

Group-cum-Townscape?

Bruce Rotherham at Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor

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The English firm of Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor, formed in London in 1960, is best known for the master planning of the new town of Milton Keynes and for a series of hospital buildings and complexes, some so extensive that they can be analysed in urban terms.

Less known is the fact that the expatriate New Zealand architect Bruce Rotherham (1926-2004) worked at Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor for much of the 1960s and 1970s. Rotherham is celebrated in New Zealand for his role in the Architectural Group, the Group Construction Co. and Group Architects, and for the house he designed and built for himself and his young family in the Auckland suburb of Stanley Bay in the early 1950s. He left the Group in 1952, and left New Zealand in 1955. He settled in London, where he remarried and had the bulk of his career. Little has been written about his British work.

This paper explores Rotherham's time in the reputable London office of Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor. It has three aims: (i) to identify the key projects on which Rotherham worked while in the office; (ii) to establish whether or not these projects were consistent with his declared interest in housing; and (iii) on the basis of claims made by British architectural historian and critic Reyner Banham in 1968, to consider the projects within the framework of Britain's post-World War II Townscape movement. Townscape had its origins in eighteenth-century landscape design and the Picturesque movement, yet was also both distinctly modern and distinctly urban.

The paper shows that Rotherham was an important figure in what was a large and multi-disciplinary office, and that his work for the firm included commercial buildings as well as contributions to new towns and town centres. It was within the firm's new towns and town centres that he was given opportunities to work on housing. The paper supports Banham's suggestion that some of the firm's work accorded with Townscape and Picturesque principles. More specifically, it shows that Rotherham both maintained

an interest in pure geometries and also worked on buildings and projects that were characterised by asymmetry and irregularity, by varied and tactile material palettes, and by the making of explicit references to urban sites and contexts. The scale, complexity and recurrent use of brick and concrete all extend Rotherham's established reputation as a designer of detached, timber houses.

Keywords: Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor; Bruce Rotherham; New Zealand expatriates

Introduction

One of the most quoted lines in New Zealand architectural history is the Architectural Group's insistence that: "overseas solutions will not do. New Zealand must have its own architecture, its own sense of what is beautiful and appropriate to our climate and conditions." (Architectural Group, 1946) This one statement is the basis on which much of the subsequent interpretation of their work rests. Yet in a 2003 letter sent from London to Auckland, former Group member Bruce Rotherham dismissed it, stating flatly that: "where they [articles on the Group] referred to me, i [*sic*] usually thought that what was being said, while interesting, would not have occurred to me: and if it had, my buildings would have been different." (Rotherham, 2003) He was referring to the Group's associations with New Zealandness and the creation of a local or indigenous modernism. These were acknowledged group leader Bill Wilson's interests: Wilson was the one who wrote about them. Rotherham clarified elsewhere that his main interest in the early years was in the creation of "space (for the enhancement of human activity) formed by building", or "space formed by building (materials)" (Rotherham, n.d.).

To further the understanding of Rotherham's work, this paper considers the fifteen years he spent in the London office of Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor, from 1961 to 1976, and the projects to which he contributed while there. This large and multi-disciplinary firm is best known for the master planning of the new town of Milton Keynes in the late 1960s. It is also remembered for a series of hospital buildings and complexes, some so extensive that they can be analysed in urban terms.

The paper uses Rotherham's CV and his own archive of drawings and files as the basis for identifying key projects on which he worked while with the firm. It benefits from site visits conducted in 2013. Access to the archives of the firm, however, which now operates under the name Llewelyn-Davies, was denied during the period of the research. If this access is granted in the future, these archives have the potential to enhance the paper considerably.

The paper reveals that Rotherham was an important figure in Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor, and that his work for the firm included commercial buildings and contributions to new towns and town centres. It discusses three key buildings – the Zoological Society Building in Regent's Park; the London Stock Exchange in the City of London; and the Metal Box Head Office Building in Reading – and three urban planning and multi-building projects: the Sunderland Town Centre near Newcastle; a housing scheme at Charlton Park in Cheltenham; and Stantonbury B at Milton Keynes.

In 1991, Rotherham commented that he had “not stopped thinking about housing” since the early 1950s when Group Architects completed their Navy Housing scheme at Devonport. In view of this statement, the paper considers the extent to which these projects for Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor were consistent with, and provided him with opportunities to develop, his particular interest in housing. Further, on the basis of claims made by British architectural historian and critic Reyner Banham in 1968, that some of the firm’s work accorded with the Townscape movement and Picturesque principles, the paper also considers whether or not the projects to which Rotherham contributed while in the office can be described in these terms.

The paper shows Rotherham was given several opportunities to work on housing while with the firm. This includes housing schemes within the bigger new town and town centre projects being undertaken by the firm. The paper supports Banham’s suggestion that some of the firm’s work can be described as Picturesque. More specifically, it shows that Rotherham both maintained an interest in pure geometries and also worked on buildings and projects that were characterised by asymmetry and irregularity, by varied and tactile material palettes, and by the making of explicit references to urban sites and contexts. The scale, complexity and recurrent use of brick and concrete all extend Rotherham’s established reputation as a designer of detached, timber houses.

Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor

Lord Richard Llewelyn-Davies (1912-1981) and John Weeks (1921-2005) formed their partnership in 1960, initially calling it Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks. The pair had worked together in the 1950s, at the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, a charitable trust undertaking research on Britain’s healthcare system (McLaghlan, 1992). They worked in a multi-disciplinary team researching and designing a new hospital at Corby in England’s East Midlands (Harwood, 2005). The research findings were published in 1955 (Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust). The research report, the Corby buildings and various research articles that decade (Llewelyn-Davies, 1954; Llewelyn-Davies and Weeks, 1959) were highly influential, leading to more commissions and consultancies and to the formation of the partnership.

Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks grew rapidly from the outset, designing hospitals and soon also developing expertise in the planning of new towns and town centres, known at that time as master planning. Former staff members remember the firm numbering some 50 people in the 1960s (Plumb, 2013; Wren, 2013). It had offices in London’s Euston Road, where staff were spread across several floors of the one building, separated according to the projects on which they worked. With the rapid growth, new partners were appointed and in about 1968, the firm changed its name to Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor. The new partners enhanced the firm’s two specialisations, with Gwent Forestier-Walker (1919-1994) having expertise in hospital design (Glendinning, 2008, p299; “Robert Jestyn Gwent Forestier-Walker”, n.d.); and Walter Bor (1916-1999) in urban planning (Glancey, 1999). In addition to these two specialisations, the firm also undertook housing, hotels and office buildings, with commissions as far afield as the Middle East.

In the partnership, Llewelyn-Davies worked initially on hospitals while increasingly shifting his attention to urban planning (see Llewelyn-Davies, 1965 and 1967). In the mid-1960s, this included a study of a large part of Oxfordshire and the master planning of the new town of Washington, near

Newcastle, followed in the late 1960s by Milton Keynes and in the 1970s by the redevelopment of the Birmingham inner-city area (see LDW & Partners, 1966a, 1966b; LDWFWB, 1977, 1980).

John Weeks, on the other hand, continued to focus on hospital design. One of his most important projects was Northwick Park Hospital and Research Centre in Greater London. When designing the Northwick Park facilities, Weeks formulated and wrote about an “indeterminate architecture”, by which he meant buildings designed to accommodate change and growth with minimum disturbance to services and ongoing use (Weeks, 1963-64). With this approach, the initial design architect was unable to determine a building’s final architectural form. Weeks also drew a parallel between hospital design and that of a town or village, and used the word “street” to refer to hospital corridors. Through designing, writing and lecturing on hospital design, he developed an international reputation for the building type, worked as a consultant on hospitals in a range of different countries and lectured when he travelled (Harwood, 2005; “John Weeks”, 2005; Moss, 2005).

Concurrent with running their practice, Llewelyn-Davies and Weeks both taught at University College London, Llewelyn-Davies as Professor of Architecture from 1960 and then Professor of Urban Planning and Head of the College’s School of Environmental Studies from 1970 to 1975 (“Richard Llewelyn-Davies”, 2013), and Weeks as senior lecturer in architecture from 1961 to 1972. Through their teaching, they were able to identify and employ talented young graduates from the school and developed a reputation for doing so (Plumb, 2013; Wren, 2013).

Following Llewelyn-Davies’ death in 1981, Weeks assumed the position of chairman of Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor and served as such until 1986. The firm was rejuvenated from about 2005 with the arrival of Ken Yeang, of bio-climatic skyscraper fame, leading to another name change to Llewelyn Davies Yeang, with offices in Kuala Lumpur, where Yeang is based, Madrid and Texas. Following financial difficulties in 2013, Yeang left, and HLM Architects bought the remnants of the firm and reinstated the name Llewelyn-Davies (*Llewelyn-Davies*, 2013).

Surprisingly, there is no book on the firm’s work and little historical analysis of it. The most detailed research and writing has been undertaken by Jonathan Hughes and is focused explicitly on the firm’s hospital buildings (Hughes, 1997, 2000a, 2000b). Other references are general, hinting at profile and significance but frustratingly short on detail. This, for example, from Ian Horton (2000):

As Banham noted, in his 1968 article “Revenge of the Picturesque: English architectural polemics, 1945-1965”, Townscape principles were initially opposed by a younger generation of architects still enamoured with the functional and modular aesthetic of International Modernism. The opposition was, however, short lived and by the early 1950s these architects – the Smithsons, Stirling and Gowan, Llewelyn-Davies and Weeks – were producing designs displaying Picturesque qualities. (p77)

Alison and Peter Smithson are the best known of Britain’s New Brutalist architects; Stirling & Gowan also remain well known, and were doing related work, particularly in the 1950s, even though they objected to the use of the word Brutalism to describe it. Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks, on the other hand, have fallen from the historical record.

That said, they operated in similar circles. John Weeks, along with the Smithsons, James Stirling and Reyner Banham, had been involved with London's avant-garde in the 1950s, through both the Constructionist Group and the Independent Group (Hughes, 2000a, pp90, 99). Hughes (2000a) traces Weeks' evolution of "indeterminate architecture" back to these associations and the groups' shared enthusiasm for D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's *On Growth and Form* of 1917 (p94). He shows that Weeks deployed this approach in the design of the Northwick Park hospital buildings, using circulation spines and wings of fixed widths in conjunction with lengths imagined as "conceptually endless" (p97).¹ Hughes comments that the firm then developed the indeterminate approach from two dimensions into three (p101).

Beyond these connections, the suggestion that the work of Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks, and in turn Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor, might be considered Picturesque and thus consistent with the Townscape movement warrants greater consideration. Townscape is often associated with architect and urban designer Gordon Cullen, on the basis of his books, *Townscape* (1961) and its smaller and more influential second edition, *Concise Townscape* (1971). Recent scholarship, however, has focused more on the writings and ideas of the prolific architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner (Macarthur, 2007; Aitchison, 2010; Macarthur and Aitchison, 2010). Macarthur and Aitchison (2010) establish that for Pevsner, "Townscape was explicitly modernist" (p14). It evolved from English landscape design of the eighteenth-century and comprised the application of Picturesque asymmetry and irregularity to the design of urban buildings, complexes and public spaces after World War II. It meant looking at urban areas in the way that an artist would look at a landscape in order to paint it (Pevsner in Aitchison, 2010, p179). It encouraged the use of the modern in conjunction with the retention of the historic (Macarthur and Aitchison, 2010, p17); sequences of changing views (p20); free planning and the external expression of the different functional parts of a building or building complex (p24); and "a mixture of materials, synthetic and natural, rough and smooth" (Pevsner in Aitchison, 2010, p168). Neither Brutalism nor Townscape was concerned with beauty; both accepted incongruity and impropriety, even ugliness, as part of the everyday condition (p177). Pevsner argued that such attributes were embedded in English aesthetics and taste. Macarthur (2007) adds that they were "endemic and diffuse" (p2) in post-war English architecture, with Brutalism being a Picturesque development (p107). Yet Pevsner and Banham were in disagreement: Pevsner promoted Townscape in positive terms, to popularise modern architecture post-war, while Banham opposed it, preferring an avant-garde modernism to one which he considered to be second rate (p106).

In the 1968 article referred to above, Banham cited the Smithsons' Economist Building, London (1960-64), and Stirling's Engineering Building at Leicester University (1959-63) as examples of buildings with Picturesque attributes (p272). He also interpreted Weeks' 'indeterminate architecture' as Picturesque, combining as it did "[s]uch 'scientific' concepts as open-endedness, the promulgation of growth and change as qualities to be incorporated in building-designs, the acceptance of expendability and impermanence" (p272). Of Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks' buildings, Banham only mentioned the *Times* headquarters in Printing House Square, London (1960-65).

Bruce Rotherham at Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor

Bruce Rotherham (1926-2004) is well known in New Zealand as a key member of the Architectural Group, the Group Construction Co. and Group Architects, and for the house he designed and built for himself and his young family in the Auckland suburb of Stanley Bay in the early 1950s. He left the Group in 1952, and left New Zealand in 1955. He settled in London, where he remarried and had the bulk of his career.

Rotherham studied architecture at Auckland University College from 1945 to 1948. He did not complete his degree, but instead joined the Group Construction Co. in 1949 to design and build experimental houses. The Group developed a reputation for detached houses for everyday New Zealanders. The houses were exercises in efficiency, both in spatial planning and material usage, with exposed timbers, informal living arrangements and close connection between inside and out. But housing, as distinct from detached houses, was a shared interest among Group members from the outset, as demonstrated by the many design variants produced for their Navy Housing scheme at Devonport in the early 1950s (Gatley, 2010, pp149-53). With reference to this scheme, Rotherham wrote in 1991: "I have not stopped thinking about housing since".

Rotherham moved to London in 1955 and after three years working as an architectural assistant in the Hampstead office of Oswald P Milne & Underhill (Milne had served his articles with Edwin Lutyens), and nine months in a similar capacity with the Design Research Unit, he enrolled at the Architectural Association (AA) and there completed his fourth and fifth years of study (Rotherham, n.d.). He earned his Diploma of Architecture and one of the five fifth-year prizes awarded by the esteemed school in 1961. His ongoing interest in housing is apparent: he worked on this building type under tutor James Gowan in fourth-year design studio, and again in fifth year, when he produced a design for an eight-storey block of flats with complex planning, including non-orthogonal walls between adjacent units.

In September 1961, a short time after completing his studies, Rotherham joined the staff of Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks, where he remained until 1976 (Rotherham, n.d.). The first projects on which he worked for the firm were the Zoological Society Headquarters in Regent's Park, London (1960-1965; design collaborative with John Musgrove), and the London Stock Exchange in the City of London (1963-1972; design collaborative with Fitzroy Robinson & Partners).

The Zoological Society Headquarters is a three-storey office building. It was commissioned in 1960, before Rotherham had started working for Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks. A period journal article identifies Michael Huckstepp as the associate on the project and Rotherham, R. Attfield and B. Darvill as assistants ("Zoological", p501).² Rotherham worked on the detailed design and working drawings (LDWFWB Prospectus).



The Zoological Society Headquarters' north façade, Regent's Park.
Photograph by Julia Gatley, 2013.

The London Stock Exchange, a commercial high-rise, was a much bigger and more complex building. Former colleagues Clive Plumb (2013) and Murray Wren (2013) recall that Rotherham led the Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks team that worked on the building. He worked closely with the engineer and contractor on the poured concrete cores and precast concrete exterior wall panels (Rotherham, n.d.), the collaboration, technical difficulty and resolution all earning praise at the time of construction ("The New Stock Exchange").

His increasing degree of responsibility is reflected in his promotions to Associate in 1965 and Technical Director of Design in 1972. In this latter capacity, he was available for consultation on all projects (Rotherham, n.d.). Plumb, a more junior staff architect from 1963 to 1965, adds that Rotherham was "a big deal" in the office during the London Stock Exchange years.

His promotion to Technical Director of Design followed his success in a limited competition, in December 1971, to design the Metal Box Head Office Building in Reading (1971-1974), some 50 kilometres west of London. A Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor prospectus (n.d.) records that "Michael Collins and Bruce Rotherham prepared the material for ... [the Metal Box competition] and were from the outset Project Architect and Design Co-ordinator." Rotherham's CV confirms his ongoing involvement throughout the project, including production drawings and site supervision.

None of these three buildings were specific to Rotherham's interest in housing, but all three accorded with Brutalism's enthusiasm for concrete in the raw and combined off-form and precast techniques. They also incorporate Picturesque elements and make references to their sites and contexts in ways that suggest affinity with Townscape principles.

The Zoological Society Headquarters is asymmetric, with differing form and materiality for the different functional parts of the building, notably the angled walls and off-form concrete of the ground floor auditorium compared with rectilinearity and exposed aggregate panels of the first floor

offices. The building neighbours and is aligned with the society's original headquarters and addresses both the Outer Circle of Regent's Park to its south and the canal on its northern flank. It had to straddle an existing tunnel providing subterranean pedestrian access between two parts of the zoo, with the tunnel kept open during the building's construction. The Zoological Society's consultant architect, Hugh Casson, recognised the firm's clever solution to this problem on two occasions: "I particularly liked the central cut-through which maintains a distant view of the North bank" (1960); and "The architects took advantage of these features and used them to dramatic effect" (1966). Above the tunnel, a ramp-in-the-air provides access to the building's west end.

The London Stock Exchange, like many commercial high-rises, combines a base, middle and top. Weeks' ideas about "indeterminate" architecture being applied in the vertical dimension can be read into the middle stretch of the building; its number of floors is conceptually limitless, but is contained by pragmatics such as cost, height bylaws and the strength of the structural system. Unlike many high-rises, it has an irregular footprint and two central cores of differing size, both irregular in plan to echo, at smaller scale, the geometry of the overall footprint. Many of the streets in the City of London are irregular, including those on which the London Stock Exchange was built: Old Broad Street and, at an acute angle to it, Throgmorton Street. There was no city grid to demand rectilinear planning. Rather, the seven-sided building addresses the two streets and two neighbouring buildings, and then connects these four exterior walls with three more, all at obtuse angles from one to the next.



The London Stock Exchange, with its irregular façades, can be seen in the background. The entire building has been re-clad in glass.

Photograph by Julia Gatley, 2013.

The Metal Box Head Office Building is a landmark for those arriving in Reading by train. In Corbusian tradition, it is raised above the ground on pilotis, with a sculptural doughnut form derived from an octagonal footprint and courtyard. Rotherham and other members of Group Architects had experimented with geometric plans in the early 1950s. At that time, Rotherham's experiments had focused on the circle (Gatley, 2010, pp98-102). With reference to the use of triangular plans by John Soane and others, Macarthur (2007) reflects on the complex relationship between geometric plans, classicism and the Picturesque. He describes such plans as difficult and demanding, and as "*bravura* performances" to be viewed from all angles (p159). Unusually, the Metal Box Building's geometric form seems to take its lead from its context, and more specifically from a large gasometer located a short distance down the railway lines: both have exposed framing, a multi-sided footprint and a hollow centre. The Metal Box Building's courtyard windows ensure that parts of the building's exterior can be viewed from inside. Internal functions are then expressed externally, in the low-rise staff facilities that originally projected outside the octagon and through the use of regular fenestration for the office floors, with differentiation between the "typical" office floors and that above, where the directors' offices were located. Weeks' ideas about "indeterminate" architecture were inverted in this building's internal "streets": being octagonal, they were literally endless, but the building was not conceptually so, as the addition of more offices would have compromised the purity of its geometric form.



The Metal Box Head Office Building, Reading, following the demolition of low-rise staff facilities from the foreground.

Photograph by Julia Gatley, 2013.

These three buildings all demonstrate a considered response to urban landscapes, sites and contexts, and more specifically to streets, waterways, railway lines, pedestrian pathways and neighbouring buildings. There is no attempt to imitate the old, but rather to make carefully considered new buildings that were decidedly site and context specific, with the different functions

being given external architectural expression, including varied concrete surface treatments and textures.

New Towns and Town Centres

Rotherham's CV articulates his role on the Zoological Society Headquarters, the London Stock Exchange and the Metal Box Head Office Building, but is briefer with regard to his work on new towns, town centres and master planning projects. It records that he prepared planning studies (feasibility studies) for the Lion Yard and Fitzroy Burleigh Street development areas of central Cambridge; worked on housing schemes for Stantonbury in Milton Keynes, Charlton Park in Cheltenham and Wood Green in London; and was project architect for the housing complement of the Sunderland Central Redevelopment Area (Rotherham, n.d.). His archive contains no further information about the Cambridge feasibility studies or the Wood Green housing. The other three projects are discussed below. It is with these that Rotherham worked on housing, the building type with which he had a long-standing and particular interest.

The Sunderland Central Redevelopment Area (1966-69) was a major project for Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor, in collaboration with Ian Fraser & Associates. It covered a 10-acre site and comprised 245,000 square feet of retail space; a 25,000 square foot department store; a market hall with a multi-storey car-park; a 60,000 square foot bus station with roof-top car-parking; 7,500 square feet of office space; and three 19-storey blocks of flats comprising 270 units ("New Town Centre", 1969).

Entries into the complex respond to the established street pattern. These take the form of pedestrian malls zigzagging through it rather than bisecting it like classical axes would have done. Stairs lead to first-floor streets-in-the-air. Vehicular traffic is separated from the pedestrian pathways, with driveways leading to car-parking at second-floor level. This demonstrates consideration of context, but beyond it, the Sunderland Central Redevelopment Area project was so big that it became the context for the individual buildings within it. The various functional parts are given individual architectural expression, in blocks of varied widths, lengths and heights. The material palette combines brick and concrete and is cohesive across the complex as a whole yet varied close-up, in its details and textures.

As noted, Rotherham was project architect for the housing complement of the redevelopment. The three housing towers are located irregularly and asymmetrically within the overall area and are raised on pilotis above the upper-level car-parking. Rotherham's file on the project includes a series of sketches showing experimentation with geometric footprints, from square and rectangle through to triangle, hexagon and circle. A short rectangle was decided upon, perhaps because it was most cost effective. There are five flats at each level, three with one bedroom and two with two bedrooms. The planning is strictly orthogonal, but this is contrasted by the employment of the 45 degree angle in pilotis, chamfered corners and projecting spandrel panels.

In 1969, Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor were commissioned to design housing for a site known as Charlton Park in the Gloucestershire town of Cheltenham. The site of almost 30 acres was formerly owned by Cheltenham College. The brief demanded that the "parklike character" of the site be retained in a housing development that would comprise blocks of flats, possibly including

high-rise (LDWFVB, 1969, p1). Local authority guidelines allowed a density of 30 persons per acre. It is believed that Rotherham prepared the firm's "Outline Study" in response to the brief, articulating the aim "to limit the horizontal spread and the vertical height of the buildings ... so as to leave the more visually attractive part of the site untouched, as also the trees on it", and emphasising that: "It is important that this project should be designed to a standard in keeping with the high architectural character of historic Cheltenham." (LDWFVB, 1969, p3) The report thus conforms to Townscape's use of the modern in conjunction with the retention of the historic. The author resisted high-rise blocks of flats, on the grounds that a house with a garden was the preferred building type in and around the township of Cheltenham. He instead proposed a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses and low-rise blocks of flats, and, following the allowable density of 30 persons per acre, developed a formula to accommodate 958 people, in units ranging from two to four bedrooms.³ Rotherham's archive contains no drawings of the housing development. Google Earth images suggest that even if it did progress beyond "Outline Study" stage, it ultimately remained unbuilt.

The expatriate New Zealander worked on further housing developments for Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor. His archive includes ten A1 and four A3 sheets of drawings for a scheme known as Stantonbury B in Milton Keynes. Stantonbury is a suburb north of the new town's central business district. Rotherham's drawings are undated, but can be assumed to have followed the firm's development of the master plan for the new town centre (1968-70). The drawings are schematic. They are concerned with the suburban layout of almost 300 low-density homes rather than with the design of the individual units. They utilise an established street pattern, although they do not identify any streets by name. Like much of suburban Milton Keynes, they combine terrace housing with semi-detached units, although they differ in their complexity, with rows at a range of angles to each other rather than located on a grid, and attempts to interlock individual units across courtyards. The scheme remained unbuilt. However, six smaller housing schemes were built in Stantonbury in about the 1970s. It seems that none of them were designed by Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor. They were numbered Stantonbury 1 to 6 at that time and Milton Keynes Council continues to know them by these numbers today. The origins and meaning of the "B" that follows the name of the suburb on Rotherham's drawings are not known.

Like the three buildings discussed in the previous section, these three multi-building projects again demonstrate an allegiance to the Townscape principles of reference to site and context. The irregularity and asymmetry of the Picturesque are used in favour of strong axes, symmetry and hierarchy. External expression is given to architectural function, and a range of materials, colours and textures is deployed. This is a strategy of journey and surprise rather than of order and regularity. Thus the paper adds evidence to Banham's claim that the firm sometimes worked in a Picturesque manner, even though much of their best known project, the master planning of central Milton Keynes, was strongly axial and dominated by major pathways and vistas.

After Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor

Bruce Rotherham left Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor in 1976, shortly after the completion of the Metal Box Head Office Building at Reading. He continued as a consultant to Metal Box, working on its next building, a Research and Development facility in Wantage, Oxfordshire (1975-80). Rotherham describes the Wantage building as having been designed by the Metal Box Building Department, of which he was consultant architect, working on it "from inception of building

to furnishing” (Rotherham, n.d.). A Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor prospectus also mentions the building, suggesting that it started out as one of their projects. This might also explain why a start date of 1975 has been suggested for the design (Chaplin, 2013), compared with 1976 for Rotherham’s departure from the office and arrival as consultant to Metal Box. This building provided a different design challenge from most of Rotherham’s work for Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor in that the site was semi-rural rather than urban, on the outer fringe of a village and on the flat land of a former airfield. A plaque in the building records that it was opened in October 1980.

It is not clear why Rotherham left Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor. His contemporary Murray Wren (2013) recalls that Rotherham was happy in the office and that it had a culture of freedom that suited his independence. Son Jeremy Rotherham (2013) suggests that finances may have been a contributing factor, with his father and second wife, Shirley, receiving a series of inheritances from about the mid-1970s, enabling them to spend two or three months in Italy on a regular if not annual basis; such activity did not fit well with the demands of full-time employment. From 1976, concurrent with his work on the Metal Box Building at Wantage, Rotherham began teaching studio on a part-time basis at the Bartlett School of Architecture at University College London, where Lord Richard Llewelyn-Davies and John Weeks had been heavily embedded, suggesting that there was nothing acrimonious about his departure from the firm. He later worked for various smaller offices and for himself, becoming more interested over time in heritage conservation and adaptive reuse. Never again did he work at the urban planning scale of Llewelyn-Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker & Bor, but housing, the focus of his involvement with the firm’s urban planning schemes, stayed with him as an ongoing interest and concern.

¹ Hughes notes that Weeks told him that he actually wrote the 1951 that appears under Llewelyn-Davies’ name, emphasising that this was Weeks’ idea.

² Before joining Llewelyn-Davies & Weeks, Michael Huckstepp had had an earlier – 1950s – partnership with John Weeks.

³ The “Outline Study” allowed for occupancy rates of 0.9, meaning an overall density of 29.5 persons per acre.

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