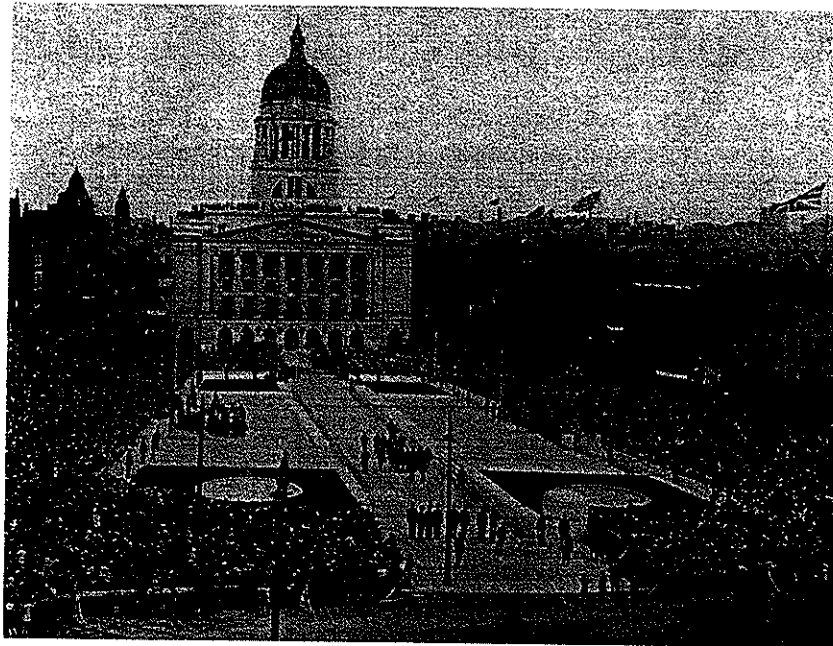


## 6

## The City Centre, the Suburbs and the Cinema-Building Boom

### Urban Redevelopment, High-Class Consumption and the Construction of the Ritz

If the Ritz cinema showcased the talents of its organist Jack Helyer, it was also seen as a showcase for the city itself. It was built as a result of the 'massive modernisation programme' that the Corporation embarked on after 1920, when its bid for a boundary extension was refused. Alongside its substantial house-building programme, the Corporation also undertook a monumental remaking of the town centre, the fulcrum of which was shifted to the Old Market Square and a new council house opposite which the Ritz was eventually built.



An 'aristocratic attitude': the official opening of the Council House, 1929

However, the cost of the project caused a public outcry. Estimated at half a million pounds, it was seen as a waste of money when there were more pressing civic responsibilities. Surprisingly for a period in which the local papers tried to maintain a sense of civic consensus, controversy raged in the local press over issues of public space and social exclusion that continued well into the 1930s. Opposition did not stop the construction work but, even in reports of the official opening of the Council House by the Prince of Wales in May 1929, there was still a concern about the exclusion of the public concealed within the rhetoric about the greatness of the city. The NDG noted, for example, that:

A modification of the arrangements affecting the general public had to be made at the last minute. It was originally intended to permit spectators to utilise the Processional way [which occupied the space of the old market and stood directly in front of the new council house] shortly after the Prince had passed along but the main parade was not in readiness for general use, and the public was not permitted to pass the barricade.<sup>1</sup>

The concrete beneath the slabs, it seemed, had not set properly, and although it was firm enough for the ceremonial party to walk along, it supposedly had not set sufficiently for the public to walk on and they were kept behind barricades.

Controversy also resurfaced only a few months later when the viewing permits allowing members of the public to look around the Council House were withdrawn, apparently due to the damage that they were causing to the interior of the building. Numerous letters of complaint flooded into the local press, and the general tone of these is captured by the quote: 'Each time I see the building the more I hate it, and those people connected with it.'<sup>2</sup> Correspondents were incensed that, as ratepayers, they had financed the building and yet were prevented from entering it. They also objected, as before, that the Corporation had spent so much money on a building for its own aggrandisement rather than on other projects to benefit the public more generally.

For the Corporation, however, the Council House was its most impressive building and it was actively promoted. Indeed, its very construction was an act of self-promotion, designed to present Nottingham as a modern, progressive city. It was therefore accorded considerable space in the *Nottingham Official Handbook*, a volume produced by the Corporation to attract people and investment to the city. Under a singularly inappropriate heading, given the circumstances, 'The Principal Public Buildings', are four pages on the Council House, while other buildings are given about a page each.<sup>3</sup>

In this way, the Council House functioned as a synecdoche for the Corporation more generally, and it became the focal point of both criticism and praise for its activities. For example, the image of the Council House was used to illustrate both a newspaper article on a week of national radio programmes about Nottingham,<sup>4</sup> and the cover of the city's official handbook.<sup>5</sup> However, in 1933, the Corporation also took out a libel case against a national magazine which had contrasted the luxury and beauty of the Council House with the city's poor housing and economic decline.<sup>6</sup>

The Council House was therefore a contested image, but it also functioned as such on account of the ways in which it was produced out of a more general contestation of

urban space. The plans for the Council House not only involved the construction of a building, but the redefinition of the whole of the Old Market Square which became the site of the processional way and formal gardens. In the process, this redefinition of the square required the removal of the daily open-air market and the annual Goose Fair, both of which had been on the site for centuries. The outdoor market was converted into an indoor market that was located within a purpose-built site that stood adjacent to the new bus station to the north of the city centre, while Goose Fair was moved to the Forest Recreation Ground, well away from the city centre. In some ways, this move eventually benefited the fair, enabling it to expand, but it also changed its meanings in significant ways.

Their removal was necessary to the Corporation, who believed that they conveyed the wrong connotations. Their presence in the centre of the city, it was argued, made Nottingham look like a provincial market town rather than the modern and progressive city that the Corporation wanted to promote, and this was made clear by the language that was used to describe the site in the *Nottingham Official Handbook*: 'the Old Market Square, formally tenanted by a picturesque medley of canvas stalls, is now laid out in broad marble pavements'.<sup>7</sup> The word 'picturesque' conveys the image of a quaint, old-fashioned and probably rural small town while the 'broad marble pavements' imply a grand, imposing city, suggestive of the classical polis.

Newspaper reports, however, suggested that the removal of the market would lead to the economic decline of the area, and the Corporation had to work hard to ensure its economic prosperity. In 1930, the NEP reported plans for a series of concerts that were to be held in the square and for more buses to use it as a terminus. Previously, most buses from the north of the city had terminated to the north of the square and, as we have seen, it was partly for that reason that cinemas and other places of leisure, entertainment and consumption had formed a culture zone there. By 1933, however, all but three of the Corporation's bus routes (or at least those serving the local area) terminated in the Old Market Square,<sup>8</sup> and this demonstrates the Corporation's determination to shift the focus of the city.

Prior to the construction of the Council House, the square had functioned as a central location within the city, but it did so in different ways and for different social groups after 1929. In addition to the market, the square had previously been the site of the old exchange building which housed small shops and the Council Chamber. There was also a shambles, where the butchers' shops were located and, according to the NDG in 1926, these 'open shops in the Shambles ... have long offered good taste'.<sup>9</sup> This mix of shops meant that the area addressed the needs of a general public. However, the cost of the new Council House was in part offset by higher rents in the spaces that replaced the old exchange building, and only the National Provincial Bank, Stapletons the Drapers, and Burtons High Class Food Shop remained in the new building.<sup>10</sup> Most of the other stores had been offered accommodation, but found the rent prohibitively high, and they all relocated.

The notable exception here were the butchers who were not offered accommodation in the new building. Their absence meant that the only remaining food shop in the square

was an exclusive one, with very different connotations and customers from those who had used the square to purchase their daily provisions. These developments therefore opened the way for the area to be colonised by new types of shops and facilities, and this had been clearly factored into the Corporation's plans for the redevelopment of the square. The new exchange building had been designed to house a large number of shops, and at one stage of the planning process, the Estates Committee of the Council had even proposed that the new building should house only shops. This proposal was roundly criticised in both the editorials and the letters pages of the local press and, eventually, the Corporation rethought its plans and reinstated the mayoral rooms and the Council Chamber into their designs. However, the provision for shops was still very different to that of the old exchange building. The new shops were housed in an arcade in the Italian piazza style, which was designed to convey an impression of elegance and high fashion.

The square was also home to a department store, Griffin and Spalding, which strengthened its appeal as a place of high-income consumption. The department store is mentioned in the *Nottingham Official Yearbook* for 1937, where it is described as 'the shopping rendezvous of the East Midlands. It is at this store fashionable Nottingham assembles to do its buying'.<sup>11</sup> This clearly identifies the store's status and image as a place of upper-class consumption not only for the city, but also for the region as a whole. Indeed, it implies that Nottingham and the East Midlands were virtually synonymous. Other stores around the square were also designed to attract these groups and there was a preponderance of drapers, milliners and high-class grocery shops.

This redevelopment was also connected to the Corporation's slum clearance programmes, particularly towards the north-western area of the square which was to become the site of Nottingham's premier 1930s' cinema, the Ritz. Located just off the Old Market Square, the site was in a prime location for commercial development. In addition to nearby bus routes, the construction of the Council House had produced a locus which would not only be conducive to the presence of a luxury cinema, but would also be enhanced by its presence. As a result, in 1931, plans for the Ritz were put forward by S. W. Gibbons, a local businessman who owned a large amount of property in the area condemned under the new slum clearance programme.<sup>12</sup> However, Gibbons did not own all the property in the area, and his original plans had to be scaled down. None the less, these initial plans had been extremely ambitious, and referred to as 'a transformation ... within a stone's throw of the heart of the city' that would seat 3,000 people and provide car parking for 1,000.<sup>13</sup> The car parking alone indicates that Gibbons hoped to attract wealthy audiences.

Gibbons' plans were put before the Corporation two weeks after the reports of these plans in the local press in late November 1931. In December 1931, the Housing Committee agreed to take the area out of the scheme in the light of the proposal for the new cinema, although they had approved the slum clearance plan in March of the same year. The rescinding of the clearance order demonstrates that, unlike the Long Row Picture House in the 1910s, the Ritz was not seen as a threat to the image that the Corporation envisaged for the square. On the contrary, it was considered a very valuable addition to this image that was actively supported and encouraged.

Although Gibbons' original ambitions had been scaled down, the Ritz still became Nottingham's premier cinema when it opened. In the 1920s, the Elite on Upper Parliament Street had fulfilled this function, but was quickly eclipsed by the Ritz. In part, this was due to the fact that the Ritz belonged to a local chain, County Cinemas, while the Elite was independently owned. In a 1935 article on the falling profits of the Elite, it was claimed that independent cinemas would soon be forced by economic necessity to merge with the big syndicates. The scaled-down Ritz still had 2,500 seats (rather than the original 3,000), and there was no other cinema in the city with a larger capacity. The Ritz also had its own café, restaurant, ballroom, crush halls and rotunda for around 700 people. The pretensions of the building were also demonstrated by its design, for which Gibbons had hired the London architects Verity and Beverley, rather than using local firms as was common at the time, and by its ability to host theatrical productions and a full orchestra.<sup>14</sup> The Conacher organ was claimed to be one of the largest in the country, and the internal décor was deemed to be tasteful and artistic: 'the dominant tones in the auditorium are green and gold and lend a light, airy aspect to the building'.<sup>15</sup>

However, as we shall argue, while the construction of the Council House was seen as the product of an arrogant and oppressive Corporation, the Ritz was seen very differently. The Council House was claimed to be based on an 'aristocratic attitude'<sup>16</sup> but the Ritz, like other cinemas of the period, despite the fact that it was so clearly designed to appeal to a wealthy upper-class audience, was also seen as a democratic space that not only welcomed the public, but was actually also made for them.

### Coming to Terms with Suburbia

The Corporation's ambitious five-year slum clearance programme which provided the impetus for the building of the Ritz also created the conditions for the extraordinary level of cinema building in the period. The programme ran from 1929 to 1934, resulting in the host of new suburbs that sprang up around Nottingham.<sup>17</sup> It is common to think of the 1950s and 1960s as 'the suburb's golden age'<sup>18</sup> but the process of suburbanisation can be traced back about 200 or 300 years.<sup>19</sup> The development of rail and tram networks in late Victorian England, however, prompted their most decisive establishment and enabled the upper and lower middle class and skilled artisans to distance themselves from the social dangers associated with the 19th-century city.<sup>20</sup> By the 1930s, these suburban developments were not simply for the middle classes.<sup>21</sup> Slum clearance resulted in the relocation of working-class families to the suburbs, although the largest single group to inhabit council estates were the more respectable working class, themselves displaced by ex-slum dwellers.

Despite its centrality to the transformation of the city in the 20th century, Silverstone argues that 'Suburbia has remained curiously invisible in accounts of modernity'.<sup>22</sup> However, this supposed 'invisibility' needs some unpacking. Rather than being simply 'invisible', suburbia has instead been a continual source of anxiety and discomfort in accounts of modernity, almost a repressed 'other' that structures the discourse. Even this would be somewhat inaccurate: rather than being repressed, it has actually repeatedly returned to trouble critics.<sup>23</sup> As Hall notes, suburban developments 'were all universally

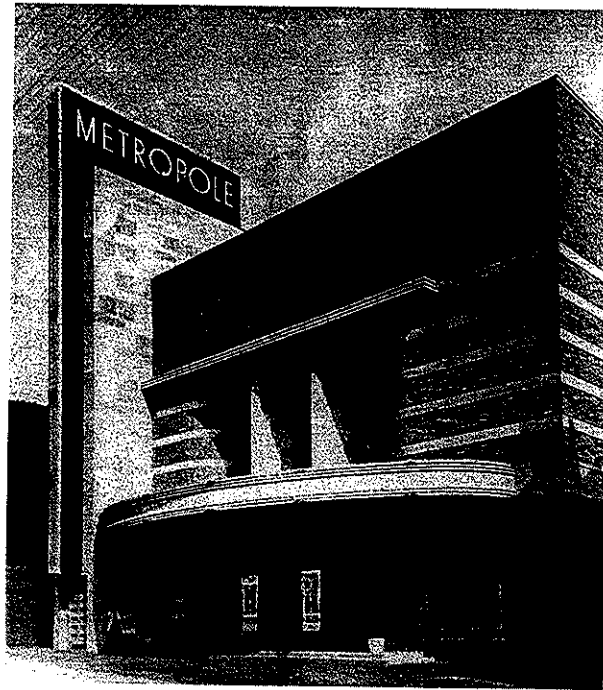
derided and condemned', although he tempers the term 'universal' with the acknowledgment that 'the prosecutors were all upper-middle class and the offenders were mostly lower-middle class'.<sup>24</sup> The common complaint against the suburbs, apart from the simple accusations of bad taste that frequently surface in these accounts, is one of cultural decline. Fishman and others, for example, have represented suburbia as a flight from the public, political life of the city,<sup>25</sup> while Harris and Larkham argued that it is characterised by 'a singular search for ... privacy and control'.<sup>26</sup> The result, it is claimed, is a retreat from socially minded public notions of politics to a 'politics based on self-interest and grounded in defensive anxiety'.<sup>27</sup>

This opposition also underpinned the modernist obsession with the public spaces of the city, such as those represented by Eisenstein (see Part Two). Here the modernist avant-garde not only identifies with a fantasy of the 'popular' to oppose the middlebrow, but also identifies with a fantasy of urban public spaces for the same ends. In other words, they privilege urban public spaces over suburban domesticity, which is frequently presented as the epitome of a feminised, middlebrow culture. These oppositions also feature in the numerous accounts that associate suburbia with consumption and conformity. For many critics, the suburban experience is, as we have seen, one of anxiety, which its inhabitants seek to solve through consumption: 'Private property and fresh air'.<sup>28</sup> Anxious about their position in the world, the suburbanites are also supposed to be anxious about their identities and they look to commodities to secure a sense of identity. However, this solution is not only supposed to be illusory but the debate frames the problem in such a way that residents of the suburbs cannot win. As Vance Packard observes, in these debates, suburban residents are placed in an impossible dilemma in which they are simultaneously accused of displaying status panic and conformity.<sup>29</sup> No matter whether they try to fit in or to distinguish themselves, they are seen as equally contemptible by most critics.

It also important to acknowledge the extent to which these conceptions of suburbia present it, as a gendered space, a space that is defined as feminine through its opposition to the masculine world of the urban public sphere. However, the politics of this gendering of suburban space needs some unpacking. While some feminist critics have seen suburbia as part of a political process designed to contain women within the domestic sphere of the home and the bourgeois nuclear family,<sup>30</sup> others have emphasised the complexity and contradictions of the suburban experience of women. They have analysed the active ways in which women produced new modes of sociality within these locations and through consumption.<sup>31</sup> It is also worth remembering the extent to which, as Joanne Hollows has noted, early feminist accounts of both femininity in general, and suburban femininity in particular, often reproduced the masculine values of the mass-culture critics discussed above.<sup>32</sup> In short, femininity itself was seen as a problem to which masculinity was often presented as the solution, and the horror with which many critics, whether feminist or not, viewed the suburbs was often specifically due to the sense that it was a space dominated by women and domestic values.<sup>33</sup>

In other words, suburbia was demonised precisely through its association with femininity which can be seen in every stage of the attack: it is a withdrawal from the

The Metropole,  
Mansfield Road,  
Sherwood: 'luxury in  
suburbia'



masculine public sphere into the feminine private sphere of the domestic home; and, like femininity, it is associated with the supposedly 'trivial' world of consumption rather than the active masculine world of production. Indeed, it is a space that is, as Fishman claims, 'founded on the primacy of the family and domestic life',<sup>34</sup> and it is this very feature that is seen to prove its status as a flight from the public, political life of the city. However, rather than seeing this world as apolitical, it might be worth bearing in mind the old feminist adage that 'the personal is political', and not simply because it is that to which women are confined and within which they are oppressed. For example, in another context, while Elsaesser has criticised melodrama as a form on the grounds that it has 'resolutely refused to understand social change in other than private contexts and emotional terms [which results in] a lamentable ignorance of the properly social and political dimensions of these changes and their causality',<sup>35</sup> Angela Partington has roundly criticised this position on the grounds that the supposed depoliticisation that Elsaesser so deplors is only 'a consequence of the critic's class and gender-specific notions' of politics. As Partington puts it, for critics such as Elsaesser: 'The experiences of working-class women, in which conflict and change are inevitably "private and emotional", are relegated to the realms of "escape", rather than reconciled with the "properly social and political".'<sup>36</sup>

As a result, these critiques of suburbia were not limited to the modernist avant-garde and the mass-culture critics. As Hollows has pointed out, it remains deeply ingrained

not only within certain varieties of feminism but also cultural studies, and particularly its conception of subcultural resistance. In most cases, the supposedly 'dominant' culture from which these subcultures are differentiated is not that of the owners of the means of production, but rather the suburban domesticity of their parent cultures.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, these criticisms of suburbia can even be found in the origins of cultural studies. For example, as Silverstone has argued, Raymond Williams claimed that suburbia 'depended on developments in media technologies, pre-eminently radio, television and the telephone, to compensate for loneliness and distance, as well as to make mobilization possible'.<sup>38</sup> Williams can be read somewhat differently<sup>39</sup> and the position that Silverstone describes can be seen as putting the chicken before the egg. Silverstone starts from the assumption that suburbia was founded upon loneliness and isolation to which media technology offered some consolation, but it could also be argued that suburbanisation took place exactly because the presence of transportation and communications prevented loneliness and isolation from ever being a factor in the first place.

At least, this claim can be made of the suburban developments of the late 19th century. What is interesting here is that most of these attacks are not directed against the suburbs *per se*, but rather at the cultures and values of those who willingly moved to them. Although loneliness was not a condition for those who had been able to move to suburbs in the 19th century, it was a condition for the working classes who moved to Nottingham's new suburban estates as a result of the slum clearance programmes.<sup>40</sup> It was the latter group who needed communications systems such as cinema to offset this sense of isolation and loneliness.

### Constructing an Identity in Suburbia: Slum Clearance and Communal Space

As Turkington argues, the major problem with the public housing programmes of the inter-war period was that 'the local authorities gave little time or attention to the provision of amenities and to the development of a sense of community on the new estates'.<sup>41</sup> This is also borne out by the evidence from T. Cecil Howitt, the architect of the Nottingham estates.<sup>42</sup> His priorities were primarily aesthetic, and he carefully planned the houses to be as spacious and light as possible. He incorporated existing mature trees into his schemes, as well as differing land levels, and he tried to ensure that there was as much greenery and open space as possible. However, there was no sense that the estates were created to form a community. Space was sometimes allocated for a parade of shops, which were designated as a 'special feature' on which surrounding roads converged. However, Howitt does not refer to any other indoor facilities. At the Sherwood estate, a shopping centre was introduced part of the way through the building programme, but on some estates there do not seem to have been any shops. The experience of Nottingham therefore supports Turkington's claim that 'in the early stages of municipal housing the general opinion seems to have been that all that was necessary was to transfer people to new estates where they could live in labour saving homes, and spend their time in their gardens'.<sup>43</sup>

All the estates had a planned recreation ground, space allocated for allotments and some of the larger ones incorporated a school. The estates were therefore clearly planned as a reaction to the housing that they replaced, namely high-density housing with only tiny yards or a street outdoors. They were also designed as a response to certain notions of the 'urban' and therefore included an attempt to integrate the benefits of the rural world of 'nature' (gardens, green spaces and allotments) but little in the way of modern, urban amusements or leisure activities. However, despite being cramped and unsanitary, urban developments did foster a sense of community: their residents often lived within one local area most of their lives and consequently developed strong relationships and support networks. It seems that this loss of community was not a concern to the Corporation's inter-war planners, if indeed these suburbs were not specifically designed to transform the cultural lives of these groups. The national initiative to revolutionise housing was part of a major cultural shift, and the way of life that the new estates sought to foster was not one based on notions of community, but one that placed the domestic and familial at its centre. As Turkington puts it, 'Community development was to remain the poor relation of Corporation suburbia throughout the inter-war years.'<sup>44</sup>

In retrospect, the Council has claimed that 'Great care was taken in planning the [Aspley] estate and provision was made not only for houses but for all those other things that are required to make a complete town – such as churches, shops and places of amusement.'<sup>45</sup> However, there was no mention in the original plans of either a church or a cinema, and this was true of all the Corporation-built estates of the 1920s and 1930s. The most significant absence, however, was the lack of public houses, which were actively excluded. In the 1930s, many sections of the middle classes still identified alcohol, and particularly the public house, as a social threat. As a result, despite being the traditional centre of community life, and probably even for this very reason, there were few licensed premises on the new estates. Turkington, for example, states that pubs were banned from the inter-war Corporation estates in Liverpool<sup>46</sup> and, in Nottingham, a major battle raged over whether licences should be granted for the new estates. An NEP article in February 1931, for example, makes it clear that the Aspley estate had no facilities for drinking alcohol, and that even an application for an off-licence had been refused, although there were already 1,900 houses on the estate and plans for another 700.<sup>47</sup> Another example was the Wollaton Park estate where an application for an off-licence was refused on the grounds that it would 'encourage secret drinking'.<sup>48</sup> In this particular instance, the Church of England Temperance Society and the British Women's Temperance Association were lined up against the licence, and their argument appears to have been about issues of class. Wollaton Park (the Corporation estate) was not granted a licence but an area of private housing, Trowell Road, Wollaton, did receive one.<sup>49</sup> The argument that 387 houses had been built within a mile of it and that more were planned contrasts vividly with the situation in Aspley, which had a considerably greater number of homes but was denied a licensed premises. One argument that was used against the granting of licences was that West Bridgford (one of Nottingham's most up-market suburbs) did not have any slums because it had no licensed premises, an argument that now seems entirely self-serving. However, temperance associations fought against licensed premises

in many of Nottingham's suburbs throughout the 1930s, and the local press contains numerous accounts of licences being refused, sometimes despite the presence of petitions from local residents who supported the application.

Other facilities such as libraries, public buildings and doctors' surgeries were also absent from the original specifications, and some of these gaps in provision were documented by the local press. For example, a 1936 article recounts plans to open a public library in Aspley some six years after people had begun to live on the estate.<sup>50</sup> Residents on the Lenton Abbey estate complained about the school, in which overcrowding was resulting in class sizes of over fifty; classes were being held in makeshift huts; and the playground was in a poor condition.<sup>51</sup> At the Aspley estate, it was difficult to see a local doctor, and the NEP reported that insurance-panel doctors were unable to obtain surgery accommodation there, despite the fact that it was a city council estate.<sup>52</sup> Transport was also a problem, and although the estate had opened in 1929, it was only in May 1930 that the NEP announced that a bus service was finally scheduled to stop there. Nor was this problem unique to Aspley, and it appears to have been common practice for transport on all the new estates to have lagged behind the house building. Thus, evidence in the local press suggests that residents of the new estates faced severe problems in the first few years due to absence of necessary facilities.

Within this context, cinemas became a significant presence within the new estates. Although they were still not classed as an amenity by the Corporation and, as we have seen, were not factored into the original plans, they did not encounter the same kind of resistance that was faced by the public houses and cinemas built within these estates during the 1930s. We found no evidence of opposition to the construction of cinemas, nor were any building applications for cinemas refused. As a result, these cinemas filled a significant gap within the cultural life of these suburbs. For example, while building on the Aspley estate began in January 1929 and the cinema did not open until December 1932, the cinema was still there before the estate had any shops and this meant that it was the only significant local amenity or communal space.<sup>53</sup>

The tone of articles on these proposed cinemas was therefore either warm or neutral. For example, a NDG article on plans for the Aspley Cinema described it as a 'facility' for the estate,<sup>54</sup> and newspaper accounts of the opening of suburban cinemas often presented them as a vital part of the suburb's infrastructure and social fabric. For example, an account of the opening of the Savoy claimed: 'With the exodus of people from the city to housing estates in the suburbs the need is being felt for amusement facilities in these areas.'<sup>55</sup> In these articles, then, each suburb was seen as a separate entity with its own need and even 'right' to entertainment, and it was an unspoken assumption that entertainment meant cinema. Certainly, no other forms of entertainment were prevalent in the 1930s' suburb: cinema was quite simply the only game in town.

Another reason that the suburbs were supposedly in 'need' of cinemas was their distance from city-centre amenities. The newspaper accounts of the opening of the Aspley cinema states confidently that: 'It has been realised that for residents in these areas to spend an evening "at the pictures" has often meant a lengthy bus journey.'<sup>56</sup> As a result, the appeal of the 'local' cinema was often presented as precisely their location, and the

implication that they were firmly tied to their community. This is clearly evident in the ways in which they were discussed and promoted within the local press, and the following quotes, for example, are typical: 'Carlton's own luxurious cinema';<sup>57</sup> 'luxury in suburbia';<sup>58</sup> 'Radford's luxury cinema';<sup>59</sup> and 'Bullwell's premier cinema'.<sup>60</sup> One account even tried to present the local as a threat to the city centre and claimed that the Aspley 'must be counted a serious rival to the houses in the centre of the city'.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, these local cinemas frequently offered more luxury than most of the city-centre cinemas, many of which were around twenty years old. However, the city-centre cinemas also had other attractions, one of which was precisely that they were in the city centre.

In other words, the suburbs changed the meaning of the city centre for those who moved out to them. Previously most people had lived and worked in close proximity to the centre, but once in the suburbs, they had a different relationship to the centre. For those in paid employment, the move to the suburbs usually placed their home at some distance from their place of work, and the resulting journeying between the two meant that few were inclined to travel into the city centre for an evening's entertainment, at least during the week. Instead, weekday leisure tended to be organised close to home. However, once the town centre was no longer convenient and local, it could also come to be seen as special and different, somewhere divorced from one's everyday surroundings. It therefore became, for many, the place of weekend entertainment and other special events, and the effort of travelling into town simply added to the sense of occasion through its distinction from the everyday.

### Notes

1. NDG, 23 May 1929.
2. NDG, 8 October 1929.
3. *Nottingham Official Handbook*, 1932.
4. NEP, 4 December 1933.
5. *Nottingham Official Handbook*, 1932.
6. NJ, 5 December 1933.
7. *Nottingham Official Handbook*, 1932.
8. NEP, 1 July 1933.
9. NDG, 20 March 1929.
10. NDG, 20 March 1929.
11. *Nottingham Official Handbook*, 1937, pp. 154-5.
12. NDG, 26 November 1931.
13. *Ibid.*
14. It should however be noted that the frontage of the Ritz was very different to that of the Elite. While the Elite had an ornate white frontage that evoked a classical marble monument, the Ritz had a much more streamlined and modern appearance. However, the difference between the two was also a difference of period. Built in the 1920s, the Elite was still mimicking the classical pretensions of many high-class theatres, while the design of the Ritz no longer felt the need to pay homage to the legitimacy of such buildings. Its lines may

- have been more streamlined but it was this very feature which announced, and celebrated, its modernity – a modernity that promised glamour, luxury and abundance.
15. NDG, 4 December 1933.
  16. NDG, 24 October 1929.
  17. This was also a response to the Town and Country Planning Acts of the inter-war period discussed by Cherry, 1996.
  18. Silverstone, 1997, p. 22.
  19. See Fishman, 1987; and Silverstone, 1997. However, the history of suburbs in Nottingham is somewhat shorter. According to Christopher Weir, it was not until after the 1845 Enclosure Act that Nottingham could expand beyond its medieval boundaries. Lenton, New Basford and New Radford were the result of industrialisation, but it was only with the 1877 Borough Extension Act that Basford, Bulwell, Sneinton, Radford and Lenton were absorbed into Nottingham: Weir, 1985, p. 122. The park was also a 19th-century development: Brand, 1984, pp. 54-75.
  20. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall point out, the middle-class images of suburban life were based on the image of a 'rural idyll', and the removal of these classes to the suburbs was designed to enable the separation of spheres and produce a 'domestic idyll'. It removed the domestic sphere from the supposedly corrupting influence of the city and its public life. See Davidoff and Hall, 1987.
  21. Judy Giles has pointed out, however, that there were conflicts and tensions between those who considered themselves to be respectable council tenants and those whom they felt were not clean and decent and hence were undeserving of a council house. Giles, 1995, pp. 85-89.
  22. Silverstone, 1997, p. 4.
  23. For accounts of these concerns, see, for example, Hall, 1996, and Carey, 1992. Accounts of modernity in the America during the 1950s and 1960s were particularly preoccupied with the problem of suburbia and the conformity that it is supposed to represent. See, for example, Keats, 1957; Reisman, 1961; and Whyte, 1956. A similar argument is also implied by Jürgen Habermas, 1989.
  24. Hall, 1996, p. 79. Oliver, Davis and Bentley also provide some good examples. D. H. Lawrence, for instance, described the suburban semi as 'horrid little mantraps'; Antony Bertram, whose book *Design* (based on his radio talks 'Design in Everyday Things') was published by Penguin in 1938, described the supposedly 'indiscriminate sprawling of our towns through ring after ring of shoddy suburb, to ribbon development and the commercial exploitation of our countryside'; William Howell, a fan of Le Corbusier and member of the design committee for the Roehampton slab blocks, claimed that they wanted to turn back the tide of suburbanisation and that 'we wouldn't want to go and live there because everything from the bright lights to art galleries, the continental restaurants, in short "life", the things one goes to the city for – it didn't seem to be happening in the suburbs'. All cited in Oliver, 'Introduction' in Oliver, Davis and Bentley, 1994.
  25. Fishman, 1987.
  26. Harris and Larkham, 1999, p. 10.
  27. Silverstone, 1997, p. 12.

28. Ibid. It should also be noted, however, that many English suburbs were not made up of private properties but rented council housing, although the growth of the inter-war suburbs did create more home-owners than ever before. Between 1919 and 1939, 28 per cent of the total houses built nationally were council houses, and this figure was even higher in Nottingham. This means that suburbia was composed of a variety of different classes, a large number of whom were not home-owners.
29. Packard, 1959.
30. See Spigel, 1992.
31. See, for example, Alison J. Clarke, 1997; and Alison J. Clarke, 1999. See also Attfield, 1989; Attfield, 1990; and Attfield, 1995.
32. See Hollows on Betty Friedan's feminist classic, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), in Hollows, 2000. See also Meyerowitz, 1994. Indeed, as Alison Light has shown, similar positions were also present in the 1930s when many upper-middle-class women began to dissociate themselves from the domestic femininity of the working and lower middle classes: 'Not surprisingly it is the "suburban" woman who is inveighed against most violently by conservatives and progressives alike, earning the scorn of both a Jan Struther and a Vera Brittan.' Light, 1991, p. 218.
33. Wylie, 1956, pp. 51-2, 77-9; and Wylie, 1958, pp. 23-4, 50, 79.
34. Fishman, 1987, p. 3.
35. Elsaesser, 1973, p. 4.
36. Partington, 1991, p. 51.
37. Hollows, 2000.
38. Silverstone, 1997, p. 10.
39. See Williams, 1974.
40. It should, however, be pointed out that inter-war council housing had a very different image from post-war council housing, if only because the rent tended to be much higher than for inner-city housing and the council regulated behaviour. Giles also stresses that, according to women's testimonies of living in suburbia, it is evident that "A home of one's own", whether it was privately rented, purchased on a mortgage or a council tenancy, was different from renting rooms.' Giles, 1995, p. 95.
41. Turkington, 1999, p. 59.
42. T. Cecil Howitt, (n.d.g.).
43. Turkington, 1999, p. 67.
44. Ibid., p. 59.
45. City of Nottingham Education Committee, 1952.
46. Turkington, 1999, p. 62.
47. NEE, 13 February 1931.
48. NEE, 13 February 1931.
49. NEN, 5 April 1934.
50. NEE, 2 June 1936.
51. NEE, 16 October 1929.
52. NEE, 26 April 1930.
53. NDG, 1 December 1932.

54. NDG, 8 July 1932.
55. NDG, 8 November 1935.
56. NDG, 12 December 1932.
57. NEE, 17 June 1936.
58. NEE, 17 June 1936.
59. NEN, 28 November 1936.
60. NEE, 12 April 1939.
61. NDG, 1 December 1932.