

the City Building



Introduction

This exhibition continues the theme of the first *Building the City* exhibition with more homes and other buildings from the 1970s and early '80s.

Aerial shots like the ones below showing newly built Galley Hill and Fullers Slade remind us of the thousands of saplings, now mature trees, planted to transform the landscape.

Most Milton Keynes Development Corporation housing was built for rent. Then, in May 1979, Margaret Thatcher was elected on a manifesto that included the Right to Buy. When she opened the shopping centre later in 1979 she also visited this family on Galley Hill who were buying their home to publicise the scheme.

Milton Keynes continues to develop: the infrastructure and first new housing in the western expansion area are beginning to take shape and the eastern expansion area already well developed.

Please get in touch if you have any photos of both old or new developments or would like help to start a heritage group for your area.

www.mkheritage.co.uk

Thank you to Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre for the provision of some of the photographs used in this exhibition, which are © Homes & Communities Agency. All other images courtesy Living Archive Milton Keynes.



Building the City

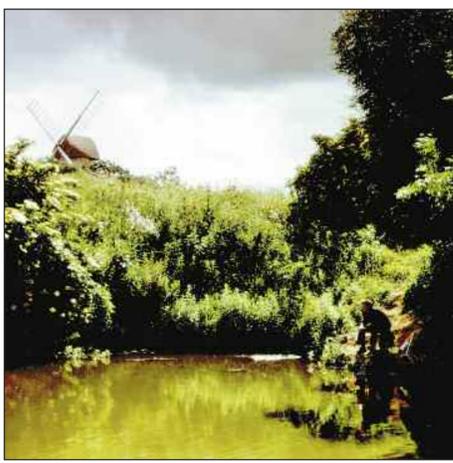
Bradville

There was already a housing estate known as Bradville when the Development Corporation started to develop the grid square in the early 1970s, with a mix of rental and for-sale housing and a light industrial area.

Whilst many of the new dwellings were of conventional brick design, the timber-framed Stanton High was laid out in terraces and featured lots of open space for play, and car ports for the increasing number of vehicles appearing in 'the city of the car'. The layout was designed to give good views northwards over the open countryside.

The Corporation provided schools and a sports and social club for Bradville. There was already a local pub called The Bradville, which was renamed Halley's Comet.

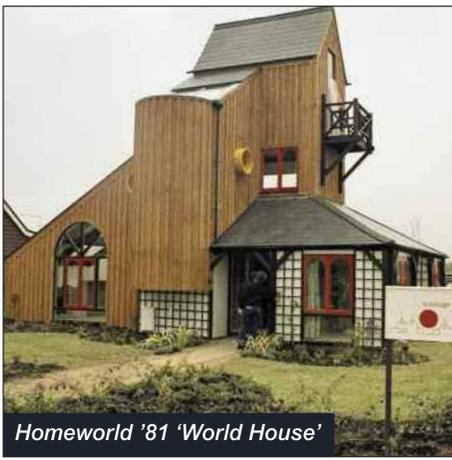
The Bradville grid square is also home to one of MK's older buildings – the 19th century Bradwell Windmill.



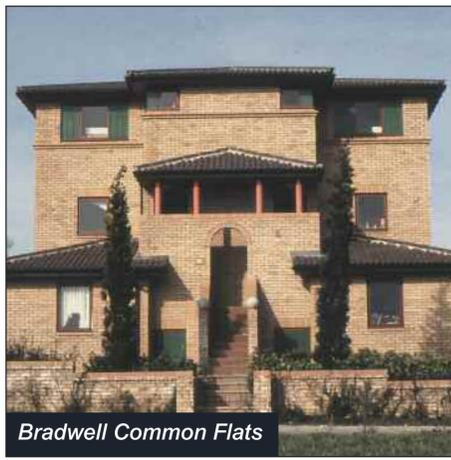
The layout was designed to give good views northwards over the open countryside.



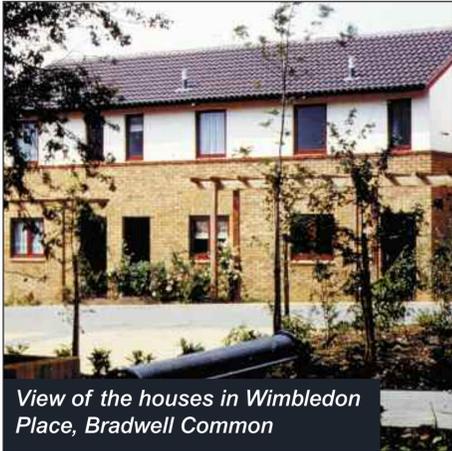
Building the City



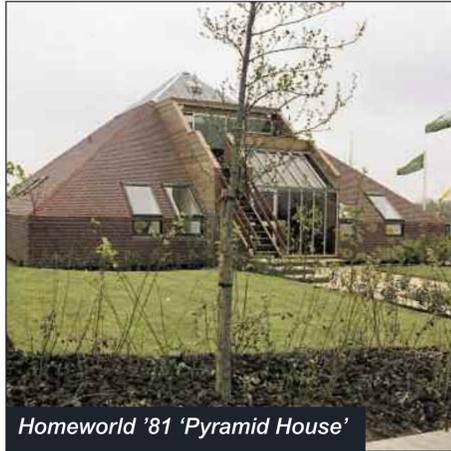
Homeworld '81 'World House'



Bradwell Common Flats



View of the houses in Wimbledon Place, Bradwell Common



Homeworld '81 'Pyramid House'



Homeworld, May 1981

Bradwell Common

By the late 1970s the Development Corporation was attracting private developers as well as still building homes for rent. Bradwell Common, one of the 'doughnut' of estates around the city centre, contains a mixture of housing types.

Whereas the first wave of new residents had been families, by now young single people were also being attracted by the new employment opportunities. Attractive blocks of flats and maisonettes such as these on Bradwell Common (pictured) were built to accommodate them.

The style of Development Corporation housing was changing, but each estate continued to feature play areas and Community Houses.

May 1981 saw the opening of the first of three major housing exhibitions, Homeworld '81, where developers were able to show off their best designs, including some futuristic ones such as *The Pyramid* and *World House*.



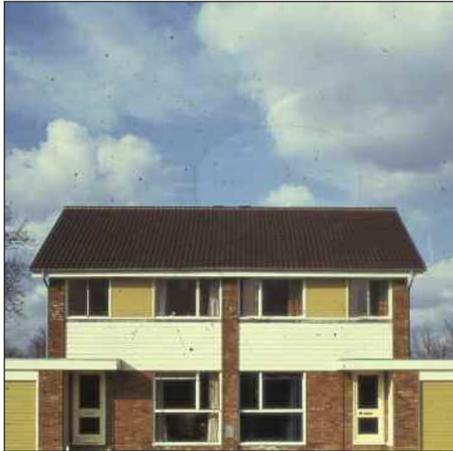
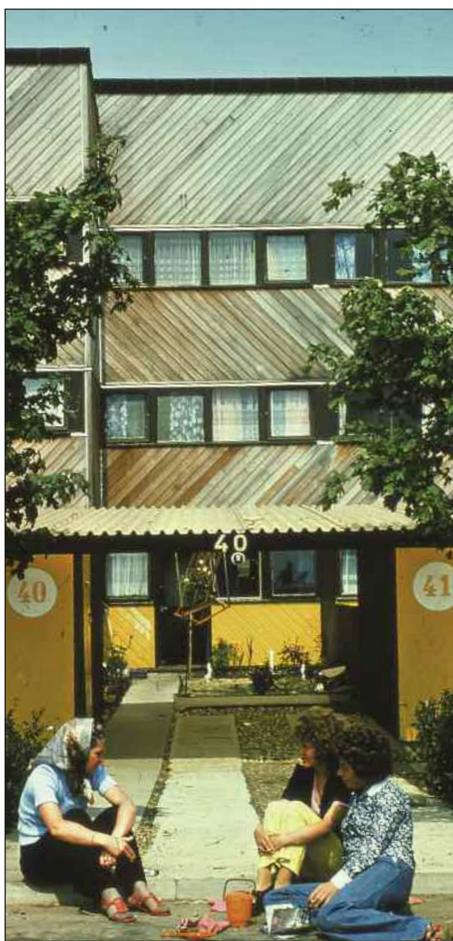
Fullers Slade

This area was given the name of the 18th century field on which it was built. Despite the historical name, the design was a contemporary, wood clad take on traditional terraced housing with small private gardens and large areas of landscaped community open space.

Work started in late 1971 and the construction used simple modular techniques and available materials, as much as anything to get round the shortage of bricks and bricklayers. The stepped design followed the contours of the site and enabled dwellings of different sizes to be provided with good natural lighting and living accommodation at ground level.

At the same time a private developer built the small Hill Top estate – conventional brick houses, mostly semi detached – for sale in one corner of Fullers Slade.

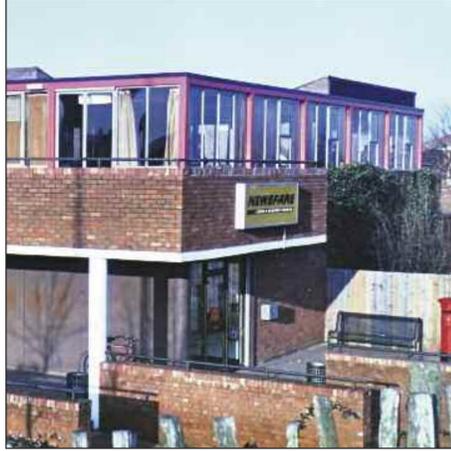
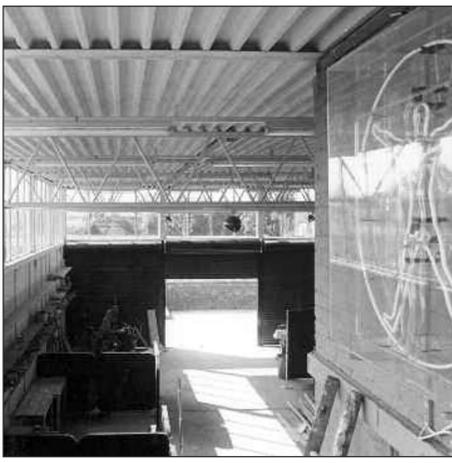
Fullers Slade originally had its own pub, The Slade, and a small retail area.



© John Donat



Building the City

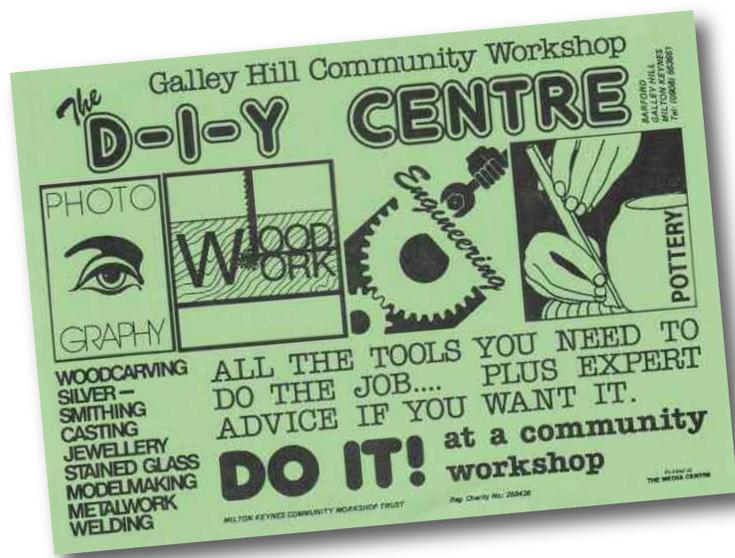


Galley Hill

Galley Hill, started in 1971, was the first large housing scheme built by the Development Corporation. Concrete shells were delivered to site and clad with brick. The mono-pitched roof design was reflected in later developments elsewhere in Milton Keynes.

The new residents came from all over the country. They were the people who were building Milton Keynes, and an eclectic mix of accents was heard in the school playground and local shops.

Housing was organised, in courts of semi-detached houses and a few flats, each with play areas for children. Some of the courts were built for sale, but the majority were for rent. There were schools and a local centre with workshops. One house was used as a GP's surgery before the Health Centre at Wolverton was built.



Great Linford

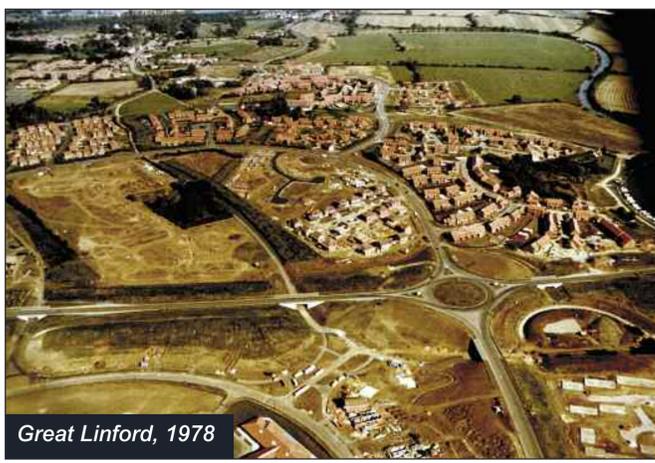
As the development of Milton Keynes continued, the small village of Great Linford with its thatched cottages, 14th century church and listed manor house, was integrated into its own grid square.

The Almshouses and stables of the Manor House became an Arts Centre and the brick kilns were restored. The old lane to Willen, past the village pond, and the lane to Linford Wood, became redways and new roads were given names associated with the history of the village.

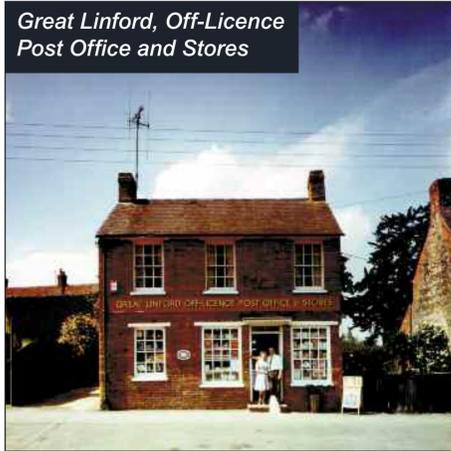
A variety of different housing, mostly low density, was sensitively arranged to keep the original village area intact and retain the village green and other green space.

The housing construction in the photos, at Gibbwin, is similar in shape to Fullers Slade but clad in very different materials.

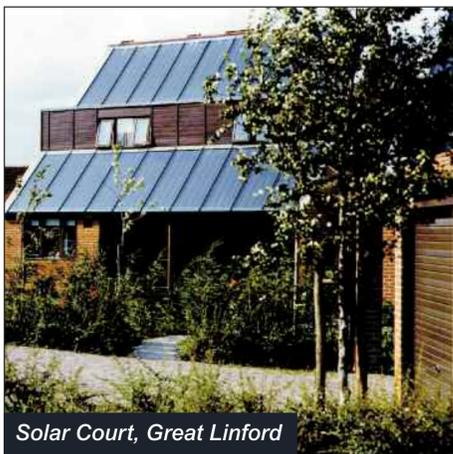
In recent years the buildings at the old wharf area by the canal have been developed for residential use.



Great Linford, 1978



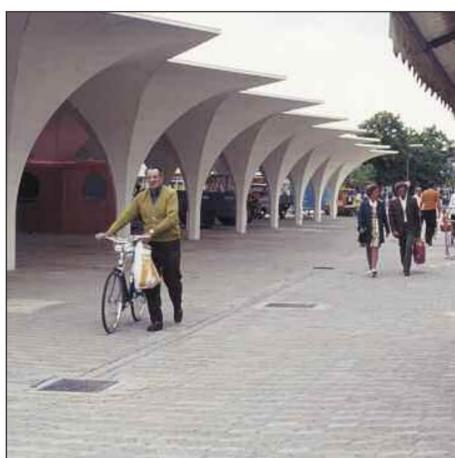
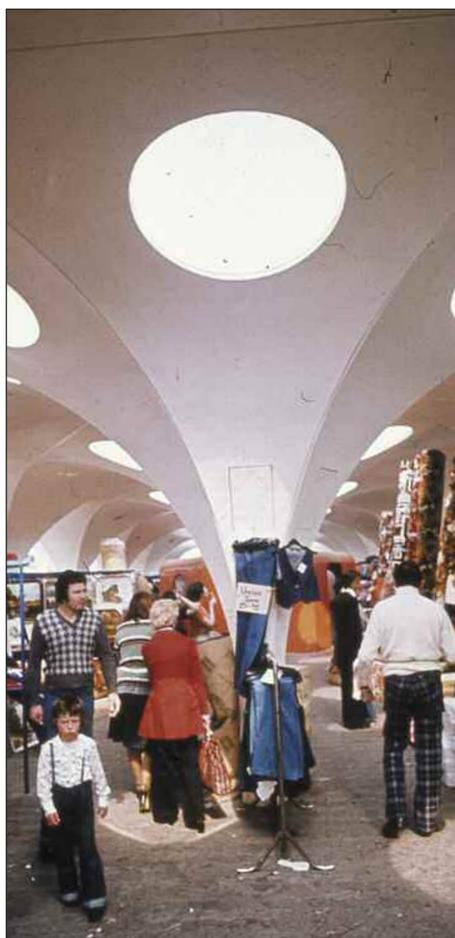
Great Linford, Off-Licence Post Office and Stores



Solar Court, Great Linford



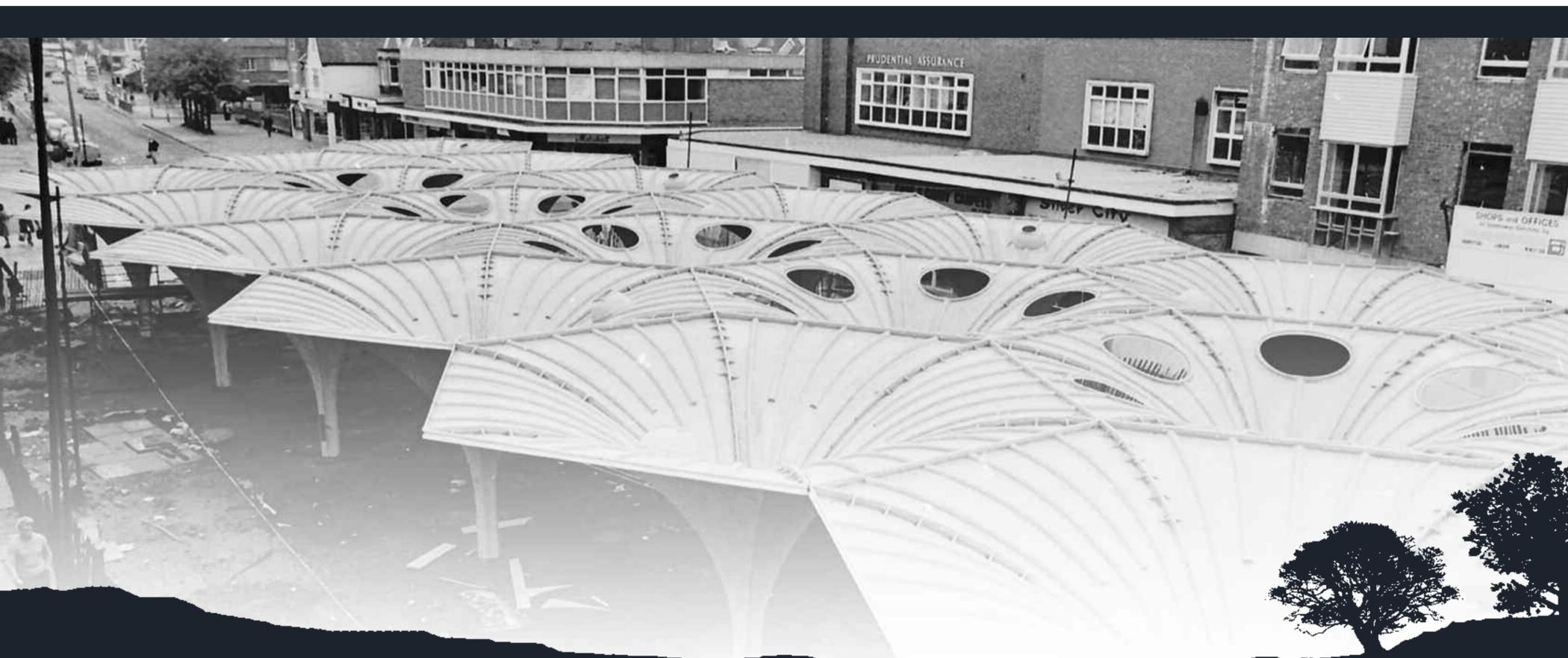
Bletchley's Covered Market



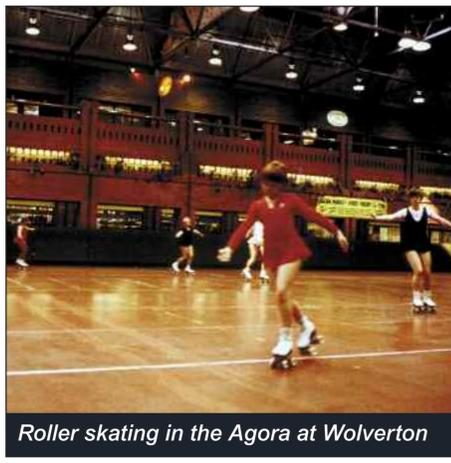
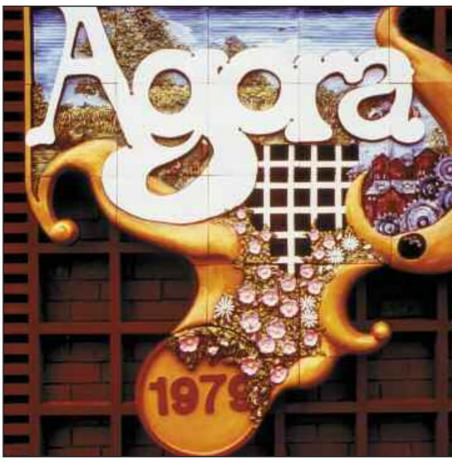
The post-war period saw a rapid expansion of Bletchley with some national chains taking shops along Bletchley Road, renamed Queensway in honour of the Queen's visit in 1966. When Milton Keynes began to be built Queensway was the major shopping destination – there was even a Fine Fare supermarket – and remained so until the City Centre shopping was opened in late 1978.

There had been a weekly general market in Bletchley for many years, but it had no permanent location and so it was decided to build a covered market in Queensway. A section of road was pedestrianised and mushroom-like structures built to provide shelter for the market stalls and create a public open space.

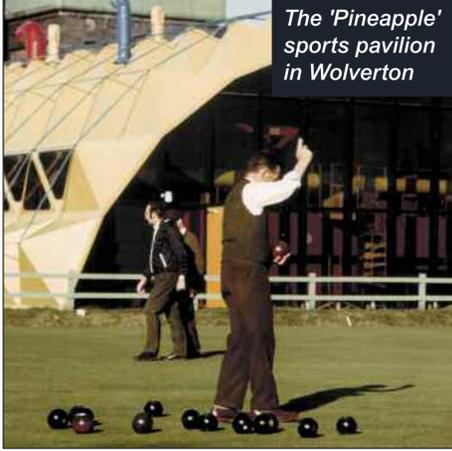
It wasn't a success, not least because the new development at the far end of Queensway attracted shoppers away from the area. After a fire the market was demolished. There is still a small street market held along Queensway.



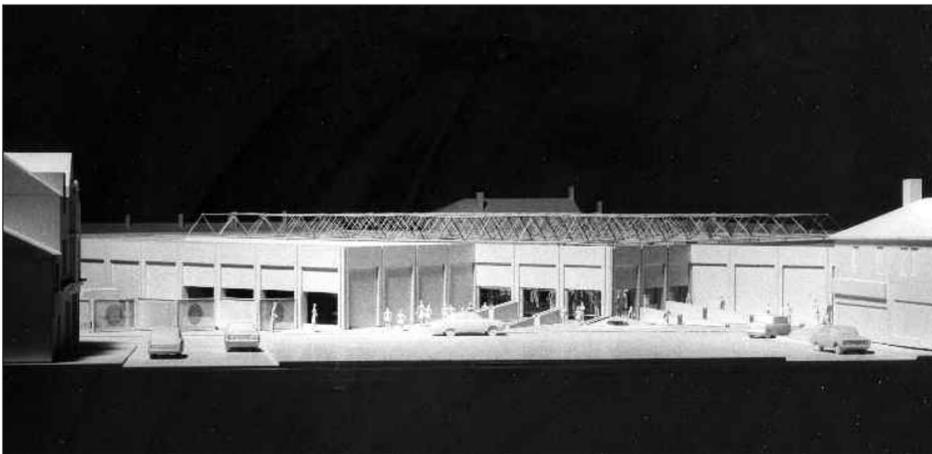
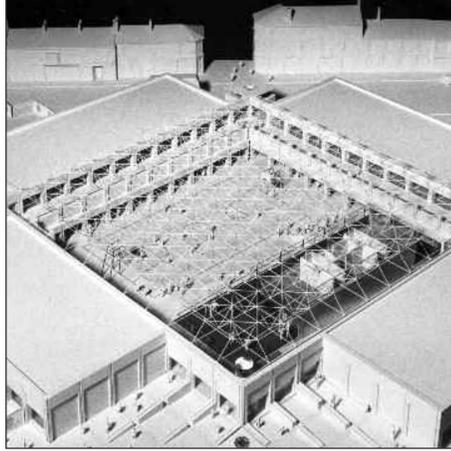
Building the City



Roller skating in the Agora at Wolverton



The 'Pineapple' sports pavilion in Wolverton



Wolverton

The Development Corporation gave Wolverton 'The Pineapple', a futuristic, bright yellow, sports pavilion which was at the Sports Club's ground. The design was considered unsatisfactory although young people appreciated the discos that were held there – to the annoyance of the neighbours!

After a short time the Corporation agreed to replace it with a more conventional brick structure and a farmer in Somerset bought the building.

In the late 1970s Radcliffe Street was cut in two when houses and businesses between Church and Buckingham Streets were demolished to make way for a brick shopping centre called The Agora.

For a time its large internal area hosted the weekly market and 'the agro', as it was known by local young people, was a major draw for roller skating.

The unloved building still dominates the area, but in 2015, there are plans to knock it down, replace it with housing and reinstate Radcliffe Street.



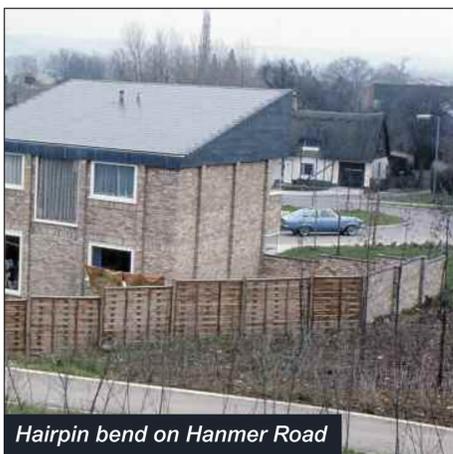
Simpson



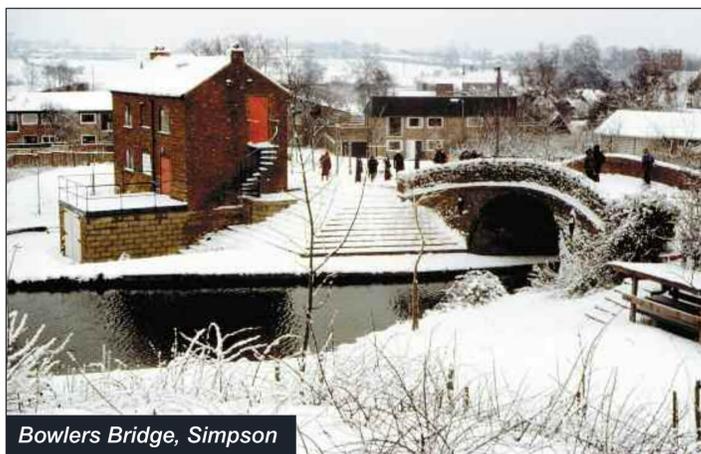
Linear Park, Simpson



Hanmer Road, Simpson



Hairpin bend on Hanmer Road



Bowlers Bridge, Simpson

The small village of Simpson, called Siwinstone in the 11th century, is recorded in the Domesday Book. Its location between the canal and a river prone to flooding restricted the available land for new development. The building of the H9 Groveway grid road cut it off from its traditional neighbour Woughton.

The existing school, which was shared by the two villages, was on the Woughton Park side and Simpson got a new school, now known as the Charles Warren Academy. Mr Warren, the owner of Simpson House and a substantial landowner, is also commemorated in the naming of one of the Corporation's earliest developments, Warren Bank, located on the gardens of Simpson House.

The early '70s housing at Hanmer Road was another example of mono-pitch roof design and was considered an attractive purchase by those employed at the nearby Open University and Hoechst (now Intervet).

Before the H9 was built, the bus from Newport Pagnell to Bletchley had to negotiate the sharp corner by the thatched cottage shown in the photo.



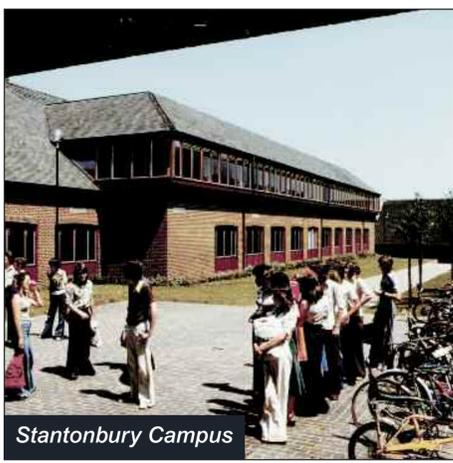
Stantonbury

Stanton High, Stanton Low and Stantonbury were local names long before Milton Keynes Development Corporation came along and called one of the northern grid squares Stantonbury.

The Barre family ruled the manor of Stanton which, by the 13th century was known as Stanton Barreor. The name evolved to Stanton Barry and eventually Stantonbury.

Some of the land was used to build schools and a Leisure Centre, including a swimming pool and theatre, to serve the growing population in the north of the area. Stantonbury Campus, which opened in 1974, was the first new secondary school in Milton Keynes.

Housing developed to include a mix of for-sale and Corporation owned properties in a variety of styles. Blocks of conventional double-pitched roofs over white walls can be found in one area while the mono-pitch for-sale housing in Ashfield reflects the earlier mono-pitched roofs at Galley Hill.



Stantonbury Campus



Ashfield, Stantonbury

Stantonbury Campus, which opened in 1974, was the first new secondary school in Milton Keynes.



Stantonbury Campus, opened 1974

