MENTAL HEALTH BUILDINGS EVALUATION

Report

S3

Community reaction-
Pilot study

Sheffield
Development Project
for mentally
handicapped people

DHSS
July 1979

FOREWORD TO MENTAL HEALTH BUILDINGS EVALUATION REPORT SERIES

This report is one of a series evaluating various aspects of particular mental health buildings. There is general agreement that evaluation of buildings is a useful part of the design process, but less agreement as to the most profitable way in which to approach evaluation. The reports in this series are varied in topic and method of evaluation, but all seek to demonstrate ways in which aspects of design affect the delivery of mental health services. This requires at times some description of what service is offered, of how units are run, of operational policies and so on. Experience and reason show that buildings cannot be evaluated except in relation to the service to which they contribute.

Where relevant, reports include recommendations either on possible modifications of the situation described, or in relation to future design; where possible, cost/benefit aspects are included.

The first reports are:

S1. Basic Facts and Figures: Sheffield Development Project for Mentally Handicapped People.

S2. Children's Residential Accommodation. Policy and User Reaction: Sheffield Development Project for Mentally Handicapped People.

S3. Community Reaction to local Buildings. Pilot Study: Sheffield Development Project for Mentally Handicapped People.

Reports with the following provisional titles are planned:

S4. Children's Residential Accommodation. Brief and Design Implications: Sheffield Development Project for Mentally Handicapped People.

S5. Children's and Adult's Units at the Gloucester Centre: Peterborough Development Project for Mentally Handicapped People.

S6. Adult Day Care. Health Service Provision: Sheffield and Peterborough Development Projects for Mentally Handicapped People.

S7. Cost Comparison of Converted and Purpose-built Accommodation for Mentally Handicapped Children: Sheffield Development Project for Mentally Handicapped People.

Various reports on the Worcester Development Project for Mentally Ill People are also envisaged.

Meetings with interested parties to discuss the reports will be arranged from time to time.

Each report represents a considerable offering of time and thought from people who have helped; thanks are extended to them.

THE SHEFFIELD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE

Many of the reports in this series deal with buildings in the Sheffield Development Project. This project is described in the Sheffield Feasibility Study (1971). An Evaluation Research Group was set up in 1976 under Professor Heron to evaluate the service provided by the SDP; this did not include evaluation of the buildings. Preliminary work on establishing a programme of building evaluation is described in Sheffield Development Project: Building Evaluation Report and Future Plans (Nov 1978). In November 1978 a single report on the Sheffield buildings was planned, but reports on specific topics will now be published as soon as available, as explained in the foreward. This enables more rapid dissemination of information, greater flexibility in responding to requests for research to be done on particular topics, and the integration of concurrent relevant evaluation work elsewhere (for example, the Peterborough Development Project). This form of presentation has made it possible to concentrate initially on children's residential accommodation.

CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

At present three reports relate to children's provision at Sheffield:

S1. Basic Facts and Figures

S2. Children's Residential Accommodation: Policy and User Reaction.

S4. Children's Residential Accommodation: Design and Briefing Implications (publication September 1979)

Each of these looks at the provision from a particular point of view. Report S1 gives the numbers, dependency and location of children (and adults) with some commentary. Both Report S2 and Report S4 consider the design of Units, Report S2 from the users' perspective in the context of objectives and policies and practices of each building, and Report S4 from an architectural perspective considering design and briefing implications.

Reports S1, S2 and S3 in this series are being forwarded to people from the RHA, AHA(T), Social Services Department, Evaluation Research Group and DHSS who contributed at some stage to be Buildings Evaluation programme; a wider circulation is anticipated. Report S2, 'Children's Residential Accommodation: Policy and User Reaction', was discussed in draft with many of the people participating in the study in order for them to comment prior to publication. The published Report takes into account these comments. The Tables in Reports S1 and S2 were cleared in advance of publication by Dr Alan Martindale of the Sheffield Case Register.

MENTAL HEALTH BUILDINGS EVALUATION

SHEFFIELD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE

REPORT S3. COMMUNITY REACTION TO LOCAL BUILDINGS

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JULY 1979

Summary

In line with the move to community-based care for the mentally handicapped ("Better Services for the mentally handicapped", 1971) most facilities provided as part of the Sheffield Development Project have been sited in the community.

The literature shows that local reaction to such provision can be hostile (eg. Nelson, 1978) and some such hostility at the planning stage is recorded in the Sheffield local press. This preliminary study investigates the later reaction of a sample of 20 Sheffield residents to nearby new facilities for moderately to severely mentally handicapped people.

No direct opposition was shown and most respondents felt positively about local provision. Possible reasons for the different degree to which the various units are favourably viewed are discussed. Half the respondents had been to an open day. Information available to local residents before a unit is completed was felt to be inadequate and lack of such information had caused worries. Respondents near the one unopened unit had no clear idea of who the hostel was for.

There was a general belief that it is better for mentally handicapped people to live in a residential area, rather than in the peaceful isolation which the respondents of Locker et al (1978) assumed was appropriate.

It appeared that the more a unit resembled local housing, the better it was liked. Unusual design features occasionally led local residents to reason that mentally handicapped people must need "special" housing. Thus some of the destigmatising potential of community-based facilities can be lost.

Further possible work is suggested.

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Further possible work is suggested.

Background

The Feasibility Study Report (1971) proposed (p.iii) "a full range of services for the mentally handicapped should be developed with the object of enabling the mentally handicapped person to live as much a part of the community as his disabilities allow ...." and (p.5) "The needs of the mentally handicapped person and his family are not fundamentally different from the requirements of the rest of the community ... segregation of this group of people by provision of an entirely separate service is undesirable". Thus, in Sheffield, a series of small hostels, some run by the Local Authority, some by the Health Authority, have been established, the aim being to move mentally handicapped people to these from the old, large, outlying hospitals.

The aims of the Sheffield project in bringing the mentally handicapped to live in the community rather than hiding away those that required residential care in large institutions in country areas, is in accordance with the principles of the government White Paper (1971) "Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped" which stressed that the shift in emphasis from care in hospital to care in the community should be accelerated.

In evaluating the Sheffield project, much attention has been focused on the new units themeselves both in the Evaluation Research Group's series of reports on the service provided and in the Mental Health Buildings Evaluation series of reports on the buildings. However little attention is given to the local people's reaction to them. ERG Report No.3 "Voluntary Services for the Mentally Handicapped" approaches this topic by looking at the wide range of voluntary services provided in Sheffield. These services, provided by a large number of organisations and individuals were not spread evenly among the recipients: childrens' residential hospitals received help from organisations but had no individual volunteers; the old adult hostels received help mainly from organisations while Lightwood House received help from a wide variety of local people; of the hostels, characterised as the "traditional mode of expressing 'community care' policies for those mentally handicapped people not requiring the support of a full hospital service fairly close at hand" two received no help or involvement at all, while the other 8 hostels then open (old and extra-project hostels were also included) received help mainly from individuals. The authors cite evidence indicating it is unusual for individuals to approach a hospital

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independently; it may not be the same for hostels and, they point out, it would be interesting to study the "factors that give rise to individuals 'hearing about' and subsequently offering help to hostels" also "how 'community based' units scour the neighbourhood for help" ... " a tenants association helps at least one health service unit in Sheffield and the idea of 'welcoming' groups of local neighbours to look around on an informal basis and meet residents has proved worthwhile in the case of the most recently opened hostel" (Warminster Road).

That the new hospital and some of the new hostels attract individuals is encouraging, indicating that some members of the community (although not necessarily local) are accepting. But why should some hostels receive no help at all and others varying amounts. There is no information on the characteristics of hostels that attract individual volunteers.

Resistance from some residents is often evident in the siting of new accommodation for mentally handicapped people (eg. Nelson, 1978 p65) and yet policies of community care assume that attitudes towards the mentally handicapped are such that siting facilities in the community will encourage/care BY the community as opposed to care merely IN the community. Various factors relating to people's acceptance of a new group home for mentally handicapped adults have been studied (Sigelman, 1976). More favourable attitudes to mentally handicapped people were expressed by the young and middle aged compared to older people; by blacks and self-styled liberals and by people who rented rather than owned their homes. Sigelman pointed out that these expressed attitudes do not necessarily mean acceptance in practice, and she suggests that, since informing local people can lead to organised opposition, it is perhaps better to say nothing until the place is opened. This "low profile" entrance can be contrasted (Weber, 1978) with the "high profile" entrance, educating anyone who will have contact with the new home, involving a planned, intensive, rapidly executed educational effort. Weber discusses a large number of factors which have been found, by experience and observation, to relate to acceptance of group homes for a variety of clients. High resistance might be expected, for instance, from attractive, neat neighbourhoods comprising mainly single family households and from areas where there may be other group homes that may be fearful of being a "human service ghetto". Low resistance might be expected in areas where there is a rapid turnover (high mobility), so people will have developed tolerance

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for neighbourhood changes, or if the new home is for infants: "everybody likes babies". He further points out that a powerful neutraliser of neighbourhood anxiety is to have bright, reasonable, enthusiastic group home parents available to answer questions (rather than an agency administrator who is not going to live at the home).

Little literature exists on community acceptance or opposition to new hostels for the mentally handicapped. However, one recent study in London (Locker et al. 1978) did not find widespread opposition to the hostel; 60% of their sample were more favourable than opposed. People with an inadequate understanding of mental handicap were more likely to feel negatively about the hostel (Pushkin, 1976, found 2/3 of the people she talked to did not know what the term 'mentally subnormal' meant) but no socio-demographic variable was found to be associated with expressed attitude towards the hostel. Providing more information about mental handicap then would, they concluded, result in more people reacting favourably to the hostel.

Local Reaction at the Time of Planning

In Sheffield, there is a good variety of new community based hostel and hospital provision. One (Ryegate) is a conversion from an old house; there are new buildings on new estates, in some cases (Wensley Street) designed as a set of houses; in others (Warminster Road) the hostel is more obviously different from the surrounding housing although erected at the same time. Some hostels have been built in more established areas: again sometimes looking like a set of houses (Arbourthorne) and sometimes looking quite unlike an ordinary house (Rutland Road). The majority of these are now open and working, while a few are still in the process of being completed or commissioned.

The local press shows that there were some objections from local people at the time of planning.

In May 1975 (The Star 15 5 75) an action committee of 50 neighbours was formed to protest against the plans for the mentally handicapped children's hostel on Tapton Crescent Road; the press reported that residents felt the hostel would reduce the value of their homes and that it would break a convenant on property.

In January 1975 (The Star 9 1 75) a 45 name petition was sent to the Department of Health protesting against the siting of a new hostel on Rutland Road. Residents were concerned that the area was becoming a "ghetto" of mental aid centres, with three centres for the mentally handicapped, a probation centre and two remand homes all close by. The area was not felt to be suitable for a

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residential home, having already more problems than it could cope with and not being a typical residential area.

At around the same time (The Star 22 1 75) residents at Woodhouse complained against the siting of a hospital hostel there. "It's not that we are against mentally handicapped people but we have enough things in the area already, like the tip and the social security building. We are worried that we will have to watch our children all the time and that the value of our houses will fall".

Aims of this Study

This report presents the results of a small scale preliminary study which was conducted to assess residents' attitudes to the new provision now that it is mostly established. The interviews were conducted in March and April 1979. Since this was to be a preliminary investigation, it was limited to a total of 20 interviews covering four areas, each with some provision for moderately or severly handicapped people. Each interviewee lived close to such a building. The areas were:

Area 1. Round Tapton Crescent Road, to find out present reactions to the now built but not yet commissioned hostel and to the Ryegate Centre which is sited close by.

Area 2. Round Rutland Road, to find out present reaction to the now almost completed hostel. The new adult training centre, Woodfold, is also close by and was also discussed.

Both these areas involved looking at new buildings in established areas (the residential unit at Ryegate is a conversion, however), so the following two areas were chosen because the surrounding housing, or at least some of it, was also new.

Area 3. Wensley Street area, around Woodcliffe adult hostel, open about two years, and the largest hospital hostel consisting of two 24 bed hostels facing each other, each looking like three individual houses.

Area 4. Warminster Road area where the hostel, open around 2 years, and the new estate, are sited across the road from an established residential area.

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THE INTERVIEWS

In each area, interviewees were approached by an experienced recruiter. An approximately equal representation on the following factors was requested: sex, age (between 20 to 40/over 40); class (ABC_1/C_2DE); housing (Owned/rented); whether they had young children at home or not (all respondents classed as having young children living at home had children under 12 years). Obviously, it was impossible to obtain an equal representation on all factors in all areas, the area around Ryegate comprising mainly of ABC_1s who owned their own homes while the area around Woodcliffe comprised mainly of C_2DEs who rented their homes. The total breakdown was as follows:

SEX	males	7
	females	13
CLASS	ABC_1	8
	C_2DE	12
AGE	20-40 yrs	8
	over 40 yrs	12
HOUSING	owned	10
	rented	10
CHILDREN	young children at home	8
	no young children at home	12

The breakdown for each area is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of Interviewees in each of the four areas

AREA	SEX		CLASS		AGE		HOUSING		YOUNG CHILDREN		RESIDENT IN AREA		
	Male	Female	ABC_1	C_2DE	< 40	> 40	Owned	Rented	At home	None at home	Before Unit	Same time approx	After Unit
1	2	3	4	1	3	2	4	1	3	2	4		1
2	2	3	1	4	1	4	4	1	1	4	5		
3	1	4	0	5	2	3	0	5	3	2		5	
4	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	1	4	2	3	

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2	3	4	1	3	2	4	1	3	2	4		1
2	3	1	4	1	4	4	1	1	4	3		
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Of the 20 interviews, 7 (with 4 males and 3 females) were conducted by a male and 13 (with 3 males and 10 females) were conducted by a female interviewer, each doing some in each area. The interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes each. Respondents were asked about the area and whether they felt the hostel was appropriately sited. Their views on the appearance and desirability of the building itself were sought as well as their feelings and knowledge about the buildings' inhabitants. In addition, they were asked what information they had had about the new hostel, whether they felt they knew enough about it and whether they would like to know more.

FINDINGS

With such a small sample, it would be misleading to attempt to draw comparisons between the areas or between the factors selected, such as class, sex and whether the property is owned or rented. The results have therefore been presented for each area as a set of summary statements backed up by quotations to support and amplify the point made.

On six occasions both members of a couple wanted to take part in the interview. Since on all these occasions the views of husband and wife were similar, these interviews have been treated in the same way as those involving a single interviewee. To do otherwise would unrealistically weight certain views which were not independent.

Area 1

In this area there is the Ryegate Centre for children consisting of a new assessment unit, a new day care centre, an old house converted into a residential unit and a therapy unit about 10 years old. Respondents were recruited mainly around the day centre so most comments about buildings related to this. Not far up the road, the new hospital hostel is sited, but not yet opened. Two of the respondents lived very close to the Ryegate Centre and had a good view of it from their homes; two others lived further away, but could also see something of it from their houses, while the fifth, although no further from the centre than these last two, could not actually see the centre from the house. All interviewees except one had lived in the area before the new buildings were erected. Three of the selected people were interviewed with their husband or wife.

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Feelings about the building itself

The people closest to the day care building felt most strongly about the building, particularly about the chimneys. Three of the people had toured the centre on the open day which was held when the new centre was officially opened, so they could comment on the interior of the building as well. Of the two who did not go, one did not live in that area at the time, the other was the only respondent who did not actually overlook the centre. The two closest commented strongly:

1.1 "Don't mind the building.....can't stand the chimneys; everyone thinks they are terrible things. Can't see why they have put them there, their dining area overlooks them. They could have put them on the other side. Nobody else would have seen them then.... been round on open night.....saw the flats.....nice place to live..... looks super in there.....not TOO good.....pretty basic but nice basic.....assessment centre quite nice too, not all that ugly. The size is OK....there aren't too many children. Feel it's better than a large hospital, more like a family unit.....staff should be able to get to know the children better".

1.2 "I toured Ryegate on the open night; thought it was very nice; not too good for the children. The bottom end (assessment unit) went up first which was very nice, very pleasant, then the top end (day centre) went up which wasn't so pleasant, then the awful chimneys went up, which is the only thing I've got against Ryegate so far".

While the two who could also see the centre but were more distant, were more mild:

1.3 "You don't notice the building (day centre) too much from the street; this house is elevated so we do get a good view. It's not an eyesore but its not really in keeping with the area.....there is the pleasant old house behind.....would have preferred to see that. It's nicer probably to live in a small unit but probably not cost efficient.....an approved school would be worse".

1.4 "The outlook is pleasant....it is said (referring to Press coverage in 1975) that these building are lowering the tone of the area, I think they've enhanced it myself. Small groups are more like family.....went to the open day, they've got everything there. Its not TOO good for the children".

As were the people who could not see the centre from their home:

1.5 "Looks very attractive from the bottom, very private....better than having a couple of hundred children. It is well closed off and private; it's just sad they had to cut down so many trees".

Feelings about the building itself

The people closest to the day care building felt most strongly about the building, particularly about the chimneys. Three of the people had toured the centre on the open day which was held when the new centre was officially opened, so they could comment on the interior of the building as well. Of the two who did not go, one did not live in that area at the time, the other was the only respondent who did not actually overlook the centre. The two closest commented strongly:

1.1 "Don't mind the building.....can't stand the chimneys; everyone thinks they are terrible things. Can't see why they have put them there, their dining area overlooks them. They could have put them on the other side. Nobody else would have seen them then.... been round on open night.....saw the flats.....nice place to live..... looks super in there.....not TOO good.....pretty basic but nice basic accommodation centre quite nice too, not all that ugly. The size is OK....there aren't too many children. Feel it's better than a large hospital, more like a family unit.....staff should be able to get to know the children better".

1.2 "I toured Ryegate on the open night; thought it was very nice: not too good for the children. The bottom end (assessment unit) went up first which was very nice, very pleasant, then the top end (day centre) went up which wasn't so pleasant, then the awful chimneys went up, which is the only thing I've got against Ryegate so far".

While the two who could also see the centre but were more distant, were more mild:

1.3 "You don't notice the building (day centre) too much from the street: this house is elevated so we do get a good view. It's not an eyesore but its not really in keeping with the area.....there is the pleasant old house behind.....would have preferred to see that. It's nicer probably to live in a small unit but probably not cost efficient.....an approved school would be worse".

1.4 "The outlook is pleasant....it is said (referring to trees overrage in 1975) that these buildings are lowering the tone of the area, I think they've enhanced it myself. Small groups are more like family.....went to the open day, they've got everything there. Its not TOO good for the children".

As were the people who could not see the centre from their house:

1.5 "Looks very attractive from the bottom, very private....better than having a couple of hundred children. It is well closed off and private; it's just sad they had to cut down so many trees".

The following comments were made about the bright colours on the bridge linking the residential unit and day centre and on the chimneys, ordered in terms of how much they could see from their homes:

1.6 "Aren't very nice but we've been told they're to stimulate the children, that's why they're so bright".

1.7 "Not very pleasant".

1.8 "Colour scheme is a bit lively, it is a bit bright, but presumably it's good for mentally handicapped children.....could be made more tasteful".

1.9 "The colours don't worry us at all, in any case, it's for children".

1.10 "Very nice".

The new hostel and the press coverage in 1975

Only one person specifically mentioned the press coverage

1.11 "They're building another place, aren't they? I understand there is a building there. I cannot understand why people are complaining ("ARE PEOPLE COMPLAINING?) "We heard so" (THROUGH NEIGHBOURS?) "No, it was in the press. I can't understand why, not for children".

Two people had not noticed the building or heard about the new hostel. One had seen it and seemed to feel quite happy about it.

1.12 "Heard it's for older children; it's flats presumably. I haven't heard anything about the local residents being unhappy".

But the fifth person expressed some concern:

1.13 "Have seen the building....I think the building has improved the area....not happy about the hostel, it's an open one isn't it; they can walk in and out can't they. It's for teenagers, I think. People have moved out because of it" (HOW MANY?) "Well, two that we know of." (WHAT WERE THEY WORRIED ABOUT?) "too many of these things round one area .....too open".

Contact with and knowledge about mentally handicapped people

The people furthest from the centre hardly ever saw any of the children. One of these said they had some knowledge of mental handicap from programmes on TV; another had worked with a mentally handicapped person. The two families living closest had had visits from residents:

1.4 "Don't see much of the residents. Last summer one little boy came into the garden and I had to take him back. I was concerned he got onto the front and onto the road. I thought he should be better supervised since he had been out a few times; but I know these things happen. I see them going to school.....have not seen them in the shop. Don't know much about mental handicap....do not know whether we can expect anything unpleasant. I know enough not to worry. Surely they wouldn't be in a

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<u>Contact with and knowledge about mentally handicapped people</u>

The people furthest from the centre hardly even saw any of the children. One of these said they had some knowledge of mental handicap from programmes on TV; another had worked with a mentally handicapped person. The two families living closest had had visits from residents:

1.14 "Don't see much of the residents. Last summer one little boy came into the garden and I had to take his back. I was concerned he got onto the front and onto the road. I thought he should be better supervised since he had been out a few times; but I know these things happen. I see them going to school.....have not seen them in the shop. Don't know much about mental handicap....do not know whether we can expect anything unpleasant. I know enough not to worry. Surely they wouldn't be in a

place like this if there was a danger?....Some people are squeamish about them. If they were physically bigger than me I might worry, but they wouldn't take violent cases, would they?.....I do now lock the door because I do not want anyone to wander in and give me a shock."

1.15 "We've had trouble....well, one little boy....used to get out, nip over the fence and come into the house. I'd give him a cuddle and take him back. He's moved. Another one, too, John*. We were laying in bed one morning, had just put the dog out and left the door open for the dog to push open and not only the dog came in but little Tom* at the bottom of our bed. Just had his pyjama top on. I wrote and told (them)..... It worried me in case he got down onto Manchester Road....he's only small. It stopped then, they kept a special eye on him. John went to the Northern General, he's too old for here actually. If they hadn't put him there they would have sent him to Rampton probably ....I don't know.....he used to go into the shop and, pinch things. We used to get quite used to Tom coming in.....but its not a thing you want.....it hasn't happened since Tom's gone. It got to the stage where my children were getting a bit nervous of him suddenly appearing ....the staff are a bit lax, just left the door open and he was out..... (HOW DID YOUR CHILDREN FEEL?) At first we, I did too, used to stand and be amazed at some of the children who came; it used to upset me..... but I suppose you get used to a thing, don't you; and they don't take any notice now.....they used to stand and watch them..... I didn't want to write, they were very nice about it. I'd rather he came over here than go down onto road.....except it plays on the children's minds. I don't really worry about the children mixing.....after a while I said 'I don't think he'd hurt you' but you just never know, I suppose, whether they could want something the children had got and get violent to get it off them....came a lot, sometimes every day, either first thing in the morning or at bath time at night"

When asked how <u>other people</u> felt about mentally handicapped people, one person had heard nothing from the neighbours and two people said they could not understand anyone objecting to having mentally handicapped children close by. The fourth felt that older people might worry more than younger people but couldn't say why. She felt people tend to worry about the unknown, while the fifth, as indicated above, felt that some people might tend to be "squeamish" about mentally handicapped people.

<u>Suitability of the area</u>

Everyone felt it was well sited. One person mentioned it was easy to reach for parents visiting or bringing their children for assessment; two people seemed to feel it was well sited because it was private and they weren't disturbed by it:

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1.17 "It's very private....these big houses are ideal, better than the Northern General.....better than having a couple of hundred" (children together).

Two people mentioned that "slum" areas wouldn't be so good:

1.18 "Any unsuitable areas? no, unless the east end of the city"

1.19 "better (here) than in slum area.....mentality of surrounding area more suitable to adjust to mentally handicapped children and the threat of.....well, I think the populace would accept it better.....in slum area, might think they're strange sort of creatures, might be subject to some abuse"

Information

The people who had attended the open evening, knew quite a lot about the Ryegate Centre, though one of them didn't realise that children actually lived there and thought it provided only day facilities for spastic children. Of the five, all but one (who was reluctant because he worked in a hospital all day) were enthusiastic about attending another open day, should one be held. One particularly would have liked more information

1.20 ".....after all they are neighbours".

Four of the interviewees had been there before the buildings were erected. One couple had known that the building was planned but had not known about the chimneys, when they moved in:

1.21 "They weren't on the plans",

and they were nervous about what might happen:

1.22 "The thing that scares me is that the building's designed to take another storey....I'm convinced it is....the roof was lowered on whole so they could just lift it off, add another storey and put it back..... and the chimneys in sections so they can add to it".

Two people felt thay had had enough information about the buildings; however the remaining person did not:

1.23 ".....got no information about the day centreand we speculated. When we saw those towers, thought it was a swimming bath.....amazed when we went in and found in wasn't. We know it was for children, spastics".

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Effect of the building on the area

Only two people had been in the area before the buildings had been planned. Of these, one felt the hospital added to the appearance of the area - the major bad change had, in his view, been the demolishing of some old cottages some years previously, across the road from the centre. The other felt the area was no different, just quieter now that the building was finished.

One of the people sited closest to the centre had had their rates reduced due to the chimneys:

> 1.24 "We all complain about the chimneys. They spoil the whole area; when there's no breeze, the fumes from the incinerator drop straight into the garden.....its quite clear smoke now, but yesterday and the day before it was black....we have had our rates reduced. We had the health people here, they said it was a modern unit, didn't even test it".

However, they were pleased to have a new fence put up at the bottom of the garden, higher than the original wall, and were looking forward to the trees which they believe have been planted on the other side, growing and screening their view.

Neither of the people sited closest felt there was any problem with noise:

> 1.25 "....not as much noise as we'dthought there'd be....thought there would be noise from the ambulances. The chimneys roar occasionally".

> 1.26 "It's busy at the back, not noisy; it only affects me in so far as I have to look at the chimneys while eating dinner".

As far as a possible effect on house prices was concerned, again, those closest, both of whom owned their homes, felt the "awful chimneys" were bound to affect the value of their homes, and one of these mentioned that some people might be put off if they felt "squeamish" about mentally handicapped people. The other three felt there would be no effect on house values.

Area 2

The new local authority hostel at Rutland Road, still in the process of being built, is sited very close to the road on what has been for years a large open grassy hill. Residents across the road had had an uninterrupted view from their homes. Only one interviewee saw a lot of the hostel from home. Three interviewees were about equally distant from the hostel and, thought it could be seen from two people's windows, they did not overlook it directly. The person furthest away also had no view of the hoste. Two of these people were, in

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addition, close to the adult training centre. All respondents were interviewed along. All had lived in the area before the hostel was planned.

Feelings about the building itself

The hostel

The person furthest away hadn't even seen the hostel; she had been unable to get out much recently. The other four people were all unhappy about the colour of the brick (a dark blue) and wished it could have been built in a lighter brick:

2.1 "It's just the colour I don't like".

2.2 "It's depressing...People are more upset about its appearance than the people who are going to live in it.....looks a bit Belsonfied Drab, drab, I think is the word for it.....I'm glad it's not in front of my windows".

2.3 "I'm not bothered by it at all - except the colour of the building".

2.4 "Couldn't they have used a lighter brick? My husband said they probably used this brick because it's more weatherproof. Today its dried out, but when its wet, its black. There must be some reason".

The three closest to the hostel all hoped it would look better when the grounds were landscaped and expressed interest in knowing exactly what landscaping would be taking place. One had hoped it would be sited further back from the road

2.5 "....soon as we open our eyes in the morning....we used to see the top of the hill and right down....now when I open my eyes, I see that. I suppose we shall get used to it....when you've had it open for (a long time) it's a big change....the high bit is near the road and it's lower at the back, I think it would have been better the other way round myself".

Everyone tried to find something positive to say about it's value:

2.6 "It could have been worse....could have been high rise flats. Or shops. Don't know if that would have been better or not.....or works. In fact, in the paper they said they were dropping the hostel and putting up warehouses....so we were wondering. At least this will be better than that.....The vicarage is next door to that other mental place on Pitsmoor Road and Pitsmoor Working Man's Club. That (the WM's Club) would have been worse....to us its not the people....really it's that we've been spoilt".

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2.7 "....dread getting some workshops....would rather have two of those (hostels)".

2.8 "That building will shield the houses from bad weather.....could have been worse, could have been flats like those (high rise) at the bottom".

2.9 "I like it round here....only thing is we have burgulars often.... have a remand home. They do get out. We were only glad they weren't building another one of them....I don't like the remand home.....but I don't mind the mentally handicapped".

Three people mentioned that the site had been being used as a refuse tip and that at least the building had stopped that.

The new ATC building evoked little comment and only from the two residents living closest to it; the others did not seem entirely sure where it was although no one was very distant from it. Of the training centre, the following comments were made:

2.10 "This place is quite pleasant looking. Only objection I have to that is that it's open plan. Not becuase the people can get out but because of the vandals from the flats".

2.11 "Not bad really....don't see much of it".

The Petition

Everyone except the person furthest from the hostel had seen the petition (mentioned on page 3). Of the four who had, only one didn't sign it:

2.12 "They need to be helped and it would have had to be put somewhere". The other three listed all the various 'social aid' centres around, and explained local residents were against it not because of the people but because the area was unsuitable:

2.13 "Everything seems to settle around here.....It's a pretty grim spot this, that's why I'm surprised" (that the hostel was sited there). "I don't mind it personally".

Two people had had second thoughts about signing:

2.14 "I signed it but felt very bad about it after. We know two girls personally (who are mentally handicapped)....it struck us after, it would be for people like them".

2.15 "I signed the petition against it....was sorry after I'd signed. A lot have been against it. I hadn't thought about it enough then".

Contacts with and knowledge about mentally handicapped people

With Woodfold, Woodside Lane Assessment Centre and Ivy Lodge all so close,

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With Woodfold, Woodside Lane Assessment Centre and Ivy Lodge all so close,

all respondents saw mentally handicapped people regularly and felt positively about them, mentioning they were very "pleasant" "happy" people:

2.16 "All they want to do is talk to the dog and make friends.....they're as pleased as punch if you say 'good morning'"

Two people had them outside their houses every day waiting for the bus; and another saw them daily pass her windows. She also knew two mentally handicapped women personally, one of whom she had nursed as a baby. She commented:

2.17 "When you see what can be done for them it makes you willing to even put up with this" (the building)

Another interviewee had known someone who used to go to Woodfold, as well as a member of staff there. The other three respondents had had no personal contact with a mentally handicapped person. Two mentioned that some information had been gleaned from TV programmes. When asked what other people felt about mentally handicapped people:

2.18 "They worry....(people with young children)....."things happen that children shouldn't see, perhaps....I don't really know.....some people are frightened of these kind of people aren't they".

2.19 "You get people that are frightened....they don't know what to expect".

2.20 "I'm not frightened, some are, I don't know why....people are afraid of them getting out and doing things....one lady had a young daughter and said she was afraid of them passing her".

2.21 "I know some people do object....now don't get me wrong, no one round here".

Suitability of the area

One of the people interviewed didn't know whether the area was suitable or whether siting the hostel in a residential area at all was a good thing:

2.22 "....once people have learnt to accept them, maybe".

Another felt they ought to be in an accessible place, for relatives visiting; a third felt that one reason the hostel was sited there was that the area was convenient and felt it was better than some places:

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Suitability of the area

One of the people interviewed didn't know whether the area was suitable or whether siting the hostel in a residential area at all was a good thing:

2.22 "....once people have learnt to accept them, maybe".

Another felt they ought to be in an accessible place, for relatives visiting; a third felt that one reason the hostel was sited there was that the area was convenient and felt it was better than some places:

2.23 "It's no good putting them somewhere where there is no life at all".

A fourth felt it was better for them to live in the community and be able to go to work, and to live in a small place rather than a big one. For siting, her comment contrasts with that of 1.19:

2.24 "Better class think they oughtn't to have them".

She felt the site was ideal as there was plenty of space :

2.25 "The middle of town would be no good...need space....plenty of fresh air up here for them...don't want to be shut in, do they."

The fifth person felt that that area and most residential areas were suitable:

2.26 "....better to try and live a normallife...helps them get better.... (the) more normal the life they can be given, the more normal they will end up."

Like the second person mentioned she felt that site had been chosen because it was easily accessible.

No one felt the hostel was too big, in fact two people mentioned that it looked a bit lost in such a large space. 24 mentally handicapped residents were not felt to be too many although two respondents said they had not given it enough thought.

Information

No one knew exactly who the hostel was for:

2.27 "Are they like the people at Woodfold?"

2.28 "I thought it was for children, mentally handicapped children; my wife said no, handicapped people, mentally and physically handicapped, and that's all".

2.29 "....been informed it's for residential mental....are they sort of bed ridden or are they sort of active or....do you know?"

2.30 "What is it about? we were told it was for the mentally handicapped.... is it? It's a hostel is it, not a workplace?. I've seen them on TV but I didn't realise it was for them."

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The limited information they had had came from various sources. One had learnt most from the Church Magazine while three had all heard about it through neighbours. The remaining person was the only one to have seen the plans when the building first began which seemed to be mainly through him fortuitously knowing someone who worked on the building. Only one person felt she had had enough information.

All expressed an interest in going to an open day at the hostel if one were held. One mentioned that she was particularly interested to see whether they would be able to look into her house from the hostel. The person living farthest away was least interested in going. Only one person mentioned meeting the residents.

2.31 "I think these people want someone to have a chat to ."

Effect of the building on the area

These residents had lived in the area for so long and seen so many changes that they all seemed generally confident that the new buildings for the mentally handicapped would make little difference to the area:

2.32 "I can't see they (ATC and hostel) have affected the area. One or two (people) moved when they heard about it ".

2.33 "There are noises from the training centre....I hear them singing 'Happy Birthday', there seems to be one almost every other day....I rather enjoy it".

2.34 "I've seen lots of changes; it's the works (industrial estate down road) that have spoilt it".

No-one thought the value of their houses would be affected, though two people pointed out that there might be some people who just wouldn't want to come to that area now.

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Area 3

Wensley Street Hostels consist of two blocks of three houses each, facing each other across a short cul de sac which they alone occupy, on one side of Wensley Street. Around them is green open space. On the other side of Wensley Street is a large, recently built council estate consisting of a variety of housing, including split level houses, bungalows and flats. The hostel was constructed around the same time as the estate, the hostel residents moving in slightly later than the estate residents. The two interviewees closest to the hostel could also see the hostel from their homes. The other three were tucked in amongst the estate and could not actually see it from their windows. One couple was interviewed, all other interviews were with individuals.

Feelings about the building itself

Everybody thought the buildings looked very nice - just like ordinary houses. Three respondents had seen them when they first came to look round the estate:

3.1 "When we first came....I thought they were houses at first.... I said, Oh, I'd like one of them over there, they're lovely".

3.2 "When we first looked round my husband said 'Oh, they're lovely houses on top...wouldn't it be nice if we could get one of them".

3.3 "I said to my husband, oh, they're nice houses...I didn't know it was a hostel you see...I said I hope we're having one of them".

and a fourth reported having heard people look round the estate saying how nice those houses were up there, and

3.4 "Thinking they were to let as well".

The fifth person, living alone, had less need for such a large house, but she felt:

3.5 "...in fact it looks better than some of the houses."

Three people (one of whom lived within sight of the hostel), had gone to the open day and so could also comment on the inside. None of them felt it was too good:

3.6 "No, it's good for them, it gives them standards to live up to".

3.7 "Too good? why not - a lot have suffered enough in places that they have come from. It's good, I wouldn't say it is luxurious really."

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lounges absolutely fabulous...people who designed it deserve an award of some kind...rooms not poky at all...fitted wardrobes, everything they could want, so they are at no disadvantage there."

No one felt it was too big, all recognising that it operated as 6 houses of 8 residents which were referred to as "like a family" and "nice little families". One person pointed out that no one would have known it were a hostel if it were not for the sign "Woodcliffe Homes" which has since been vandalised.

Contacts with and knowledge about mentally handicapped people

All the people interviewed talked to some of the residents regularly. Three people had invited one or more residents into their homes on one or more occasions. One of these mentioned seeing some of the residents at the local pub and buying them drinks. Another had worked at the hostel for a time "best job I've ever had...I enjoyed it" so she knew a great deal about how the hostel worked and who lived in it. Two interviewees had nursing jobs and felt they knew quite a lot about mental handicap. One of these also had a son who she referred to as a 'bit backward' so she felt she understood the problems of mentally handicapped people.

One person was not sure whether inviting the hostel residents into their home was a good thing:

3.9 "I would never encourage any of them to come in, because I feel that is wrong...they might try and get in other people's houses...there's a lot of things to think about, isn't there, with that sort of thing... probably if I went to the home and knew that much more about them, I might feel better about it...would we be doing the right thing? I could imagine him coming back and coming back again."

While in contrast, another person commented:

3.10 "I invited them in because they must get that depressed being stuck in all the time and not seeing anybody."

The families with young children at home all mentioned that their children knew by name and talked to some of the hostel residents and all felt this was good. One person's young son had gone to a football match the previous evening with one of the hostel residents; three people commented that their near neighbours also talked to them. They all felt they were very pleasant people, and three commented that they were a lot more pleasant than some of the people living on the estate which clearly has some problems with vandalism and is over-run by dogs. In addition, two of these also commented on how clean the residents were, as though this was something of a surprise.

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When asked how other people on the estate felt:

3.11 "One or two people have pulled me up and said 'How can you live with them across the road'...some of them think they are a bit frightening. One or two are a bit strange. It doesn't really bother me, it's just life" and later "people on the other part of the estate won't have anything to do with them...they're worried...I don't know, I can't understand it; they're only human beings, why punish them in that way. They can't help the way they've been born, can they".

3.12 "At first we were a bit upset - patients from a mental home - but then they came and you got talking to them, they were alright... somebody up there...she said some of these were coming from Rampton and one of them was a murderer and so on".

3.13 "Never heard anybody complain" although she agreed that some people had been worried "They was, I'm not".

3.14 "Some people feel they oughtn't to be here...think they should be back at the Northern General..worried in case they get violent... I really don't know..people are frightened of mental illnesses, aren't they" (and when questioned on the distinction between mental illness and mental handicap) "people worry about someone born mentally handicapped rather than someone who has had a mental breakdown".

3.15 "Some people are frightened of mental health."

Two people felt the presence of the hostel could benefit the council estate residents:

3.16 "...helps us understand them more".

and felt it helped to educate people about mental handicap.

There had however been one or two problems. One person mentioned that the Wensley Association Group (a residents' group) had had complaints from some people about the noise made during discos at the hostel and one of the interviewees had been sexually propositioned by one of the hostel residents some time ago. Another interviewee had also heard about this incident. Compliants had been made to the hostel and explained to the resident, and the woman concerned felt it was now sorted out and in the past.

Like 3.12, another respondent initially felt a bit apprehensive about the hostel thinking the people might be a bit unfriendly, and said her neighbours had also felt "a bit dubious". A third person said she was "surprised" when she first heard about the hostel.

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Suitability of the area

Everyone thought the hostel was well sited for various reasons:

3.17 "If they come from Sheffield they will feel lost in the country... wouldn't be able to mix as much...wouldn't see as many people...better built on to an estate than out in the wild...if it were one of my relations I'd hate them to be out on their own...wouldn't have so many people to talk to".

3.18 (asked if this were a good place for the hostel) "In the community, yes. It's no trouble...need to be somewhere spacious".

3.19 "It's nice (for them) to see people around...it brings them out more."

3.20 "Better in a residential area, gives them a chance to mix in the ordinary community...think they should all be built near residential estates...people should accept a bit more responsibility for mentally handicapped people".

3.21 "A thickly populated area would be worse as children torment this kind of people - I've seen this happen up here with one of them". (another person also mentioned this.) "Think it's good for the hostel to be open, good it's on it's own on the perimeter (otherwise) they wouldn't be left alone as much as they are there (talking of vandalism)."

In addition, one person also pointed out that the area was unsuitable as it was difficult for some residents to get up the hill to the hostel, and that they didn't use the footpath (which was down an embankment from the road) and so were not safe on the road. They were concerned in case somebody got hurt.

Information

As is apparent of the section on the building, when people moved in they did not know that the hostel was for mentally handicapped people. One found out because she happened to know someone who was working on the hostel building. Another asked the builders and then found more information for herself through her job. The other three had heard about the hostel through neighbours. The three people who had been to the open day obviously found this a useful source of information about what went on. Everybody seemed interested in what happened at the hostel and told about discos they had heard, Christmas parties they had seen, how and when the residents went to work, how some had GIRO savings accounts and various other events.

One person expressed some confusion over what the hostel residents were allowed to do. Her husband, seeing them watch him while he took the dog for a walk had wondered about asking them to come too:

3.22 "He says he'd ask them...but he doesn't know...if they've got Wellingtons...and one thing and another".

Two people felt more open days would help:

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3.24 "I think they should have one or two more visitors' nights...let people go in and talk to them...would find people understood more. The more people see them, the more they understand it".

All expressed interest in attending another open day, one being slightly less keen than the others, saying it would depend on what she was doing that day. All five knew an open evening had been held.

Effect of the hostel on the area

Obviously, the interviewees couldn't talk about changes in the area, all being relatively new themselves. However, one point that came up was that of jobs at the hostel. One had worked there, two others expressed interest in working there and everybody knew of someone that worked there and lived on the estate. That local people are being involved in a community-based hostel seems a very positive point and these three people felt it was an asset to have the possibility of working so close to home.

Area 4

The hostel at Warminister Road is sited at the entrance to a small council estate and was built about the same time as the estate. On the other side of the road to these new buildings is an established residential district. Two of the interviewees lived in the established area and had been there before the hostel was planned; both could see the hostel from their houses. The other three lived on the estate and had moved in just before the hostel residents: two were very close but could not see it from their houses, the third was furthest away of the five and also could not see the hostel from home. In two cases, couples were interviewed together; the other three involved individuals.

Feelings about the building itself

Nobody had any objections to the look of the building, four of the people interviewed all commenting that it blended in very well with the rest of the

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Feelings about the building itself

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of the new housing:

4.1 "I think if it had been an old estate it would have stood out".

4.2 "I thought it was a house at first, pretty queer windows, but a house or a community centre."

One commented that the brick was a nice colour. The two from the old housing were pleased it was a single storey building, one mentioning that this prevented them from being overlooked.

One of them felt vaguely:

4.3 "It's ideal for that type of person".

Everyone was, in fact, very positive about the building's appearance. The two families from the old housing mentioned that they had initially been upset when they heard about the plans because the buildings would spoil their view; before they could look over Derbyshire:

4.4 "Initial feelings? We were....very cross really, but then I think it was mostly against the estate than the home".

4.5 "When we first heard, we were a bit upset...it was a big shock when it first came up.".

As far as size was concerned, one thought 24 residents was

4.6 "plenty...looks to be plenty of room".

and the other thought:

4.7 "a big pretentious place would have been too much".

Of the residents on the new estate, two felt there did not seem to be many residents, saying they never saw more than a dozen or 18 together, and the third commented:

4.8 "More homely than a big unit...bigger place is more hospital-like... I think that is bad....this is more normal".

Of the five, only one person, from the new estate, had been to the hostel; she had been 2 or 3 times to coffee mornings.

4.9 "I thought it was fantastic...not too good...its their home...several of the rooms had their own fire surrounds...it did not seem like a home for handicapped people".

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4.10 "Only thing I thought was funny was the long windows. I thought it's a funny house having windows like that...until I found out what it was and then I thoughts, well, probably they have to have kind of windows like that in case....you know they...they...happen to...perhaps climb out through a window or something. I dont know a lot about handicap or their attitudes or anything and I thought, well, it's probably a necessity, they've had to put them this way....but that's the only thing that drew my attention to it (the building) really".

Contacts with and knowledge about mentally handicapped people

Again, as at Wensley Street, interviewees mentioned that the residents were "pleasant" "happy" people. Four people had no previous contact with mentally handicapped people; the fifth couple had a mentally handicapped relative and had close friends who had a mentally handicapped child.

The person living furthest away had little contact with the hostel residents, seeing them only once or twice a week at most, and never speaking to them. Three others mentioned how residents waved and said hello to them on their way to work in the morning and one of their children knew some residents by name and talked to them quite often. These three interviewees said they hardly saw the hostel residents except in the morning.

On first hearing there was to be a hostel for mentally handicapped people two people on the new estate "were not bothered". The other:

4.11 "had some (fears) at first, worried about violence ".

The people who had lived there longest were most upset:

4.12 "When first heard...had the impression they were coming from Hollow Meadows...people on probation".

4.13 "We knew what it was going to be used for and we did not fancy that really...thought they might...be hung over the back gate...but there is nothing like that ".

One of the five mentioned that she had seen programmes on television about mental handicap which, she felt, had taught her a little about it.

When asked what other people thought, all five had heard no complaints about the hostel from neighbours (the person living furthest from the hostel had little contact with neighbours but felt he would have known if people did object). In general terms though:

4.14 "Some people are dubious, aren't they...(mental handicap and mental illness) are two different things, mental illness is the nerves, this (mental handicap) is probably something that happens at birth. (A hostel for the mentally ill)might worry me more, with the children and everything ".

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One person expressed some current fears about the hostel residents:

4.15 "only thing that disturbs me is when they all go out at night...all waiting at the bus stop...it was alright...nothing happened...but I just didn't like it because there was only me and a lot of them...they seem to quarrel a lot amongst themselves, like children ".

The person most distant from the hostel had no idea what went on in the hostel one person said it was:

4.16 "for people they are trying to get back into the world...quite ordinary things they have to teach them ".

and another said it was for people:

4.17 "presumably if they have no other people...if parents are elderly ".

Hostel residents were rarely seen at the local shops, and no-one felt the hostel ought to be fenced in:

4.18 "They would feel caged in ".

Suitability of the area

Everyone felt the hostel was well sited, blending in with the estate. Each of the five provided a reason:

4.19 "Better in town than in country ".

4.20 "Got to put them where it's convenient for their centres; doesn't worry me in the least where it is ".

4.21 "Would feel cut off if they were on their own...good in residential area ".

4.22 "Need to have people round them...not in centre of estate...get people who would probably torment and abuse them ".

4.23 "Too isolated in the country from everything they want to see... better seeing the ordinary things that are going on...near a school (would not be suitable)...children can pick up some peculiar habits if they see them...not a threat to the children ".

Information

The people who had been resident before the hostel and estate were built were unhappy about the amount of information they had been given:

4.24 "Notice on telegraph pole...went to the Town Hall to look at the plans...would have liked more: icture, drawing of it all...we were all in a small room trying to see the plans at the same time. It would have been nice to have someone to talk to about it ".

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4.25 "Did not know it (the hostel) was for mentally handicapped...they said they were coming from Hollow Meadows as it was easier to visit these here than what it was there...easier to put them in this type of building rather than an institution...and we were a bit afraid...everyone got that impression...the information we got was misleading...it was in the local newspapers as well ".

The people on the new estate had had no information about the hostel prior to opening; two of these felt they knew enough about it and would not be interested in visiting the hostel; the third felt open days were good:

4.26 "It's nice to be invited to go and see...for people who don't understand and were prejudiced, it's great to show people what really goes on ".

Of the five people interviewed, three of them said they would like to visit the hostel (in one case this would not be the first visit).

Effect of the hostel on the area

The people who had lived there prior to the hostel and the estate felt the hostel itself had not had a detrimental effect on the area. However, neither of the interviewees were happy about the council estate. One said she felt they should get something off their rates as there was more dirt around from having buildings there than open country, but felt house prices were not affected.

The other also felt house prices would not be affected by the hostel and felt the hostel was an improvement on the wasteland that had been there before and were pleased to have it, rather than the estate, behind them. It was pointed out that the local children tended to use the grassy patch around the hostel as a meeting place at night and that that was noisy, but it was not the fault of the hostel:

4.27 "in itself (the hostel does not make the area less desirable)... the corporation housing does though ".

The other three interviewees could not say much about changes in the area, having lived there for only a short time. One person knew someone who worked at the hostel and it seemed that some other staff also lived locally but none of the people interviewed mentioned having thought of working there.

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All areas

Some consistencies and some difference emerge. People living in 1 and 2 areas tended to be less favourable to the provision than people in the other areas. This seemed to be not because of the people living or going to live in the buildings but because of the buildings themselves. Only 1.13 proved an exception to this. Unfortunately, because the people sampled who lived in newer areas mainly rented their houses while those sampled in older areas mainly owned theirs, this factor was confounded, as was class to some extent. This makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions as to whether socio-economic class, or home ownership, affect reaction to buildings for mentally handicapped people.

Two unexpected perceptions of mentally handicapped people emerged. Three people mentioned that mentally handicapped people might be subject to some abuse (1.19, 3.21, 4.22) and a fourth mentioned seeing this happen. There seemed to be some evidence that a few people confused mental handicap with being in trouble with the law, where some restriction might be necessary (1.13, 1.15, 3.21, 4.12).

Integration into the community requires the existence of a community into which mentally handicapped people can integrate; at least one of the respondents felt

> 4.28 "...don't get it today like you used to...they (people in the area) stick to themselves...you say hello but that's about it, unless you know someone really well"

but many of the comments cited in this report suggest a neighbourly interest which must be part of what is meant by "community".

Of the 15 people who lived near a unit now open, 7 had attended the (an) open day; one had not moved in at the time. Only one person did not know that an open day had been held. Thus half the respondents had actually visited units that are open, and nearly all of them were aware that an open day had taken place. 15 of the 20 people interviewed were very interested in visiting the units if an (other) open day were held and two more were quite interested.

Discussion

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This preliminary study brings up several issues important in the development of community based services for the mentally handicapped, some suggestion possibilities for future research, briefly outlined below. Although nobody

directly objected to having mentally handicapped people living nearby, people clearly do have fears about mentally handicapped people - a variety appeared as "other people's worries" and there do seem to be some misconceptions about the nature of mental handicap. Some people felt these fears lessened as people have more contact with mentally handicapped people and over three quarters of the people talked to were interested in having more contact with their mentally handicapped neighbours, through visiting the hostel. Four people mentioned that they had learnt something about mental handicap through television programmes, which suggests one means by which further education might take place.

The information available to local residents before a unit is completed was felt to be inadequate. At the one unopened unit, nobody had a clear idea of who the hostel was for. People in other areas mentioned that they had been worried before the hostel opened, but now that they have the people there, their worries have been allayed.

Many respondents in this study expressed a desire for more information about the hostel and its occupants, which reflects what Locker et al, (1979) found. Various people suggested that this should be done by more open evenings. It is possible that this could lead to more volunteer help. Most people sounded interested but unsure how to show it. In Sheffield, there are hostels situated in a variety of areas: amongst modern housing, amongst more established housing, in more expensive areas of Sheffield as well as in the more "working class districts". It would be possible to examine hostels across this range to compare the community involvement policy of each and relate this to the response of the nearby residents. This possibility is raised below under "Development of work from points raised". It appeared from this preliminary study that, of the facilities now open, most acceptance was shown at Wensley Street (a purpose built hostel looking like a set of ordinary houses and surrounded by corporation housing of the same age and set across the road from an established residential district). Least integration seemed to have occurred at Ryegate (situated in an established residential district) but this may have been partly because the residents at Ryegate Assessment Centre, where three of the four buildings on the site have non-residential functions, and one of these (the day centre) is an unusual looking building, sets the converted house clearly apart from the surrounding housing and this is considered under "Development of work from points raised". It would be interesting to know if the units concerned have similar views of the

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extent of favourable community response in their district. In this study it seems that the more like surrounding housing in age and appearance, the better the building is accepted.

In addition, there was a little evidence that the fewer peculiar or distinctive features these new buildings have, the more they are preferred. People seemed to look for reasons why unusual features had been incorporated, and on more than one occasion they reasoned it was on the grounds that mentally handicapped people must need them like that. Thus it may be that any unusual feature in a building for mentally handicapped people only serve to distinguish them from the community in that they are seen to need "special" housing. This point is particularly worthy of more investigation since it is one of the reasons for the current move to adapting ordinary housing for mentally handicapped people, ordinary housing being felt to be de-stigmatising - see below, "Development of work from points raised".

One difficulty in assessing community integration lies in the definition of a "community". In the new corporation housing, former communities had been completely re-shuffled, and, for these re-housed people, the new hostels had always been there. This may have contributed to the acceptability of the hostels. In addition, as Weber (1978) points out, in areas of high mobility there is little resistance to a hostel, yet there is probably little integration either because the local residents are regularly changing. Thus lack of opposition to a hostel may not necessarily indicate integration. However the areas Weber described had a transient population, whereas the areas 3 and 4 in the present study have a newly arrived but potentially stable population, and do show interest.

Only a few people were concerned about house prices being depressed because of the presence of the new facility, but this was due less to the mentally handicapped people who lived there or were to live there, than to the appearance of the building itself. However, there were a limited number of home owners interviewed. In future provision for mentally handicapped people the objection to unusual design could be avoided by converting ordinary housing, this may entail closer proximity of buildings and it is not clear how people would feel about having mentally handicapped people right next door, but the attitudes expressed in this study suggest most people would accept this. It might be

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possible to examine people's reactions to this greater proximity by talking to people living next door to group homes. These are ordinary houses for four to six adults with a mildly handicapped minimal support staff. It would be interesting to discover whether people living close to this kind of provision encounter any difficulties, and whether they are happy with the current group sizes or feel that a larger number of residents could be accepted - see below, "Development of work from points raised".

The new hostels on the new estates seemed to provide a source of jobs in the community and at Ryegate too one person mentioned she would like to do some voluntary work there, another hoped she might find a job there and several interviewees mentioned that two people who lived locally worked there. This is obviously one form of community involvement. It would be interesting to know how usual it is to have staff that live locally and whether it is preferred by the units - see below, "Development of Work from points raised"

Locker et al, (1978) found many of their respondents seemed to assume that what the mentally handicapped person needed was open space, isolation and a peaceful atmosphere. Some of the people in this study did mention space, but the majority mentioned that they needed to be in the midst of things, conveniently sited for getting to and from work and for visitors, and in a place where they would be able to see people. The majority felt the site chosen was good and that a residential area was appropriate.

Development of work from points raised

The preliminary work described above was deliberately kept to a very small scale. The results suggest that broader coverage of community reaction to mental handicap facilities could be pursued in the following ways.

1. An interview survey of all hostels to ascertain the policy and practice of each toward community integration, detailing for example how much contact local residents are allowed with hostel residents, any specific efforts on the part of staff to forge links with the the surrounding community, whether staff live locally and whether local workers are preferred.

2. A questionnaire survey of a sample of local residents within the immediate area of each hostel on their knowledge of and attitudes to the Unit. Sheffield hostels are in a wide range of areas in terms of age of surrounding housing and cost of surrounding housing enabling useful comparisons on which neighbourhoods feel positively about having mentally handicapped people among them. It may be that certain characteristics of neighbourhoods (eg. to be associated with local residents being more amenable to the siting of a hostel. As suggested above

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whether the designs of the buildings have any appreciable effect on local acceptability could also be examined from this information, as could (by including group houses) the reaction where buildings are closer to other housing, as is the case of group houses. Examples of ordinary housing for more severly handicapped people could usefully be added, this would require going outside Sheffield.

3. If a relationship between hostel policy and local response can be shown by comparing 1 and 2, action research, if staff were willing, could develop a more intensive programme of community involvement in some ("experimental") hostels. Effects could be compared with ("control") hostels in which the policy of community integration remained unchanged. The two groups of hostels ("experimental" and "control") should be matched in respect of type of hostel, area, housing, and local residents.

4. The above suggestions mainly specify hostels, but in 1 and 2 hospital units could be included.

In conclusion, of the 20 people interviewed, not one said they were unhappy about having mentally handicapped people living near them and the majority felt positively about it. Some people were not happy about the buildings provided for them, the most preferred being those which looked most like the surrounding housing. Most people felt they would like more information about the unit; few were satisfied with the information received before the unit opened. This preliminary study suggests advantage could be taken of the variety of designs and sites of the new provision for mentally handicapped people in Sheffield to elucidate such factors affecting the community's reaction to such provision.

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Rowan Matthews' background is in psychology (University of Sheffield) moral sciences (University of Cambridge) and environmental psychology (University of Surrey).

She has worked on environmental psychology research programmes at Surrey University, for the Fire Research station, and for the DHSS. Her recent work with architectural teams at the DHSS has included research on the design of secure buildings, design preferences of senile dementia patients, and the development and assessment of reminiscence aids for the elderly.

She also teaches architectural students, at present at Portsmouth Architecture School.

She has developed and is organising the programme of evaluation of the buildings in two recent major attempts to provide new services in the field of mental health - the Sheffield Development Project for the mentally handicapped and the Worcester Development Project for the mentally ill.

Mary Dalgleish studied psychology at Bristol University. From 1973 to 1976 she was engaged in detailed observational and experimental research to clarify factors affecting the acquisition of motor skills in young children, for which she received a Ph.D from Sheffield University. Subsequently, she worked on an SSRC-funded research project to investigate the role of fantasy play in the development of social and intellectual skills in disadvantaged pre-school children.

In November 1978 she joined the Building Evaluation Team as their research worker based in Sheffield.