

## MEMORIES OF OVERTON

### Parkside

The housing estate, Parkside was originally developed from an idea first considered by Maelor Rural District Council in 1961, in order to provide properly adapted housing for the elderly.

Convinced that such a scheme would provide considerable benefits for the older people of the district, the Maelor Council commenced discussions with Flintshire County Council, who had previously expressed its willingness to collaborate with District Councils in such housing schemes as far back as 1958.

Following the publication of a joint circular from the "Ministry of Housing and Local Government" and the "Ministry of Health" on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1961 the County Council issued details of a new scheme which recognised the benefits to be obtained from grouped dwellings and laid down the conditions upon which they would be prepared to contribute funding.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1961 the County Council Scheme was revised to provide a basic contribution of £20 per annum in respect of each unit of accommodation together with an additional contribution in respect of the welfare facilities provided within that scheme.



Parkside estate was designed to consist of 18 one bedroom bungalows together (*see picture left*) with a communal laundry within a small estate which would also contain six three bedroom houses, a block of nine two bedroom flats and eight remotely sited garages.

The estate was constructed in two phases, the first phase comprising of ten bungalows and a laundry together with the houses and flats and the second phase the additional eight bungalows.

The Overton Parkside Welfare Scheme finally came to fruition and was opened by Harold Finch MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Welsh Office on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1965.

Taking a quote from the official brochure distributed on the day of the opening 'Parkside is situated on the edge of the village, quite near to the shops and all the bungalows have pleasant aspect, looking out either on the Park and cricket field, the central grassed areas or a nearby orchard.' I'm not sure that, the residents of the bungalows would have agreed with that statement, the park and cricket field were a good distance away and mainly obscured and the orchard was an over grown garden.

Each bungalow on the estate consisted of a living room, a bedroom with electric kitchen and bathroom with a fuel bunker and bin storage attached to the building

adjacent to the front door. The bedroom was accessed directly off the living room through wide sliding wooden doors and was equipped with thermostatically controlled electric under floor heating (which some occupants tried but no one ever used due to the cost). An illuminated bell push in the bedroom was connected to the warden's house and was designed for residents to summon assistance if required.

The council had considered the number of accidents which occurred through out the country from open domestic fires especially when associated to old people and therefore installed closed solid fuel room heaters in the living room. This fire also supplied hot water for the kitchen and bathroom. The bathroom was fitted with a low bath with hand rails and the toilet could have hand rails installed as an option.

Many original occupants from Parkside had grown up or had and moved from accommodation with no bathroom facilities, consequently many failed to use them for their intended purpose. One lady found going outside for coal during winter months too much of a chore and kept her coal in the bath. Cooking in the bungalows was via an electric cooker provided by the council. All door openings were made wide enough for wheel chair access.

The Council provided Parkside elderly residents with a laundry in lieu of a Common Room usually built in this type of development. The Council felt that Overton was well equipped with communal facilities and that a laundry would be more practical. The laundry was equipped with an industrial size Bendix washer/dryer along with a constant hot water supply and intended for use by the bungalow tenants.

Each bungalow was wired for the reception of television from a master aerial sited on top of the block of flats.

The old peoples housing scheme was supervised by wardens, initially a husband and wife joint part time appointment where one of them would be on call at all times to give assistance to residents of the bungalows in case of an emergency. The call bell installed in each bungalow was connected to an indicator board in the warden's house. The wardens would then act as a liaison between the various welfare services i.e. doctors, district nurse, the home help etc. The wardens salary was paid for by Flintshire County Council and at the time occupied the house rent and rate free as well as having access to a telephone to call the welfare services. The wardens were expected to maintain daily contact with all of the residents in the bungalow and keep a register of visits which was presented to the Housing Committee each month. Small tasks such as replacing tap washers and/or fuses as well as maintenance of the lawns and flower borders would become regular jobs undertaken by the warden.

Within just a few years of the official opening an additional 8 houses and 2 blocks of four flats (including four ground floor pensioner flats) were built to expand the estate.



Parkside Christmas Party 1964



Some of the helpers who made it all happen, Mrs Roberts, Mrs Murray and Mrs Clayton



**A few facts:**

**The People involved**

**Maelor Rural District Council**

Chairman: Sir Edward Hanmer Bart JP

**The Overton Housing Committee:**

Councillors Mrs M.B.Whitehouse, W J Griffiths, T Parry, G Evans.

**Architects**

Messrs Biggins and Associates, Richmond Place, Boughton, Chester

**Quantity Surveyor**

Messrs Mercer & Miller, Standwell House, City Road, Chester

**The General Contractors**

Messrs A.J Minshall Ltd, 58 Noble Street, Wem

**How much it cost:**

The total project costs, including the purchase of the land, fees, site works roads, sewers and the buildings are as followed: -

Phase I.	Ten bungalows, nine flats, six houses, communal laundry and eight garages	£52,468
Phase II.	Eight bungalows	£12,734

**Individual building costs:**

Phase I.	Bungalow	£1133
	House	£1882
	Flat	£1524
Phase II.	Bungalow	£1269

**Other costs.**

Communal Television Aerial (Serving 33 dwellings)	£268
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**Welfare facilities**

Laundry Complete	£708
Call Bell system	£275
Bath Safety Rails	£90
Closed Solid Fuel Heaters (Extra)	£275
Underfloor Heating	£501
Sliding Doors (Between Living room and bedroom in bungalow)	£240
Electric Cookers	£476
Miscellaneous	£11
Total cost	<u>£2576</u>

**Rents**

**(Exclusive of rates)**

Bungalow	19s 3d
Flat	33s 6d
House	38s 3d
Garage	6s.6d

**The Dates**

12 <sup>th</sup> June 1961	Architects appointed
2 <sup>nd</sup> May 1963	Tenders Invited
15 <sup>th</sup> May 1963	Purchase of land completed
25 <sup>th</sup> May 1963	Tender accepted
8 <sup>th</sup> July 1963	Ministry approval received
4 <sup>th</sup> September 1963	General contractors commenced on site
8 <sup>th</sup> May 1964	First three bungalows completed
24 <sup>th</sup> July 1964	Pair of houses and one further bungalow completed
7 <sup>th</sup> August 1964	Approval to negotiated tender for additional eight bungalows received from ministry
18 <sup>th</sup> August 1964	General contractors commenced work on phase II
4 <sup>th</sup> September 1964	Four houses and six further bungalows completed
20 <sup>th</sup> November 1964	Flat block completed
19 <sup>th</sup> March 1965	Phase II completed

***Thanks to Gordon Whitfield. Info from programme of the Official Opening 1965.***