home. The model masculine lifestyles disseminated at exhibitions championed an understanding of masculinity as something place-specific that stood outside traditional class categories and orientated men’s lives around family and the home. Exhibitions also drew attention to men’s use of domestic objects and spaces. For example, armchair design and the promotion of masculine leisure, the demarcation of private and

⁸ For example, Caitríona Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), chap. Housewives and citizens: post-war planning and the post-war years.

⁹ Joel Sanders, ‘Introduction’, in *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity*, ed. Joel Sanders (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 12.

public spaces so that men could perform family-orientated identities without the risk of others seeing, and the influences of the past on the efficacy of model communities such as Lansbury.

Exhibits seldom affected visitors in the exact manner that exhibition organisers intended. Most notably, class differences created problems as visitors frequently misunderstood the messages conveyed at exhibitions or found ways to continue customs from the past that subverted planners' original intentions. This chapter therefore expanded my analysis beyond the top-down flow of planning knowledge at exhibitions by assessing the limited opportunities for male inhabitants to contribute to planning debates. 1940s planners espoused a rhetoric of engagement with the people for whom they planned and brought into the planning process figures like London County Council sociologist Margaret Willis. Yet, the flow of information remained overwhelmingly one-directional, a finding that contradicts Selina Todd's account of the period 1945 to 1967.¹⁰ By examining the inhabitants' agency, this chapter presented an account of exhibition materials that did not presuppose men's emotional investment in the ideal domestic representations disseminated.

The final chapter viewed these prescriptive sources alongside men's domestic experiences to reveal points of similarity and difference. Beginning with an examination of demobilisation, movement to new estates and the effect of past traditions on men's identities, this chapter argued that improvements in working class living conditions did not indicate an embourgeoisement of previous class identities.¹¹ Rather, examples from oral history interviews and observational studies suggest that working class identities changed to accommodate new domestic contexts and men found ways to bridge past customs and the new demands of a family-orientated identity.

I supported this assessment with an examination of living rooms, dining spaces, bedrooms, gardens and sheds. Drawing upon Julie-Marie Strange's study of Victorian and Edwardian fathers at home, this chapter

¹⁰ Selina Todd, 'Phoenix Rising: Working-Class Life and Urban Reconstruction, c. 1945–1967', *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 3 (July 2015): 680–81. My study more closely reflects the findings of Peter Larkham and Keith Lilley, in Peter Larkham and Keith Lilley, 'Exhibiting the City: Planning Ideas and Public Involvement in Wartime and Early Post-War Britain', *Town Planning Review* 83, no. 6 (January 2012): 647.

¹¹ In agreement with Jon Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, 1930–64', *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 2 (1 June 2013): 273.

demonstrated how men used material objects such as DIY projects and garden sheds to help fashion identities as emotionally interested and involved fathers and husbands.¹² My analysis particularly focused on the delineation of public and private spaces in well-planned homes and how the gaze of others shaped men's willingness to assist with housework or play with children. However, at the same time, men maintained a need for the viewership of others to construct their masculine identities. The proliferation of DIY among the working classes helped satisfy this demand. In mid-twentieth century Britain, two parallel chronologies therefore emerged: changes in what men did at home as fathers and husbands; and men's movement from 'badly-planned' to 'well-planned' homes. The point at which these chronologies coalesced differed for individual families, which makes it difficult to propose a causal link between planning ideas and domestic practices. However, from the men discussed, it becomes clear that movement into well-planned homes helped facilitate some men's performance of family-orientated masculinities.

Future directions for study

My investigation of masculinities, planning and the home has limits and, during the course of research, fertile areas for further study became apparent. As discussed in the introductory chapter, this study has examined planners' ideas for British housing, the dissemination of these ideas at exhibitions in London and examples of lived experiences in urban areas such as Bethnal Green, Coventry, Oxford, Bradford and Sunderland. I position this study within a historiography of twentieth century Britain as planners generally conceptualised housing and the domestic actions of inhabitants through a 'British' lens. However, gaps exist to further tease-out similarities and differences between men's domestic experiences in different parts of the British Isles. Philippa Levine rightly argues, '[h]istories of England masquerading as histories of Britain do little to challenge entrenched ideas'.¹³ As historians, we must outline the national and regional boundaries of each study and remain mindful of the multiple

¹² Julie-Marie Strange, 'Fathers at Home: Life Writing and Late-Victorian and Edwardian Plebeian Domestic Masculinities', *Gender & History* 27, no. 3, Special Issue Men at Home (November 2015): 705.

¹³ Laura Nym Mayhall et al., 'Roundtable: Twentieth-Century British History in North America', *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 3 (1 September 2010): 403–4.

histories within Britain.¹⁴ However, a comparative study of regions and nations would bring this research into wider contexts outside the remit of this thesis. I therefore leave this thread as a springboard for future studies.

The domestic experiences of non-white men and questions of race in 1940s and 1950s Britain also present an area in need of further analysis. Jordanna Bailkin discusses the explosion of postwar expertise – in areas such as psychology, psychiatry, social work, and sociology – and argues that the dismantlement of the British Empire changed how experts understood subjects such as mental health, marriage and parenting in the metropole.¹⁵ The arrival of more black people in Britain gave rise to a new ‘science’ of race relations, in which anthropologists and sociologists took a greater interest in the interplay between racial identities and everyday experiences.¹⁶ Experts’ interest in the domestic activities of white, nuclear families utilised similar methodological tools as race relations studies and emerged from the same unease over the direction of the nation’s postwar recovery.

Anxieties about race and masculinity went beyond expert studies. For example, the increased visibility of black men from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent in urban areas unsettled Britain’s imagined racial homogeneity and, for some white men, represented a threat to the nation.¹⁷ Historians have shown how experts’ well-meaning investigations often did little to assuage these fears.¹⁸ As Alison Light has argued, middle class definitions of national identity in interwar Britain increasingly evoked the idea of Britain as a private, domestic nation.¹⁹ As previously noted, this association continued into the 1940s and 1950s and proliferated at exhibitions: for example, an exhibit at the Festival of Britain noted how ‘the English have led the world in making a ‘home’ and there are still many countries who have no word for it’ and that the ‘English spend more time on

¹⁴ This approach will be addressed in the forthcoming edited collection, Naomi Lloyd-Jones and Maggie Scull, eds., *United Kingdom? Four Nations Approaches to Modern ‘British’ History, 1700-1960* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

¹⁵ Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 7, 23.

¹⁶ Chris Waters, ‘“Dark Strangers” in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963’, *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 2 (1 April 1997): 209. For example, Kenneth Little, *Negroes in Britain: A Study of Racial Relations in English Society* (London, 1947); Michael Banton, *The Coloured Quarter: Negro Immigrants in an English City* (London: Cape, 1955).

¹⁷ For further discussion, see Waters, ‘Dark Strangers’, 209; Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, 23.

¹⁸ Waters, ‘Dark Strangers’, 217, 224.

¹⁹ Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), 208–21.

their homes than any other race'.²⁰ Chris Waters explains that postwar race relations experts remained 'committed to a particular vision of the social order that drew its efficacy from established tropes of Britain as a domesticated nation'.²¹ Although many experts sought to counter negative stereotypes associated with black people, by propagating the image of 'domestic Britain' they exaggerated the nation's vulnerability to identities that stood outside the norm. Like class, race shaped and was shaped by gender identities. And although this study has suggested that class had a greater influence on planners, observers and inhabitants during this period, race reminds us that planners' vision for ideal homes evolved among a wider pool of expert knowledge that changed in response to global developments such as decolonisation.

Homes and masculinities since the mid-twentieth century

Experts' attempts to discipline how working class inhabitants used and experienced their homes did not end in 1961. Between 1955 and 1975, local authorities demolished an estimated 1.3 million properties as families continued to relocate from inner-city areas to well-planned housing estates.²² However, as Victor Jeleniewski Seidler observes, structures of class and gender changed in the 1950s and unsettled rules about 'who is entitled to speak and who is expected to listen and show deference'.²³ On an international stage, Jon Lawrence documents how 'Britain's paternalist traditions' faced problems in the 1950s as the cold war, decolonisation and major events such as the Suez crisis challenged the supremacy of the British state.²⁴ At home, planners continued to disseminate their expertise in publications and at housing exhibitions, with the Ideal Home Exhibition reaching its peak attendance of 1,329,644 in 1957.²⁵ However, for both

²⁰ Council of Industrial Design, *Homes and Gardens*, 1 (23 April 1949), [DCA 14B/5181](#); Council of Industrial Design, *Homes and Gardens*, 3 (23 May 1949), [DCA 14B/5181](#).

²¹ Waters, 'Dark Strangers', 229.

²² Chris Waters, 'Representations of Everyday Life: L. S. Lowry and the Landscape of Memory in Postwar Britain', *Representations* 65, no. Special Issue: New Perspectives in British Studies (Winter 1999): 134; Melanie Tebbutt, 'Imagined Families and Vanished Communities: Memories of a Working-Class Life in Northampton', *History Workshop Journal* 73, no. 1 (1 April 2012): 164.

²³ Victor Jeleniewski Seidler, 'Masculinities, Histories and Memories', in *What Is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. John Arnold and Sean Brady (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 438.

²⁴ Lawrence, 'Class, "Affluence" and the Study of Everyday Life', 288.

²⁵ Deborah Ryan, *The Ideal Home Through the 20th Century* (London: Hazar, 1997), 17.

planners and the public, it had grown increasingly clear that the ideals presented could never become realities for everyone.²⁶

Events like the Festival of Britain and the arrival of the Snoddy family in Lansbury reflect the culmination of mid-twentieth century planning ideas, rather than their starting point. On his return to Lansbury in 1984, LCC architect Arthur Ling looked back at what his department hoped to achieve and remarked,

It was to be a prototype neighbourhood development. Unfortunately instead of being the beginning of the whole process, it seemed in some ways to be the end of this whole conception of the new London with its human needs satisfied... Suddenly the whole thing was abandoned in favour of just producing as many flats as possible: up they went and people were put into the sky and this is where vandalism really began since the parents can't control children if they're above three storeys, they're out of touch.²⁷

By 1984, Ling's negative portrayal of high rise estates had become synonymous with postwar planning. Jennifer Allen interviewed Ling, and LCC architect Walter Bor, in the early 1990s and described them as 'defensive' when it came to conversations about Lansbury, a response she attributed to the public's low opinion of postwar architecture at that time.²⁸ Writing in 1995, Adrian Forty noted, '[a]nyone who chooses to write about post-war British architecture cannot avoid the fact that most people in this country believe it was a disaster'.²⁹ Planners' misguided design ideas and the shoddy building work of later postwar projects, most infamously Ronan Point in East London, stoked the public's negativity.³⁰ Yet, factors outside of planners' control also shaped perceptions of postwar housing. Economic decline in the 1970s, for example, cut the budgets available for social and security services on housing estates.³¹ The viability of council housing faced further struggles as Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979 and focused on house ownership rather than local authority provision.

²⁶ Peter Larkham discusses the enthusiasm for planning exhibitions in Britain in the 1940s and the subsequent decrease in public confidence, in Peter Larkham, 'Exhibiting Planning in Wartime Britain', in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, ed. Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 131-132.

²⁷ Paul Addison, *Now the War Is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-1951* (London: BBC Books, 1985), 78.

²⁸ Jessica Allen, 'Contested Understandings: The Lansbury Estate in the Post-War Period' (Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1994), 88.

²⁹ Adrian Forty, 'Being or Nothingness: Private Experience and Public Architecture in Post-War Britain', *Architectural History* 38 (1995): 25-26.

³⁰ Joe Moran, 'Housing, Memory and Everyday Life in Contemporary Britain', *Cultural Studies* 18, no. 4 (July 2004): 615.

³¹ *Ibid.*

The domestic experiences of many inhabitants failed to materialise as planners intended. However, many men found ways to extend the performance of family-orientated masculine identities and by the late-twentieth century the concept of 'active fathers' had become an accepted norm among many communities.³² King argues that one of the greatest changes after the 1960s 'was the balance between fatherhood in private and in public'.³³ This meant that men grew less reliant on domestic privacy in order to play with children or assist with housework, as discussed in previous chapters. By the 2010s, the British government had recognised the existence of 'stay-at-home dads' in the shared provision of paternity leave and 'alternative families', such as those headed by same-sex parents, had become increasingly common-place in British society.³⁴

Contemporary impacts

More than sixty years have passed since men like Albert Snoddy moved into their well-planned homes, yet the interplay between masculine identities and domestic spaces remains a matter of enduring importance. Mirroring anxieties of the 1940s and 1950s, the *Evening Standard* asked in March 2016 if men in London are struggling to adjust to a new gender identity described as 'masculinity 2.0'. The journalist, Samuel Fishwick, describes this identity as one where 'male friends take yoga classes on a Tuesday and play seven-a-side football on a Wednesday', the kitchen has become 'the new man cave' and photographs of One Direction singer Louis Tomlinson with his baby son go viral.³⁵ The article also highlights that beneath this veneer of active fathers and fluid gender roles, men continue to face specifically gendered problems. For example, a 2014 report from Campaign Against Living Miserably, a charity that works to prevent male

³² By 2015, traditionally conservative newspapers enthused about the importance of active fathers, such as Jake Wallis Simons, 'It's up to Dads to Take a More Active Role in Raising Kids', *Telegraph* (13 February 2015), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/relationships/fatherhood/11410650/Its-up-to-dads-to-take-a-more-active-role-in-raising-kids.html>, accessed 13 May 2016.

³³ King, *Family Men*, 200.

³⁴ Under laws, which came into effect in April 2015, parents can share up to 50 weeks leave and 37 weeks of pay after the birth or adoption of a child, 'Shared Parental Leave Law Comes into Effect', *BBC News* (5 April 2015), <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-32183784>, accessed 4 April 2016. Matt Cook highlights the increased acknowledgement and acceptance of same-sex parents, at least in terms of government legislation and popular culture, since the turn of the millennium, in Matt Cook, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London*, Gender and Sexualities in History (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1.

³⁵ Samuel Fishwick, 'Struggling with Masculinity 2.0? This Is What It Means to Be a Man in 2016', *The Evening Standard* (10 March 2016), <http://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/esmagazine/struggling-with-masculinity-20-this-is-what-it-means-to-be-a-man-in-2016-a3198711.html>, accessed 10 March 2016.

suicide, noted that 42 per cent of men felt pressure to become the household's main breadwinner.³⁶ Only 13 per cent of women reported similar feelings.

Britain's current housing situation can amplify these difficulties. For example, in March 2016 the London Borough of Camden removed 21,850 people from a list of 27,020 waiting for council housing in the area.³⁷ A tightening of eligibility requirements means that applicants must now prove residence in the borough for five of the past seven years and a relaxation of overcrowding regulations allows the local authority to count living and dining rooms as possible bedrooms.³⁸ This thesis has examined planners' efforts to educate working class men on how to use and experience living rooms and dining spaces in their new, well-planned homes. In twenty-first century Britain, many men now face life in local authority housing in which these rooms, because of reclassification, no longer exist. If politicians and policymakers with the power to improve housing provision remain unwilling, or more likely unable, to use the past as a means to avoid mistakes in the present, historians need to think more creatively about the potential uses of their research.

Historical studies of masculinities and domestic spaces can benefit men in the present. Although the lives of 'great men' occupied (and continue to occupy) the pages of history books, these studies do not necessarily help men make sense of their own lives and remain blind to figures like Robert Williamson (who enjoyed singing to his daughter in the bath rather than going to the pub) and Lesley Samuels (whose proficiency at DIY impressed his wife and children).³⁹ When discussed at all, these lives stand outside of hegemonic expectations as something odd or alternative. But, as my study has established, a diversity of masculinities existed throughout history.

³⁶ The report also notes that 78 per cent of all suicides in England and Wales are men and that suicide represents the single biggest cause of death for men aged 20 to 45, in Judith Welford and Jane Powell, 'A Crisis in Modern Masculinity: Understanding the Causes of Male Suicide' (Campaign Against Living Miserably, November 2014), 3, 5.

³⁷ Ella Jessel, 'Thousands Kicked Out of Queue as Camden Cuts Waiting List for Council Homes from 27,020 to 5,170', *Camden New Journal* (18 March 2016), <http://www.camdennewjournal.com/housingwaitinglist>, accessed 26 March 2016. Also see Dawn Foster, 'If Council Housing Is in Such Demand, Surely Private Renting Is Broken?', *The Guardian* (25 March 2016), http://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2016/mar/25/council-housing-private-renting-waiting-lists?CMP=twl_a-money_b-gdnmoney, accessed 26 March 2016.

³⁸ Jessel, 'Thousands Kicked Out of Queue'.

³⁹ Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shephard highlight historians' efforts to 'avoid the criticism that the history of masculinity is merely the old game in a new dress, a preoccupation with "great men" disguised as a component of the history of gender', Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950', *The Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 276.

For men's lives today, histories of masculinity that take account of these diversities help men position present-day actions within longer historical spectrums. For example, King shared her research into fatherhood between 1918 and 1960 with Birmingham-based theatre company Babakas during their development of the 2012 production *Our Fathers*.⁴⁰ She explains how her research helped the writers and performers 'universalize' their stories of fatherhood and move the production 'from a tale about three adults, their relationships with their fathers, and their decisions about themselves becoming parents to a much bigger story of social change and intergenerational relationships'.⁴¹

Like King, my research provides a language for readers to think about their own domestic experiences as something that transcends the specifics of their individual lives. While researching and writing this doctoral thesis, I found opportunities with University College London's Public and Cultural Engagement Department to share my analysis of men's relationship to the home with museum visitors.⁴² Conversations would quickly move beyond the narrow parameters of my own research as people felt encouraged to recall where their father sat in the living room, memories of when dad returned from war or how family life changed when they moved to a new estate. Although histories of masculinity and the home cannot fully explain *why* men acted and behaved in a particular way, they can help people in the present make sense of the wider historical contexts within which these domestic actions occurred. Concepts such as 'experts', 'homes', 'fathers' and 'husbands' maintain currency in popular discourses today.⁴³ The intellectual accessibility of these concepts highlights the need for historians of masculinity to use research to help non-specialist audiences speak, in their own terms, about the past and its influence on present-day society and, as John Tosh argues, 'reach beyond our captive audience of student and academic peers'.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ For further information on the production see 'Our Fathers', Babakas, <http://www.babakas.org/shows/our-fathers>, accessed 4 April 2016.

⁴¹ Laura King and Gary Rivett, 'Engaging People in Making History: Impact, Public Engagement and the World Beyond the Campus', *History Workshop Journal* 80, no. 1 (October 2015): 227.

⁴² For further information on UCL's Researchers in Museums project, see 'Who We Are & What We Do', Researchers in Museums (2016) <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/researchers-in-museums/>, accessed 10 April 2016.

⁴³ For instance, the public continue to question the legitimacy of expert knowledge, whether it takes the form of economic predictions or guidance on healthy living. Housing issues also remain a key concern for many, as well as debates over what it means to be a 'good' father and husband in twenty-first century Britain.

⁴⁴ Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity', 18, 32.

Conclusion

Historians have described the middle decades of the twentieth century as the apex of male domesticity.⁴⁵ My study of planning knowledge, housing exhibitions and men's domestic experiences between 1941 and 1961 focusses attention on the co-constituting relationship between working and middle class masculine identities and the home. However, I have also problematised the universality of the 'domestic man' as some men remained ambivalent towards their well-planned homes and found ways to continue customs from the past.

I have also highlighted a chronological gap between working class men's desire for homebased privacy, which predated the 1940s, and the arrival of opportunities to enact these ideals in well-planned homes. The environmental devastation of the Blitz and social instability that followed the Second World War positioned the private home, and the activities of its inhabitants, as a key location for postwar reconstruction. The wartime successes of scientists and technicians bolstered confidence in what rational and technocratic planning could achieve in times of peace. Although planners attempted to distance themselves from previous stereotypes of experts as upper class elites, their planning identities and ideas continued the paternalist outlook of previous generations.

Although each chapter addressed individual planning ideas, specific housing exhibitions or men's personal experiences, I have also demonstrated how these experiences constituted part of something bigger. Overarching themes such as the proliferation of a 'technicist class', social anxieties associated with the Second World War and improvements in people's living standards highlight points of connection between ideas, dissemination and experiences. In a number of instances, men's lived experiences aligned with the planning ideals promoted in publications and at housing exhibitions. However, men could as easily ignore or subvert the expectations of their well-planned home and instead find ways to blend new

⁴⁵ James Obelkevich, 'Consumption', in *Understanding Post-War British Society*, ed. Peter Catterall and James Obelkevich (London: Routledge, 1994), 144; Martin Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity', *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (22 November 2002): 644; Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', 341–62.

and past practices. Movement into well-planned homes did not therefore transform all men into doting dads and helpful husbands, nor did it signal the demise of working class cultures. However, men's departure from overcrowded housing and traditional communities did modify their everyday lives and present spatial opportunities that made it easier to perform new masculine identities. This study has articulated the relationship between masculinities and planning knowledge, how this affected the representation of men and housing at exhibitions, and provided a window into men's domestic lives. Above all, it has brought the interplay between domestic space and masculinities out from the margins of twentieth century British history and into view.

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