



Fishermead 1 and 2 (MKDC, 1972)
Three storey houses backing onto landscaped greens. Facades of glazing and fibre cement panels spanning between the party walls. Projecting balconies form carports beneath. Corner blocks of flats and maisonettes with the ground floors either fitted out for commercial use or left vacant for such uses in the future.



Fishermead C/D (Denton Tunley Scott, 1989)
Modest and small-scale private housing arranged around a wedge of open space leading out of the gridsquare. Distinguishing concrete lintels over the windows.



Fishermead 3 (MKDC, 1976)
Three storey brick facades punctured by windows. Balconies are either at the front or rear depending upon orientation – an early MK example of planning for solar gain. The corner blocks, with distinctive glazed staircase lobbies, still have their flat roofs.



Fishermead 7 (MKDC, 1982)
Three storey crescent that was originally planned for a mirror site in Conniburrow but moved to Fishermead as a result of poor ground conditions. A suitably grand scheme to mark the termination of MKDC's rental housing programme.



Fishermead 5 (MKDC, 1981)
A shift in design with two storey houses with pitched roofs around mixer courts with no distinction between footpath and road. Nearby, in Helston Place, a scheme of MKDC Starter Homes, built for sale rather than rent: architecturally modest.



Local Centre (MKDC, 1979)
Combined development of a local supermarket and a multi-use community centre (the Trinity Centre) that also functions as the local church. The supermarket has an abnormally wide sheltering canopy.

OLDBROOK / FISHERMEAD

FISHERMEAD
The name comes from a field "Fishers Mead" west of the canal in Great Woolstone. The roads are named after places in Cornwall.

OLDBROOK
The gridsquare name comes from a local field name (alternatively Holbrook or Oldbrook). The roads are named after cricketers.



Frank Howe Court (Trevor Denton, 1983)
Elegant L-shaped sheltered housing scheme for the Royal British Legion by the architect who previously led the Central Area Housing design team within MKDC. Opposed monopitch roofs and the architect's distinctive projecting brick fins.



Oldbrook 1 (MKDC, 1980)
Three storeys and pitched roofs from the outset. Backing onto the Local Park, cluster blocks combining smaller units to make detached pavilions – a new departure for MKDC. Shallow pitched roofs and deep eaves in the manner of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Houses.



Oldbrook 2 (Colquhoun and Miller, 1980-83)
Three storey mews courts leading towards CMK with two storey cross streets with linking pergolas over the parking spaces. Oriol staircase windows form dramatic features at the ends of the taller blocks. Crinkle crinkle walls line the interior greens.



Oldbrook 3 (Phippen Randall and Parkes, 1980-81)
PRP were some of the most prolific architects in MK designing houses for both MKDC and private developers. Generous hipped roofs, particularly noticeable above the balconies of the corner blocks of flats.



Oldbrook 6 (MKDC, 1982)
Shared ownership scheme with standalone blocks comprising two ground floor flats and sweeping staircase to the two maisonettes on the first and second floors, a development of the blocks in Oldbrook 1 and a clever way to give architectural dignity to small dwellings.



Oldbrook Green (MKDC, 1984)
Three cheerful service buildings on the cricket green at the heart of the gridsquare – a pavilion, landscape depot and a utility building.



The Cricketers Public House and Meeting Place (David Byrne Associates 1982-3)
Broad hipped roofs with a pop-up manager's flat. The original brightly coloured timberwork has suffered in a subsequent redecoration. Enjoyable interior stained glass on a cricketing theme by Brian Milne.



Oldbrook First School (Bucks County Council, 1994)
One of a new wave of school designs that moved away from the more traditional image adopted by BCC. Linear design with classrooms off a spine. Big gridded window overlooking Oldbrook Green. Subsequent extension by Stenton Obhi Architects.



SIA House (Sansome Hall, 2005)
Energy conscious building with green roof and photovoltaic cells for the Spinal Injuries Association.



Oldbrook B (Various, 1981 onwards)
Individual plots for self-build housing were an important part of MKDC's housing provision. Each site had its own brief detailing building zones, choice of materials etc. Most of the buildings, as here, are relatively conventional in appearance.



Oldbrook 4 (Design Research Unit, 1989)
Inclusive housing and bungalows built by Habinteg, a housing association established to provide housing for people with disabilities. Cranked blocks address the roundabouts.



Dexter House (MKDC, 1982)
L-shaped sheltered housing around a landscaped court, one of a number of sheltered housing schemes designed by MKDC throughout the city.

207 Conniburrow Boulevard
(Berman Guedes Partnership, 1994)
Stalione pavilion building for New Era Housing Association. Intersecting shallow pitched roof and deep eaves that recall early Frank Lloyd Wright. Pop up roof lights. There is a similar building on Fishermead Boulevard.



3

Conniburrow C Phase 2 (Tuckley Walker, 1981)
Charming, small scale scheme by the architects from Newport private housing schemes in MK. Pagnell who probably did more than any other firm. Plentiful detailing in a contrasting engineering brick.



4

Downs Barn 1 (MKDC, 1975)
Two storey terraces of cream terraces (similar to those nearby in Conniburrow).
Alongside Mullien Avenue are a group of three storey timber pergolas: a sophisticated image. Private gardens carefully arranged along the street edge by black garages which are tied together brick set behind simple paired



5

Downs Barn C and D (Denton Tunley Scott, 1984)
Detached housing with "rooms in the roof" stepping up the hill. Private gardens carefully arranged so that they face the sun. Carefully detailed.



6

Downs Barn (David Sim, 1989)
The building that gave its name to the grid square dates back to the early C19 was converted to a sports pavilion. Security measures that were subsequently installed due to the barn's relatively isolated location detract from the overall appearance.



7

Cross and Stable Ecumenical Church (Denton Tunley Scott, 1986)
Part of a complex that includes workshops and a vicarage. Many good details that demand closer inspection. MKDC made a contribution to the bell tower as part of a budget to provide local landmarks throughout the city.



8

CONNIBURROW
Conniburrow's name is derived from a hill ("Connie Burrow Hill") shown on map of 1641. The roads are named after wild flowers.
"The Downs" was a field shown on a map of 1641, and Downs Barn is an old farm barn. The road names have connections with horses.



Conniburrow 1 (MKDC, 1975)
The first scheme in the grid square and similar to Fishermead 1 and 2 but with facades of brick rather than cladding panels. Corner units of flats, maisonettes sheltering eaves. Extended to the east in 1994 by different architects.



2

Salvation Army (Gotch, Surridge and Saunders, 1982)
Single storey homage to Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Houses, with a low pitched roof and deep sheltering eaves. Extended to the east in 1994 by different architects.



1

Background

At the peak of activity in the late 1970s and early 1980s over 2,000 new houses a year were being built in Milton Keynes - initially the majority were rental houses built by Milton Keynes Development Corporation (the Government body charged with building the new city) but, as political circumstances changed, there was an increased reliance upon the private sector.

The different aspects of this concentrated period of activity are all reflected in these four gridsquares which, with together with Bradwell Common and Springfield, were designed around a common orthogonal theme and are collectively known as Central Area Housing (CAH).

Development began in Fishermead in 1973 and the final houses were completed in Oldbrook in the mid 1990s. The first schemes took the form of three storey terraces with flat roofs backing onto generous landscaped squares but, as development progressed, alternative forms were explored. Pitched roofs became the norm from the late 1970s onwards and layouts based around mews courts also appeared.

The election of the Conservative Government in 1979 brought an end to the rental housing programme and, in its place, MKDC developed its pioneering programme of shared ownership housing whilst also briefly flirting with low cost "starter" homes. The decline of the MKDC programme was counterbalanced by the growth of private housing, which was planned around more conventional housing forms, and the final developments (in the western half of Oldbrook) were large estates of housing for sale, similar to many others throughout the city.

These gridsquares also include other forms of housing - individual plots for self-builders, sheltered housing for the elderly and integrated housing for people with disabilities - as well as a mix of schools, shops, meeting places, small offices and other facilities - mostly spread along the central boulevards.

Maintenance problems meant that the majority of the flat roofs were replaced in the early 1990s (those that remain were of a different construction) and many of the original brown windows in the rental houses have been replaced, however the strong building forms still dominate the streetscapes. As with much of Milton Keynes though in certain places, particularly along the boulevards, the landscaping has become the dominant feature rather than the architecture.

MK Heritage Trails

The Heritage Trails were developed by On The Verge in conjunction with Milton Keynes Forum (the city's civic society) as part of its arts and heritage project "Underpasses - Connecting People, Connecting Places". They provide an insight into some of the key buildings in these gridsquares but we could not include them all so please keep your eyes open as you explore. As you walk and cycle around please look also at how the gridsquares connect with each other. Such connections were an integral part of the planning of Milton Keynes from the outset - see especially the road between Fishermead and Oldbrook under the V7 as well as the links into CMK. Two of the underpasses will be the subject of artworks during 2016/2017.

On The Verge is a community interest company that works closely with local residents, heritage organisations and artists to help improve some of the older estates bordering Central Milton Keynes, concentrating upon the underpasses that link the estates with each other.

The Underpasses project is supported by: The Heritage Lottery Fund, Milton Keynes Community Foundation, and Milton Keynes Council and delivered in partnership with The Parks Trust MK, MK City Discovery Centre, and MK Council.



www.miltonkeynesforum.org



Artwork by Caroline Brown. Images ©Tim Skelton. Cover image drawing of rental housing at Fishermead by Helmut Jacoby © Homes and Communities Agency, courtesy of Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre. Mapping based on © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. All rights reserved Ordnance Survey Licence number - OS 100019593



The Story of Housing in Milton Keynes



Fishermead / Oldbrook
Conniburrow / Downs Barn



www.ontheverge.org.uk