

100 Years of Council Housing in Derby



A brief history of local authority house building from 1919 to 2019

Contents

Foreword	3
Pre 1919: Before the Great War	4
The 1920s: “Homes Fit for Heroes”	6
The 1930s: Steady pre-war building continues	8
The 1940s: World War II and the second housing shortage	10
The 1950s: Concrete canopies, sheltered housing and the last big development	14
The 1960s: Onwards and upwards	20
The 1970s: Housing diversity reflects the changing needs of tenants	24
The 1980s: Changes to local service and the right-to-buy	26
The 1990s: Listening to tenants	28
The Noughties: The formation of Derby Homes	30
The Teenies: New build programmes, solar panels and volunteering	34
The Future: The next hundred years	38



Foreword

by Maria Murphy, Managing Director of Derby Homes and
Councillor Roy Webb, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing



Throughout 2019 and 2020 we organised a series of special events in the city to mark and celebrate 100 years of council housing in Derby. The Housing Act of 1919 gave financial assistance for councils across the UK, allowing them to build new properties to meet the huge demand for housing created by the First World War.

In Derby, this led to a recommendation by the Provision of Houses Committee to build 430 houses in Victory Road and Stenson Road. This recommendation was approved and work on the first council houses began in the last months of 1919. The keys to the first council house completed on Victory Road were handed over to its first tenant on 9 February 1920. Over the following decades, thousands more council houses and flats were built around the city. Those properties have gone on to provide warmth and shelter for countless people who are all part of the history we are celebrating.

Although it was the council that provided the materials and manpower to build social housing in Derby, it is the tenants who have turned those houses into homes. Over the last hundred years, Derby's council houses have nurtured thousands of families who have had their share of good times and bad times. Within the walls of those homes, people have lived and died and been born. The sound of voices, music, laughter and tears has echoed in every room. In each of those neighbourhoods, lasting friendships have been forged and shared experiences have brought communities together. We acknowledge and appreciate the valuable contribution made by tenants, past and present, and we pledge to continue to provide good quality houses that they are proud to call homes.



Derby has grown and changed over the last hundred years, and council housing in the city has reached several key milestones during that time. From 'homes for heroes', pre and post-war building programmes, to sheltered housing, flats, and the latest in housing development, this booklet records those important milestones. We hope the photographs and stories of council homes and estates over the last century will bring happy memories for you.

9 February 2020

Pre 1919 | Before the Great War

In the period before the First World War, there was no obvious housing shortage in Derby. On the contrary, in 1891, figures suggested that less than 3% of the population were living more than two to a room.

The 1891 census recorded 1,299 unoccupied houses in Derby and, by the 1901 census, the figure had increased to 1,652. Compared to other large towns in the country, Derby's situation seemed positive. Only Leicester, Croydon and Portsmouth were less overcrowded than Derby. However, these statistics painted a false picture. In the wards close to the centre of town, the situation was much less rosy. Many of the working class houses in these areas were unfit for habitation and needed to be demolished.

Some of the worst areas were cleared in the early years of the twentieth century, but most of the slum properties still existed at the end of the First World War. The limited amount of clearance work undertaken before 1914 had actually increased overcrowding, as most of the families affected couldn't afford the higher rents required for better accommodation.

There were still unoccupied houses in Derby, but there was a shortage of houses available at low rents.

Between 1903 and 1914 only 2,765 new houses were completed in Derby. This period coincided with an influx of workers to the town, attracted by jobs available in the new industries that had been brought to Derby by the Borough Development Committee after 1906. During the First World War, house building in Derby ground to a halt and, by the end of the war, the housing shortage had worsened.

*Throughout this booklet you will see the council and its various departments referred to in a few different ways (such as Derby Corporation or Borough). These terms predate 1977, when Derby became a city and the council became **Derby City Council**.*

Below: Soldiers of the Sherwood Foresters embarking for the front from Friar Gate Station, Derby in 1914.



Photo: picturethepast.org.uk

1911 Population: 123,410

**Private dwellings
1911 | 28,811**



Photo: picturethepast.org.uk

Above: Much of the housing in the wards at the centre of town was semi-derelict, insanitary and unfit for habitation. Pictured above are houses in St Michael's Lane in about 1884.

With the arrival of industries such as the Rolls-Royce factory in Derby, the town was growing. Between 1911 and 1921, Derby's population increased by almost 20,000.

The soldiers, sailors and airmen returning from the First World War wanted their lives to return to normal. They expected to go home to a safe environment, with jobs readily available to them. It was time for the nation to show gratitude and build "homes fit for heroes".

Turbulent Times

1907 - Rolls-Royce Limited announced plans to build a factory in Nightingale Road, Derby.

1908 - the first old age pensions were introduced.

1910 - Edward VII died and George V assumed the throne.

1911 - the National Insurance Act introduced a contributory scheme of health insurance for people in employment.

1912 - on 15 April, *The Titanic* sank during its maiden voyage, with a loss of more than 1,500 lives.

1914-1918 - the First World War.

1918 - women over the age of 30 who met certain property requirements were given the vote.

1919 - Lady Astor became the first woman to take her seat in parliament.

The Titanic (right) sank on 15 April 1912



The 1920s | “Homes Fit for Heroes”

As the First World War drew to a close, the Prime Minister David Lloyd George promised ‘habitations fit for the heroes who have won the war’ or, as the newspapers of the day reported it, ‘homes fit for heroes’.

Delivering on this promise wouldn’t be easy. In the immediate aftermath of the war the building industry was experiencing a severe shortage of skilled manpower and materials, which meant building costs were high.

With the country facing a severe housing crisis, the government decided to hand responsibility for social housing to local authorities. The **Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act of 1919** provided subsidies to help finance new building programmes. This made it possible for many local authorities, including Derby’s, to build their first council houses.

The plan in Derby was to build 430 houses. To make this happen, the Council needed to find tradesman and labourers and set up an entire building department. It was a huge undertaking for the newly created Building Committee. However, construction began to increase steadily and by the end of the decade the Council owned 3,804 dwellings.



The sites chosen for Derby’s first council houses were Victory Road (pictured) and Stenson Road.

- Early in 1920 there were over 2,000 houses in Derby occupied by two families or more.
- Over 3,000 houses were defective and needed replacing.
- There were over 1,000 names on the council housing register.
- By 1923 there were 1,500 people on the council house waiting list.

The Addison Act

The 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act became law on 31 July 1919. The Act was also known as the ‘Addison Act’, after the Minister of Health at the time, Dr Christopher Addison, who was also responsible for housing. The Act gave local authorities the responsibility for making new affordable housing available for working people to rent.

Addison Road in Osmaston was one of many streets built as a result of this Act and was probably named in honour of the Minister.

Other Acts of Parliament followed in 1923 and 1924, providing further grants to local authorities to address housing shortages.



1921 Population: 142,824

Council Houses

1920 | 28

1929 | 3,804



This cast iron "Thorncliffe" house in Osmaston was renovated in 2015



The cast iron homes of Osmaston and Allenton

In 1925, with the council house waiting list continuing to grow, the Council needed to increase the rate of house building. They wanted to build a large number of houses as quickly as possible, but with skilled labour and bricks still in short supply, they had to consider other options.

One possibility was to use "Thorncliffe" cast iron panel houses, the walls of which were constructed from 3ft square iron plates, bolted together. Following a visit to Sheffield to talk to Newton Chambers and Co, the manufacturer of these properties, the Provision of Houses Committee recommended the Council build 250 "Thorncliffe" cast iron houses at a cost of £425 each. The proposal was approved and Derby became the first local authority to use this method of building on a large scale. The first semi-detached houses were erected on 11 January 1926, 12 to an acre on a garden suburb plan. The technique provided an innovative solution to the housing shortage and even made the headlines in the 12 May 1928 edition of the San Jose Evening News in California, USA (see above).

The Roaring Twenties

With the Great War over, the 1920s heralded a new era of opportunity, prosperity, and new discoveries. Known as the 'Jazz Age', this was the decade of daring fashions, such as 'flapper' hairstyles and dresses, plus exciting new music and entertainment experiences.

1920 - The Spanish Flu epidemic came to an end. Around one third of the world's population had been infected and an estimated 20 million to 50 million people died worldwide.

1922 - The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) was formed on 18 October. It became the British Broadcasting Corporation in January 1927.

1928 - In May, all women over the age of 21 were given the vote. In September, Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin and the first 'talking' film was shown in Britain. Going to the 'pictures' became increasingly popular. Derby had many cinemas, including the Picture Palace in Normanton (pictured below).



Photo: picturethepast.org.uk



The 1930s

Steady pre-war building continues

Despite the 1930s being the decade of worldwide economic hardship known as the 'Great Depression', it was a period of great improvement for Derby.

The implementation of a Central Improvement Plan, overseen by the Borough Architect for Derby, Charles Herbert Aslin, brought major changes to the layout of the town. The plan included the development of a bus station, the Council House, Riverside Gardens and Morledge Market, a new police station and Magistrates' court, and Exeter House flats.

The building of new council homes also continued to be a priority. The Housing Act 1930, also known as the Greenwood Act, encouraged mass slum clearance and provided local authorities with further subsidies to re-house inhabitants.

On 1 April 1930 the Estates & Housing Department was formed, bringing a new approach to housing management in Derby. Housing had previously been managed by the Town Clerk, Borough Surveyor and Borough Treasurer, and rent collection had been carried out by a private firm of estate agents. The new department took full control of housing management and maintenance, together with the management of other corporation properties.

House building continued in Osmaston, Alvaston, Chaddesden, Sinfyn and Old Normanton. Seventy homes were built in 1939 before building was stopped at the outbreak of World War II. By then, the number of corporation houses in Derby had increased to 6,855.

Below: An aerial view of a council estate in Sinfyn taken around 1938



Photo: picturethepast.org.uk

1931 Population: 154,316

Council Houses
1930 | 4,141
1939 | 6,855



The Council House (above left) and a new bus station (above right) were part of Derby's Central Improvement Plan. Exeter House, an apartment complex in Exeter Place (pictured below in the 1970s), was designed by Charles Aslin and provided the first municipal flats in Derby. Completed in 1929, this was one of the first structures completed as part of the Central Improvement Plan. The building was named after Exeter House, which had previously occupied the same site before it was demolished in 1854.



Photo: picturethepast.org.uk

The Thrifty Thirties

The stock market crash of 1929 caused a worldwide economic depression that lasted throughout the 1930s. Known as the 'Great Depression' it was a difficult time for many families, with widespread unemployment and financial hardship.

1936 - In January, George V died and was succeeded by Edward VIII. On 11 December of the same year, Edward abdicated in order to marry Wallis Simpson. In October 1936, the 300 mile march from Jarrow to London took place to highlight poverty and mass unemployment in the north east of England.

1937 - In May, the Duke of York was crowned as King George VI, and Sir Frank Whittle invented the jet engine, which would provide a boost for aero engine manufacture at Rolls-Royce in Derby.

1939 - On 3 September Britain declared war on Germany, following the invasion of Poland.

Right: Children help to build an Anderson shelter in Traffic Street, Derby in 1939 (photo: picturethepast.org.uk).



The 1940s

World War II and the second housing shortage

Compared to many other towns and cities, Derby suffered relatively little air-raid damage during World War Two, despite the Rolls-Royce aero engine factory being an obvious target for the enemy.

The Luftwaffe tried to bomb the Rolls-Royce works in August 1940, but instead ended up hitting Ley's foundry, the railway lines and several homes. They tried again – unsuccessfully – on 29 September and 2 October 1940. On the night of 15-16 January 1941, fifty high-explosive bombs fell on Derby, hitting the Midland Railway Station, the Bliss's factory and many houses on London Road and in Normanton. The Rolls-Royce factory was hit on 27 July 1942, and three other bombs landed on nearby houses in Hawthorn Street, Abingdon Street and Handel Street. Twenty-three people died in the raid and 40 were injured.

Derby Corporation acted as agents for the War Damage Commission, providing "First Aid" repairs for thousands of properties in Derby. A total of 16 corporation houses were completely destroyed by enemy action and, by the time the war ended, there were 7,500 people on the council housing waiting list. Derby Corporation was facing another housing crisis.

A similar situation existed across most of post-war Britain. Anticipating the problem, Winston Churchill had begun working on a temporary housing programme in 1944. This resulted in the 1944 Housing (Temporary Accommodation) Act. The Act addressed the nation's need for housing by facilitating the construction of 300,000 homes across Britain in the two years after the war. Local authorities could provide prefabricated housing as part of an Emergency Factory Made programme.

The design chosen in Derby was the "Hawksley" – a three-bedroom bungalow made by A W Hawksley Limited (a company formed in 1940 by the Hawker Siddeley Group to build Armstrong Whitworth Albemarle aircraft). In the post-war years, many of the factories that had once manufactured aircraft parts and armaments were put to good use making pre-fabricated housing.



A Hawksley aluminium detached bungalow (photo courtesy of Airfield Research Group archive, Creative Commons license BY-NC-ND 4.0)

1941 | Population: 167,321

Council Houses

1940 | 6,855

1949 | 8,048

FABulous features

The prefabricated homes (or 'prefabs') were the original "flat pack" system of house building. They were relatively cheap and easy to construct and required less manpower than a brick-built house.

The aluminium 'prefab' bungalows were small, but carefully designed to make best use of the space available. The properties featured mains electricity, a bathroom, indoor toilet, hot running water, a lounge, bedrooms and a small garden. The kitchens included space-saving features such as fold-out tables and ironing boards, and mod-cons such as a built-in cooker and fridge. These things would have been viewed as quite luxurious by the people who had moved from older properties.

The 'prefabs' tended to be cold in winter and the walls were thin, but they nevertheless proved popular with tenants. When the time came to move into new, permanent homes, many residents were sorry to leave their 'prefab' bungalows.



A service of remembrance

On 27 July 2017 a memorial service was held at the Marble Hall building in Osmaston. The service took place on the 75th anniversary of the wartime bombing of the Rolls-Royce Nightingale Road factory and surrounding streets.

During the service a plaque was unveiled listing the names and ages of the 23 men, women and children killed in the attack. The **Osmaston Community Association of Residents (OSCAR)** campaigned for the plaque to commemorate those who lost their lives during the 1942 air raid and remember the important role the Rolls-Royce aero engine factory played in World War II.

The Fighting Forties

The Second World War brought changes and challenges for everyone. As men went off to fight, women were conscripted into work of national importance. Many factories ceased production of their usual products and instead made shells, tanks and other munitions.

1940 - Food rationing began on 8 January, starting with bacon, butter and sugar. The rationing of other foods followed over the next few years. Between 10 July and 31 October 1940 the RAF fought the Battle of Britain to defend the nation against attacks by Germany's air force. The large-scale night attacks, known as the Blitz, began on 7 September and raged until 11 May 1941.

1941 - On 7 December the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, prompting the United States to enter the war.

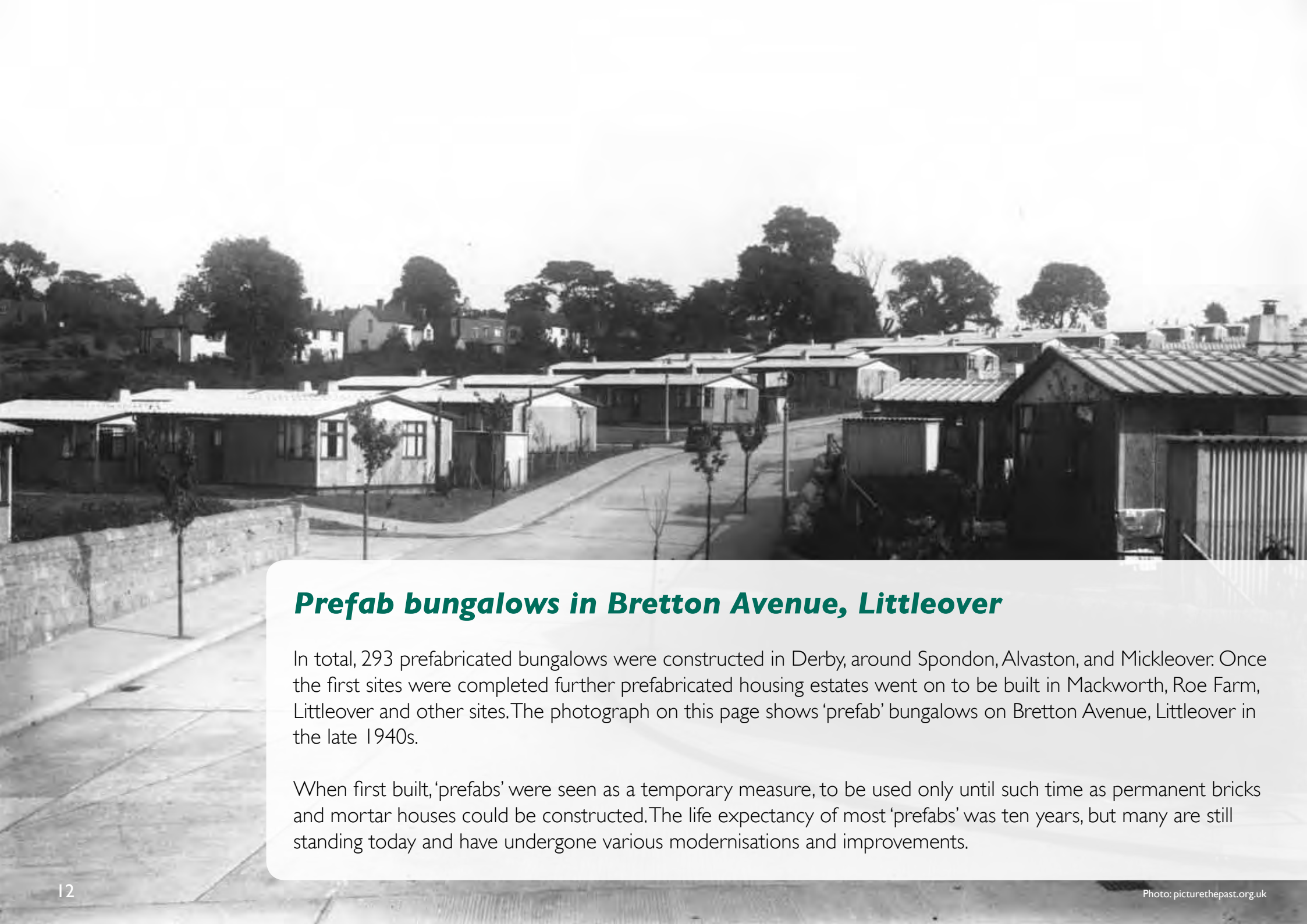
1942 - The Utility Furniture Scheme was introduced to cope with furniture shortages.

1945 - The Second World War came to an end when the Germans surrendered on 7 May, followed in August by the Japanese.

1948 - On 5 July the National Health Service was launched.

Right: A page from the 1943 Utility Furniture catalogue.





Prefab bungalows in Bretton Avenue, Littleover

In total, 293 prefabricated bungalows were constructed in Derby, around Spondon, Alvaston, and Mickleover. Once the first sites were completed further prefabricated housing estates went on to be built in Mackworth, Roe Farm, Littleover and other sites. The photograph on this page shows 'prefab' bungalows on Bretton Avenue, Littleover in the late 1940s.

When first built, 'prefabs' were seen as a temporary measure, to be used only until such time as permanent bricks and mortar houses could be constructed. The life expectancy of most 'prefabs' was ten years, but many are still standing today and have undergone various modernisations and improvements.



Prefab houses on Gertrude Road, Chaddesden

As well as the Hawksley 'prefab' bungalows, Derby relied on a range of non-traditional designs to allow them to build post-war properties quickly and with less need for skilled labour. These included Wimpey 'No Fines', Trusteel Steel Framed BISF Houses, and Unity Houses.

Many of these non-traditional building systems were durable enough to provide longer term homes and, following refurbishment and modifications, some continue to house families in the 21st century. In recent decades, these properties have undergone a comprehensive scheme of repair to bring them up to modern standards. The works have included brick cladding, new windows and improved insulation.

The 1950s

Concrete canopies, sheltered housing and the last big development

As the 1950s arrived, people began to feel more optimistic. The war was over and life seemed brighter. In May 1950 petrol rationing came to an end and dried fruit, chocolate biscuits, treacle, syrup, jellies and mincemeat were all taken 'off the ration'. Soap rationing ended in September 1950. Tea came 'off the ration' in October 1952, and sweet and sugar rationing ended in February 1953. Food rationing ended completely on 4 July 1954.

It wasn't just food that was making a welcome comeback either. House building in Derby was booming. The West End and Little City areas were cleared and new buildings began to spring up on estates around the city, including Sinfin and Chaddesden. In 1950, work also began on the Mackworth Estate, the largest of Derby Corporation's post-war estates.

The majority of the houses on the estate were completed by 1959.



1951 | Population: 181,423

Council Houses
1950 | 8,465
1959 | 14,848

This is Sinfin Fields Crescent, Sinfin, photographed in the 1950s (photo: picturethepast.org.uk)

Goodwin Street in Derby's old West End, prior to demolition (photo: picturethepast.org.uk)



Make way for new housing!

Derby Corporation began a new clearance programme in the 1950s, demolishing poor quality housing in areas such as Little City and the old West End. Many of the families living in these areas were relocated to the council estates being constructed in other parts of Derby.

By 31 December 1950, there were 6,977 applicants on the housing list. In June 1952, to meet the growing demand for council homes, the Council purchased additional land for housing: 204 acres between Breadsall and Chaddesden, 56 acres between Alvaston and Bolton, 54 acres at Sunny Hill, and 61 acres in Littleover.

The Fabulous Fifties



With the war over and rationing coming to an end, people were beginning to enjoy themselves again. This was a time of increasing economic prosperity, cheerful fashions and rock 'n' roll music.

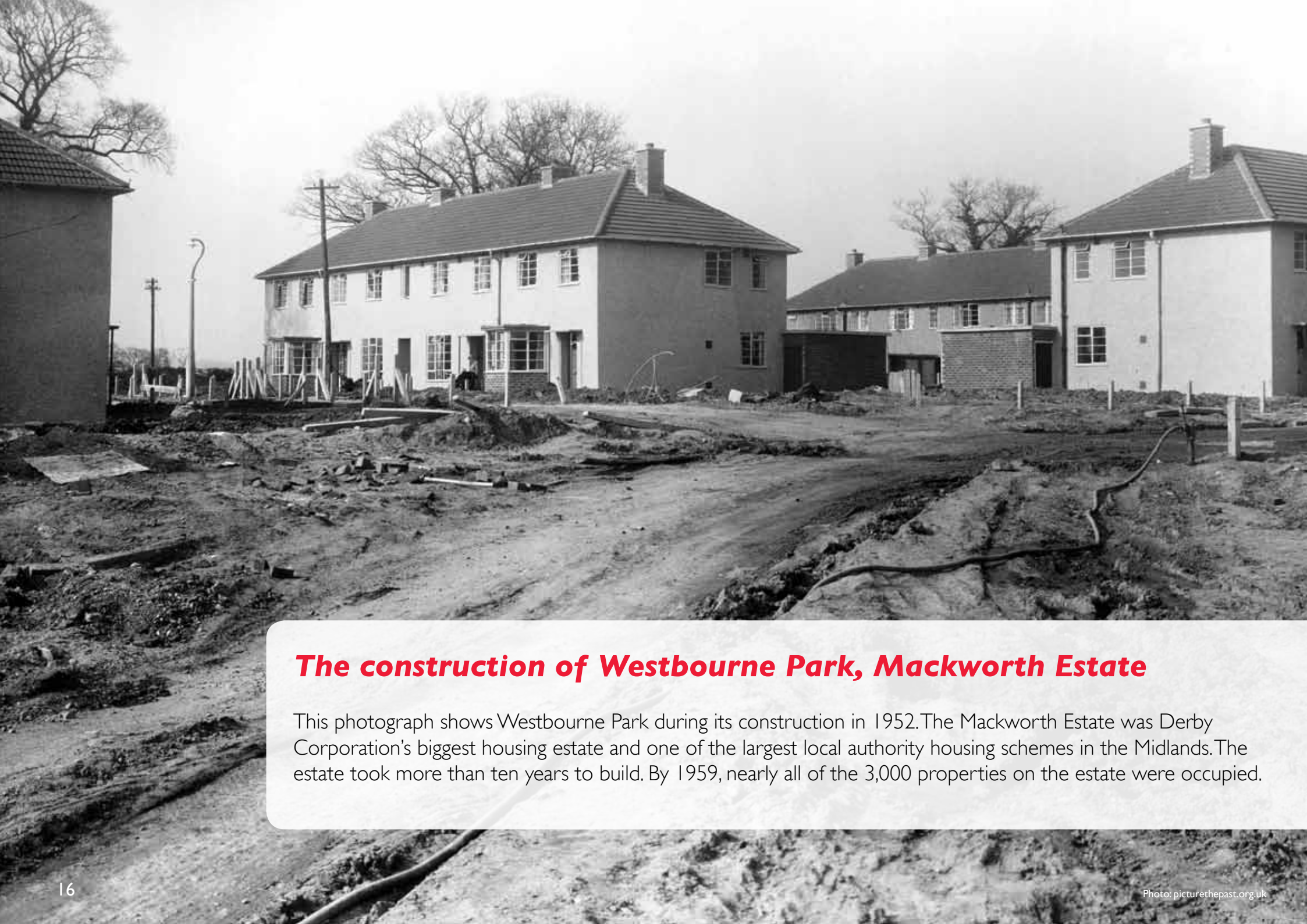
1951 - The Festival of Britain opened in May on the South Bank, London. The aim was to promote the feeling of recovery and celebrate British industry, arts and science.

1952 - On 6 February Queen Elizabeth II succeeded her father, George VI. Her coronation took place in Westminster Abbey on 2 June of the following year.

1956 - Elvis Presley released *Heartbreak Hotel*, the first Elvis single to sell over one million copies.

1958 - On 5 December the opening of Preston Bypass heralded the first stage of Britain's motorway system. The M1 opened in 1959.





The construction of Westbourne Park, Mackworth Estate

This photograph shows Westbourne Park during its construction in 1952. The Mackworth Estate was Derby Corporation's biggest housing estate and one of the largest local authority housing schemes in the Midlands. The estate took more than ten years to build. By 1959, nearly all of the 3,000 properties on the estate were occupied.

Work begins on Derby's largest Corporation Estate

The Mackworth Estate was built to meet the growing demand for council housing in Derby. Construction work began in May 1950, carried out initially by private contractors, George Wimpey & Company. Previously, the Council had used its own labour force to build council properties, but the huge scale of the Mackworth Estate project meant this wasn't possible. Some of the houses on the estate were constructed using Wimpey's 'No Fines' system, using concrete (with no fine aggregates) and cast in situ.

The first properties completed on the Mackworth Estate were on Enfield Road, and these were occupied by 1951. The estate was carefully planned and had a layout that included everything the newly developing community would need, such as shops, schools, pubs, and churches.



The main shopping centre on Prince Charles Avenue was officially opened on 23 April 1959, and the Council published a booklet to mark the occasion (pictured left). It described details of the newly created neighbourhood

as "containing approximately 3,000 dwellings when completed, and 2,907 are already occupied. The development will ultimately comprise approximately 203 privately owned residences, 286 private leasehold properties, and 2,507 council-owned dwellings. Of this total 1,095 dwellings are traditionally built and the remaining 1,412 are of non-traditional construction. The neighbourhood contains a large variety of dwellings of differing character, size, and design and although the majority are

semi-detached houses, terraced types have been introduced into the general scheme. Each dwelling has an individual garden."

The images below are taken from the Council's official booklet. The photograph on the left shows a terrace of 'No Fines' housing adjoining Radbourne Lane. The photograph in the middle shows houses in Brentford Drive (complete with fashionable concrete canopies) flanked by bungalows built for older residents. The image on the right is the interior of a typical living room.



Ten years ago, the **Derby Association of Community Partners** spoke to Betty Dean as part of a celebration of 90 years of council housing. Betty moved into a council house in Winchester Crescent, Chaddesden in 1950. She said: "It was a two-bedroom house and we thought it was heaven. There was no central heating in those days, of course, but there were fireplaces to keep us warm. The property had two toilets - one inside and one out - which was quite a luxury!"



Sheltered housing for older residents

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Derby had already built 401 bungalows, maisonettes and flats specially designed for older people. The development of these kind of properties continued to be a priority during the post-war building boom of the 1950s. A block of bungalows for older residents on Max Road, Chaddesden had been officially opened in 1949, which included the 1,000th permanent post-war house built by the Council. The bungalows (pictured above in 2019) were described as providing “real homes for older people, with facilities to enable them to meet in a bright and friendly atmosphere.”

Bungalows for older residents were included in the planning of the 1950s Mackworth Estate and were also developed across other parts of the city. Derby Homes continues to provide a range of affordable, rented properties that allow older residents to keep their independence, whilst still having access to a range of support services.





Official Opening of Castle House Flats in 1956

Castle House Flats were built on a site bounded by Siddals Road, John Street and Canal Street that had previously been occupied by three-storey cottages and shops that had fallen into a poor condition.

Castle House was officially opened on 30 April 1956. At the time, the Council said: "With the resumption of large scale clearances, there will be an increasing number of sites becoming available in and near the town centre and it is anticipated that some of these will be redeveloped with modern dwellings. As the sites will be very valuable, it may be considered uneconomic to build normal houses in these locations, and flats and maisonettes may be the principle type of dwelling available." Castle House was an experiment in this type of development in Derby, and a forerunner for properties such as Huntingdon Green Flats on Nottingham Road, and Rivermead House.



The 1960s | Onwards and upwards

During the 1960s, the post-war building boom continued. In many of the UK's cities and large towns, stark, concrete tower blocks began to appear. These “streets in the sky” were considered futuristic and progressive by most local authorities.

In Derby, the trend towards building blocks of council flats had also gained favour. However, with the exception of Rivermead House, the blocks of flats constructed in Derby were low rise developments.

Huntingdon Green

On 27 January 1961, the Huntingdon Green development on Nottingham Road (close to the cricket ground and Pentagon Island) was officially opened. The flats were designed to be easy to run and comfortable to live in. The Council's brochure from the official opening said:

“This scheme provides 48 flats and 22 separate lock-up garages, and is situated on the north side of Nottingham Road at its junction with St Mark's Road, on land previously occupied by stables and part of the old race course paddock. The flats are

arranged in three blocks, to be known as Park View House, Derwent House and Willow House, sited to form three sides of an open space which will be a grassed area known as Huntingdon Green. All the blocks are three storeys high, many enjoying pleasant views across the open space to the north.”

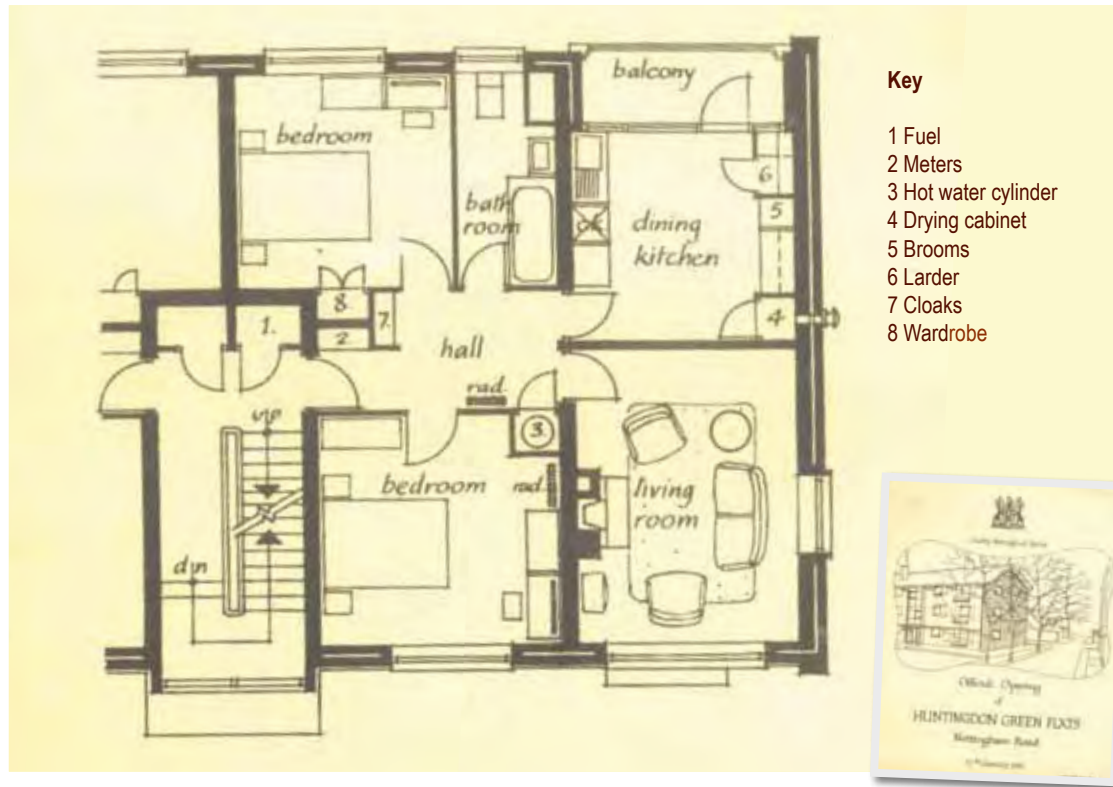
There were 16 ground floor one-bedroom flats in total, which were intended for occupation by older tenants. The remaining 32 first and second floor flats had two bedrooms, with a spacious balcony accessible from the dining kitchen.



Huntingdon Green flats in 2019

1961 | Population: 199,578

Council Houses
1960 | 15,618
1969 | 20,954



The layout of a typical two-bedroom upper floor flat in Huntingdon Green is shown above. The dining kitchens in each flat were fitted with the latest mod-cons, including a built-in dresser, broom cupboard, pot and pan cupboard, and a gas-heated clothes drying cabinet.

The scheme was designed and supervised by staff from the Borough Architect's department and the building contractor was Vic Hallam (Contractors) of Langley Mill.

The Housing Committee provided three furnished show flats for the Council and public to view. These were furnished by three well-known local retailers: the Derby Co-operative Society, Messrs Mack's Furniture Stores (Derby) Limited, and The Midland Drapery & Co Ltd.

The Swinging Sixties

The sixties was a decade of social change, memorable fashions, and great music. It was also a decade of achievement, with England winning the World Cup in 1966 and Neil Armstrong landing on the moon in 1969.

1962/63 - The winter of 1962–1963 was one of the coldest winters on record in the UK. With blizzards, snow drifts and icy temperatures it became known as the "Big Freeze".

1966 - England won the World Cup, beating West Germany 4-2. Geoff Hurst scored a third goal in extra time, making him the first person to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final.

1969 - On 9 April the Concorde prototype made its first 22 minute test flight. On 20 July, an even longer flight reached its destination when the Apollo Lunar Module Eagle landed on the moon.



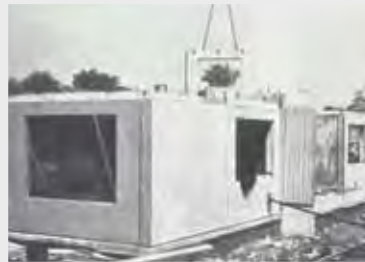
Arise Rivermead House

Rivermead House multi-storey flats on Bath Street were officially opened on 14 May 1965 by the MP for Derby North, Niall Macdermott. The occasion also provided an opportunity to commemorate the completion of 10,000 new post-war dwellings.

Until the late 1950s, Bath Street was made up of 19th century housing. The street suffered air raid damage in 1941 and many of the houses had to be repaired by Derby Corporation. In 1959, the ageing properties were deemed unfit for occupation and were acquired for redevelopment by the council under a compulsory purchase order.

The contract for building Rivermead House was awarded in 1963 to the Building Works Department, which chose a relatively new industrialised method of construction involving the use of large, precast concrete panel units. The concrete floor slabs, load bearing walls, staircases, lift wells and refuse chutes were all cast by the department, either at their London Road headquarters or on site. The finished twelve-storey block contained 94 flats, all with electrical underfloor heating, communal TV and radio aerial, and built-in drying cabinets. There was a store for 35 cycles on the ground floor.

The construction of Rivermead House had required a fresh approach to building, using new techniques. E E Armstrong, Chairman of the Housing Committee said: "It is indeed a splendid thing to see in this modern age, with all its change and progress, that the building industry is alive to the challenge of new ideas and methods. I am particularly proud that our own Building Works Department should be among the leaders in the country in this particular field."



The above photos are taken from *The Derby Method - How Rivermead House was built*, published in April 1965

The Little City Flats



The Little City flats on Burton Road were officially opened by the Mayor on 13 September 1961. The council's official brochure for the event provided the following explanation of how the area came to be called Little City.

"No-one quite knows when or why the small area lying off Burton Road with its junction with Green Lane and Babington Lane earned for itself the name 'Little City', but for many years that has been its general description.

"It held a life unto itself. It had its closely knit community – many of its families inter-related – and narrow streets. It was a place set apart from the rest of Derby. Perhaps then, it was a 'Little City'."

The area was originally dominated by a silk mill, with tiny two bedroom mill workers' houses packing the narrow streets around it. These properties lacked modern amenities, had become very dilapidated and were no longer fit for habitation.

The Little City development provided light, airy homes suitable for the modern age. The layout for the redevelopment of the area took into account existing and future changes to the road pattern, including the proposed inner ring road. The planned scheme included 15 houses, 61 flats and 19 lock-up garages.

Each two bedroom flat had double the floor area of the mill workers' houses that they replaced.

1968 Housing Department Report

HOUSING REQUIREMENTS FOR SLUM CLEARANCE

The Medical Officer of Health has recently estimated that up to 10,000 dwellings in Derby will require replacement and the Ministry is pressing the Council to accomplish this within ten years.

FUTURE BUILDING PROGRAMME AND LAND FOR SAME

To achieve an average building programme of 1,000 dwellings per annum will be a major task. Of recent years lack of suitable building land has been the major factor which has limited building and this is still a serious problem. Recently, however, about 166 acres at Sinfin have been obtained and a further 85 acres in the same locality will probably be obtained shortly. Unfortunately it will be some time before drainage works will be sufficiently advanced to permit a commencement of building.

A further substantial site of about 80 acres off Elvaston Lane, Alvaston has been under consideration for some considerable time but is held up pending decisions on the London Road diversion.

It appears likely that large scale building will not get underway before the middle of 1969.

The 1970s

Housing diversity reflects the changing needs of tenants

In the 1970s, council housing stock levels were reaching their peak in Derby. New social housing was still being built, but on a much smaller scale than in other post-war decades. The latest properties reflected the changing needs of the local population, with an emphasis on a greater diversity of housing types, including flats and sheltered housing purpose-built for an ageing population.

Between 1969 and 1978 the Council prioritised the clearance of any remaining unfit houses. A survey was carried out to establish which houses would need to be demolished – either because of their age or poor condition, or because they were in a location that was being developed as part of the city's traffic improvement plan. The survey also assessed how many new properties would need to be built to meet the needs of the occupants who would need alternative council accommodation.

Legislation to address homelessness

In the same year that Derby received city status, the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act of 1977 came into force. For the first time, local authorities took on responsibility for providing housing for certain groups of homeless people who were considered to have a 'priority' need.

Sheltered housing

Sheltered housing schemes were developed around the city, such as Rebecca House in 1974, Whitecross House and Holly Court in 1976, Acorn House and Kestrel House in 1977, and Churchside Walk and Filbert Walk in 1978. Most of these developments consisted of self-contained flats with communal facilities.

This type of accommodation gave older tenants an opportunity to downsize to a property with facilities and support to help them live independently in the later years of their life.

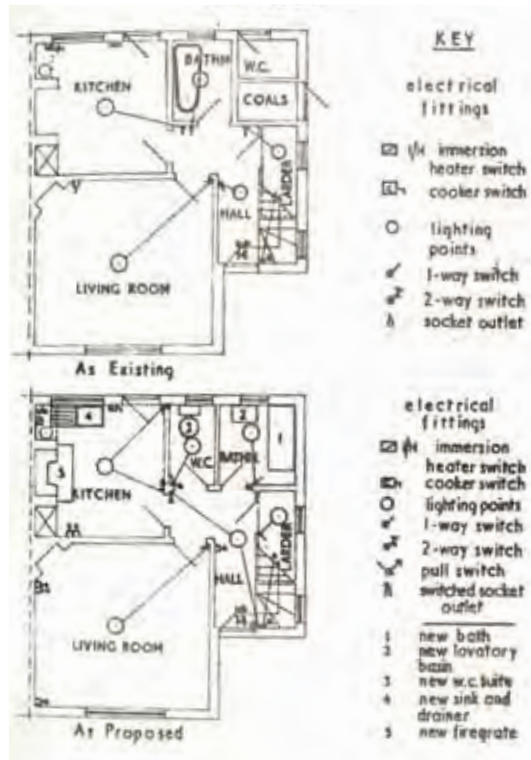


1971 | Population: 219,558

Council Houses
1970 | 21,205
1979 | 23,702

The modernisation of older properties

As well as building new properties, the council was undertaking the update of its pre-war housing stock.



A modernisation programme to update pre-war housing had begun in the 1960s, and this scheme of work continued and gained pace in the 1970s. Improvements included electrical rewiring, the fitting of new kitchen sinks, and the replacement of obsolete fire grates and ranges with modern fireplaces that burned smokeless fuels.

Structural alterations were also carried out on many properties to bring outside toilets into newly-fitted internal bathrooms. The illustration on the left shows the modernisation plan for the ground floor of a typical pre-war three bedroom house.

The Striking Seventies

The 1970s was a time of high inflation and industrial action. It was also the decade Britain entered the Common Market.

1971 - In February, decimalised currency replaced pounds, shillings and pence.

1973 - On 1 January Britain became a member of the European Economic Community.

1974 - Industrial action by coal miners led the government to introduce a three-day week to conserve electricity.

1976/77 - The emergence of punk culture began to influence the music scene in the UK.

1978/79 - A series of strikes by public sector workers led to the "Winter of Discontent".

1979 - Margaret Thatcher became the country's first female Prime Minister.



Derby becomes a city

On 7 June 1977, Derby officially became a city and the council became known as Derby City Council. The date of the town's elevation to city status coincided with the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations. Derby was the only town to be awarded city status during her jubilee year.



The 1980s

Changes to local service and the right-to-buy

During the 1980s, Derby City Council improved the way housing services were delivered. There was more focus on listening to tenants to find out what kind of services they needed.

In 1983, Chaddesden Area Housing Office opened – the first of 15 Housing Offices to appear across the city. In a decade in which cash payments were commonplace, the Housing Offices provided somewhere locally for tenants to pay their rent and council tax, and request repairs to their property. Housing Officers also visited tenants in their homes to offer support to those who were struggling to maintain or manage their home.

The end of the decade saw the implementation of the Housing Act 1988: Tenants' Choice. This would lead to the formation of new tenant organisations aimed at giving tenants more say on how their housing service was managed.



The Right to Buy Scheme

There were 24,476 council homes in Derby in 1981 – but housing stock levels had reached their peak. Ten years later, there would be 27.6% fewer council homes in Derby.

This change was triggered by the Right to Buy scheme championed by Margaret Thatcher's government through the Housing Act of 1980. The Act came into force on 3 October 1980 and gave council tenants in England and Wales the right to buy their house from their local authority. Tenants who had lived in their homes for at least three years could buy their home at a 33% discount on the market price (the discount was 44% for those living in a flat). People who had been tenants for 20 years or more got a discount of 50% off the market price. There was a huge take-up for the scheme initially and home ownership grew nationally from 55% of the population in 1980 to 67% in 1990.

Derby's council housing stock levels over the last 40 years



1980	24,233
1990	18,127
2000	15,779
2010	13,623
2020	12,750*

*Estimated



Britannia Court

On 9 June 1981 the Council officially opened the Britannia Court housing scheme. The development was constructed on a riverside location on Duke Street and provided 63 flatlets, all of which were intended for single people (41 of the flatlets were small bedsitters intended for younger, short-stay tenants). The accommodation was handed over to tenants on completion at the end of December 1980.

Unfortunately, the Britannia Court flats became unpopular. The scheme was decommissioned in 2007 and the building was demolished in 2013.

In 2019, the site's redevelopment was included in the Our City Our River master plan.

The Electronic Eighties

The 1980s brought royal weddings, a war, a year-long miner's strike, electronic computer games, and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

1981 - Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer.

1982 - The Falklands War with Argentina lasted for 10 weeks from 2 April to 14 June.

1984 - In March a year-long miner's strike began, aimed at preventing the closure of collieries.

1985 - On 13 July millions of people across the world watched Live Aid, a dual-venue popular music concert that raised money for those affected by the Ethiopian famine.

1989 - On 9 November the Berlin Wall "fell" when the East German government announced that all citizens of the German Democratic Republic could visit West Germany and West Berlin.



The 1990s | Listening to tenants

In the 1990s the council formed Customer Panels for every estate in Derby. The Panels met regularly to talk with local housing staff, Ward Councillors and a member of the Housing Committee. In 1995 the DACP was formed to co-ordinate and support individual customer panels. Its representatives met with the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing and the Director of Housing and Environmental Services to develop new initiatives and set standards.

Tenants' Choice

The Housing Act of 1988 had come into effect on 5 April 1989, giving secure tenants the right to opt to transfer to an approved landlord other than the council. The tenants who did not wish to leave the Council were not forced to do so.

There was a mixed response to Tenants' Choice. Some tenants felt that it could give them better services and the opportunity to influence housing management practices. Others protested against the legislation, fearing it might push up rents and threaten their security as tenants. In Derby, tenants chose to retain Derby City Council as their housing landlord.

1991 | Population: 225,296

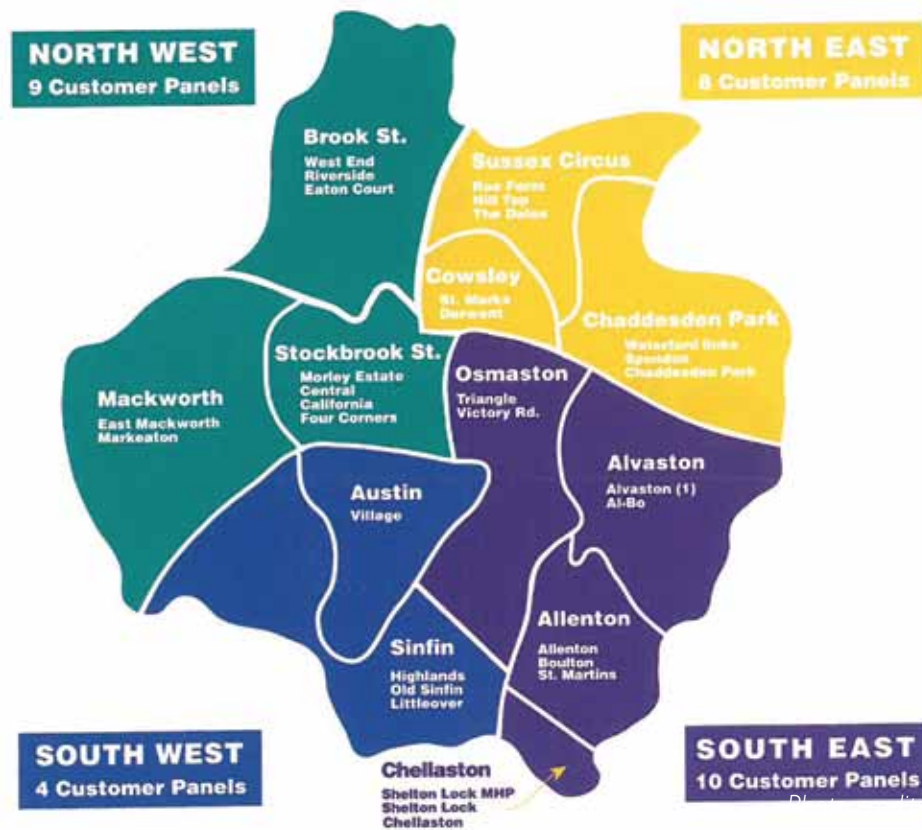
Council Houses
1990 | 18,127
1999 | 16,050

The growth of tenant organisations

A National Tenants Organisation (NTO) had been formed back in 1976 to campaign for tenants' rights and a Tenants' Charter. In 1988 the National Tenants and Residents Federation (NTRF) was set up by those campaigning for greater investment in social housing. In 1997, the NTO and NTRF were brought together under the umbrella of the Tenants and Resident Organisations of England (TAROE) to represent social housing tenants across England. In 1999 TAROE linked with the trade union-led Defend Council Housing group to campaign against large scale voluntary transfers. Since 2013, TAROE has been known as TAROE Trust.

The **Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP)** was formed in 1995. It is a voluntary organisation for tenants, community groups and other partner agencies. Members volunteer their time to make sure Derby Homes is providing an excellent service. The tenants involved have good, in-depth knowledge of housing issues and how Derby Homes operates as a company. This means they are in a good position to advocate on tenant issues and ideas. They also monitor Derby Homes' performance against agreed targets.





Customer Panels - Your Voice, Your Choice

The 1995 Annual Report for Derby City Council tenants encouraged residents to get involved with their local Customer Panel. The Council realised that the people who lived in each area were best placed to understand local needs and issues. A panel was formed for every estate in Derby (see the above map which was taken from the 1995 Annual Report). Panel members met every two months, giving tenants an opportunity to talk to local housing staff, Ward Councillors and a member of the Housing Committee. This gave tenants a chance to have their say and influence key decisions on the area in which they lived.

The Nifty Nineties

This was the decade that brought the internet and launched the careers of Oasis, the Spice Girls and the Teletubbies! Mobile phones became increasingly popular.

1990 - Margaret Thatcher resigned on 22 November and John Major took over as Prime Minister.

1994 - On 6 May the Channel Tunnel opened, linking London and Paris by rail. A few days later on 10 May, Nelson Mandela was elected as President of South Africa.

1997 - Labour won the May general election. On 1 July Britain handed Hong Kong back to China. Diana, Princess of Wales, died on 31 August.

1999 - On 1 January the Euro became the new 'single currency' of the European Monetary Union.



The Noughties

The formation of Derby Homes

The new century heralded radical changes in the way council housing was regulated. In 2000, Tenant Participation Compacts came into force, regulating tenant involvement in council housing. A Housing Inspectorate was established, which acted to make sure social housing providers complied with minimum standards of tenant participation.

Recognising there was an investment backlog nationally, the Labour government launched Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) as an alternative way of achieving investment in social housing without the ownership of housing stock having to pass out of council control. In Derby, council tenants voted overwhelmingly in favour of the ALMO model.

Derby Homes is formed

Derby Homes was one of the first ALMOs to be formed. It was incorporated on 25 February 2002 and began operating on 10 April 2002. The management and maintenance of council homes was delegated to Derby Homes, but Derby City Council still retained ownership of the housing stock and all tenants continued to be council tenants.

The creation of Derby Homes coincided with the move to give tenants a much greater say in how their estates were managed. A Tenant Board was established, with council tenants making up one-third of the membership. The remaining Board positions were taken up by local councillors and independent members, many of whom had business and housing experience.

This structure meant that Derby Homes could access business and housing expertise, retain a close relationship with Derby City Council, and give tenants a voice at a senior level. A Delivery Plan and Service Plan were developed by Derby Homes in partnership with tenants and leaseholders, and progress against the agreed standards was monitored and reported to customers.

As well as improving housing standards, Derby Homes aimed to deliver initiatives to regenerate neighbourhoods, improve the local environment, and support projects that improved the lives of council tenants' and their children.

In 2005, Derby City Council agreed to extend the original arms length management agreement beyond 2007 to 2010/11.

2001 | Population: 230,726

Council Houses
2000 | 15,779
2009 | 13,734



Derby Homes was formed as an Arms Length Management organisation in 2002



Launch of the Derby Homes website

The **Derby Homes Enquiry Centre** was launched in September 2004, providing tenants with a easy way to get in touch to report repairs, check their rent account and make other general housing enquiries.

As the new century rolled on, an increasing number of tenants were using the internet and, in 2005, Derby Homes launched its own website. Initially the site provided information about the ALMO, news updates for tenants, details of how to get involved as a tenant, and access to online leaflets and booklets.

By the end of the decade, with more and more people using the site, Derby Homes decided to further develop the website to offer more options for tenants who wanted to access details of their tenancy online.

The Digital Noughties

The first decade of the new century brought world-changing events, as well as an ever growing trend for using digital media.

2001 - Terrorists attacked New York and Washington on 11 September.

2004 - In February the social media site Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg.

2005 - In December, civil partnerships gave same sex couples legal rights.

2007 - On 9 January the Apple iPhone was announced and the first iPhones went on sale in the USA a few months later on 29 June. On 21 July the seventh and final novel in the Harry Potter series was published – and within 24 hours of release, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* had sold 11 million copies worldwide.





‘Decent Homes’ funding

As an ALMO, Derby Homes had an opportunity to access ‘Decent Homes’ funding. To qualify, it needed to receive a minimum 2-star Good rating from the Audit Commission. During its first ALMO inspection Derby Homes was able to demonstrate a high level of performance and services to tenants, with sound financial planning and management. As a result, it was awarded the 3-Star Excellent rating by the Audit Commission and secured £81m of government funding for ‘Decent Homes’, which would allow it to improve thousands of council homes in Derby.

Homes Pride Programme

The Derby ‘Homes Pride’ programme began in March 2003, setting out to modernise existing housing stock and bring all council houses to the Decent Homes standard. In the first year of the programme 4,800 homes were upgraded to meet the standard. Along with other funding schemes, improvements included damp-proofing, installing PVCu windows and doors, and new central heating systems. Tenants were given a choice of fixtures and fittings as part of the scheme.

‘Homes Pride’ was completed in 2006 at a total cost of £120m. With all council houses now meeting the Decent Homes standard, Derby Homes was able to move to a more cost-effective programmed maintenance cycle.

Another 3-star rating for Derby Homes

In 2006 Derby Homes was re-inspected and retained a 3-star Excellent status from the Audit Commission.

Regulatory change

After demonstrating a consistently excellent service in 2006, Derby Homes embraced the proposals of a new regulation at the turn of the decade. As a move to reduce the cost of regulation, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) sought to be “an empowering regulator, giving responsibility to landlords to demonstrate how they are meeting standards”. It placed tenants at the centre of discussions about how local resources should be used, and promoted greater engagement through co-regulation of housing services.

It meant new standards with a stronger focus on customer service, choice and complaints.



Pictured above is the famous TSA pink campervan, part of the campaign for a countrywide tenant consultation on standards called The National Conversation.

The National Conversation



Above: Derby Homes tenants took part in events organised as part of the National Conversation.

The Teenies

New build programmes, solar panels and volunteering

The 2010s saw the revival of new build projects, albeit on a smaller scale than the estates developed in the post-war building boom. New, 21st century homes were created in various locations across the city. The majority were new build properties, but some involved converting or adapting existing buildings.

Derby Homes completed its first new build project as an ALMO in 2010 and around 500 new homes were built during the last decade.

2010 was a busy year for Derby Homes. A **Tenancy Sustainment Service** was introduced to help new tenants successfully manage the first year of their tenancy. It was also the year that the **City Board** was created as a committee of the Derby Homes Board. The City Board was set up to take the lead on major decisions affecting housing management, maintenance and customer services. In June, Commercial Services Department staff transferred from the council to Derby Homes, forming the ALMO's in-house **Repairs Team**.

In 2011, Derby Homes signed a new, 10-year management agreement with Derby City Council, meaning Derby Homes could continue as an ALMO until March 2022.

Also in 2011, a £6.6m project for warmer homes saw more than 2,200 homes in parts of Osmaston, Cowsley, Old Sinfin, Austin, Alvaston and Allenton fitted with a range of energy saving measures. This included insulating solid brick walls, installing new heating systems, cavity wall and loft insulation.

Derby Homes fitted **solar panels** to around 900 of the most suitably positioned council homes to provide sustainable energy and help reduce fuel poverty.



The Derby Homes Repairs Team was established in 2010. Their distinctive vans can often be spotted driving around the city.

2011 | Population: 248,752

Council Houses
2010 | 13,623
2019 | 12,774

An improved website and social media

By 2010 Derby Homes tenants were beginning to ask for online options to pay their rent and request repairs. This required a major revamp of the website, which resulted in the launch of the Derby Homes 'Dashboard' in 2011. For the first time, tenants were able to use the dashboard for a variety of things, including checking their rent account and reporting a repair. Tenants and leaseholders could also pay their rent, service charges and invoices online for greater convenience. In the same year, Derby Homes introduced SMS communication (text messaging) as a more efficient way to keep in touch with tenants.

By 2012, with more and more people using social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, Derby Homes set up social media accounts as a new and fast way of keeping tenants informed.

This allowed them to provide updates on the latest news and information, and live Twitter coverage of City Board meetings to encourage interaction with tenants and get their input to key decisions.



@DerbyHomes



facebook.com/derbyhomes

The Techie Teenies

The 2010s saw a massive increase in the use of mobile technology. People began to use smartphones to shop online, send emails and check everything from their bank balance to their heart rate and the weather.

2010 - In April, Apple launched the first iPad. 300,000 of the devices were sold worldwide in the first day.

2012 - Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her Diamond Jubilee and London hosted the Olympic Games.

2013 - Sales of tablets began to overtake sales of laptops and desktop PCs.

2014 - The first gay marriages were held in England and Wales.

2016 - On 23 June, the UK voted to leave the EU.



New homes for a new century

In 2010, Derby Homes completed its first new build project as an ALMO by creating new energy efficient homes for sale and rent in **Penalton Close, Allenton**. The project was delivered in partnership with Strata Homes.

In 2013, bungalows were built in Chaddesden on the site of the old Rocket pub.

In 2014 keys were handed over to tenants of new properties on **Hastings Street** in Normanton and **Davies Close** in Osmaston. Flats on **Chesapeake Road** in Chaddesden were also created by converting a former family centre.

The photograph on this page is of new houses on Coronation Crescent in Alvaston.





A focus on volunteering

In 2012 the DACP and the Derby Homes Resident Involvement team moved into The Hub on London Road – a move that coincided with a renewed focus on engagement and supporting tenants to volunteer in the 22 Community Rooms across the city.

Volunteering provided opportunities for tenants to try something different, gain skills and experience, meet new people and give something back to other residents. Along with support and training, groups and individuals were given some financial assistance to allow them to get started running coffee mornings or other activities.

The Future

The next hundred years

The UK's first council houses were built to improve the health of the nation – a priority that is once again high on the Government's agenda. In Derby, the earliest council houses provided much-needed, quality homes for the growing workforce at Rolls-Royce and, in the one hundred years since then, social housing has continued to develop and evolve.

The 2018 Government Green Paper *A New Deal for Social Housing* shows a renewed and encouraging focus on the social housing sector. In the future, council housing management is likely to involve clearer service standards and greater consumer choice. It will build on the strong culture of engagement that began in the 1990s and, through partnership working, continue to consider the issues, needs and aspirations of our communities. The aim will be to improve social inclusion, provide volunteering opportunities, support young people, and harness social value for Derby from a range of businesses and providers.

As we enter the 2020s and beyond, we must continue to adapt to the changing needs and lifestyles of the people of Derby, taking into account local, regional and national plans, government policies, new building standards and funding opportunities.

The one thing that will remain constant is Derby Homes' and Derby City Council's commitment to providing the kind of good quality housing that plays a key role in helping people live happy, healthy and independent lives.

Whatever the future has in store, our aim will be to provide the right types of homes and high quality services for the people of Derby for the next 100 years and beyond.

Design standards of the future



Newly built and refurbished homes will have to meet a range of needs and standards. In future, homes are likely to:

- Consider our ageing population and people who are disabled.
- Be ultra-insulated, reducing heat loss and saving people money.
- Be warmed with low carbon forms of central heating, like air source heat pump heating and underfloor heating.
- Incorporate renewable technologies, such as solar panels.

2021 | Population: 262,549*

*Estimated

**Council Houses
2020 | 12,750***

Derby Homes would like to thank the following people for their time and help with collating this book:

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*Many of the photographs in this booklet are from **www.picturethepast.org.uk**, which is a not-for-profit project that makes archived images of photographs, slides, postcards, engravings and other resources available from the libraries and museums of Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.*



derbyhomes.org

