

William Alexander Harvey (1874-1951): Bournville and after

Michael Harrison

University of Central England in Birmingham

Although W.A. Harvey received two R.I.B.A awards in the 1930s, he is best remembered for his earlier efforts at Bournville. This paper will review Harvey's work at Bournville and his later career.

Harvey came from an artistic family and attended architecture classes at the Birmingham Municipal School of Art. He was recruited as a very young man by George Cadbury to design cottages for the new Bournville estate in 1895. Whilst Harvey's other Arts and Crafts designs were well received, he became best known for his simplified cottage designs. The varied disposition of these dwellings led Bournville to be considered an object lesson in estate development.

Harvey left the employment of the Bournville Village Trust in 1904, but he continued to design most of the public buildings in the village. He was also responsible for the layout and most of the cottage designs on the Bournville Tenants' estate.

The publication of Harvey's book, *The Model Village and its Cottages: Bournville*, in 1906 led to an increase in his profile. He began to design houses, public buildings and estates in Birmingham and elsewhere. Harvey came to be seen as one of the country's experts on 'the cheap cottage problem'. After the First World War his estate plans and house designs were used by a number of English local authorities. His inter-war work also included churches, municipal buildings and conservation and restoration projects. He remained active in artistic, architectural and planning circles. In his last years he was still being consulted about post-war reconstruction plans.

William Alexander Harvey (1874-1951) was in practice as an architect and planner for over fifty years. He was recognised as 'one of the most distinguished architects in the Midlands'. (*BWM* March 1951, p. 83; Granelli, 1984, p.56) Although his practice was varied, and he received the Bronze Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1935 for the Town Hall and Municipal Offices at Dudley, Harvey is best remembered for his earlier work at Bournville. He was recruited by George Cadbury as a very young man to design cottages for the new Bournville Estate in 1895. 'The appointment,' one commentator rightly judged, 'while giving him the first big opportunity for the exercise of his gifts, proved to be of incalculable value to this pioneering housing experiment.' (*JRIBA*, April 1951, p. 247)

William Alexander Harvey came from an artistic family. His father and his brother, Ernest, were stained glass artists. W.A. Harvey was educated privately. (*BM* 7 February 1951) It was originally intended that he should take up engraving as a profession, but he chose architecture instead. (*JRIBA* April 1951, p. 247) Between 1890 and 1894 Harvey was articled to the local firm of David Smith and Son. He also attended classes at the Birmingham Municipal School of Art where he was taught architectural history and design by W.H. Bidlake, the prominent Arts and Crafts architect. (Birmingham College of Art Programmes 1892-3) He also came across Benjamin Creswick, a pupil of John Ruskin and Modelling Master at the School, with whom he later collaborated. (Crawford, 1984) Harvey, who throughout his career was rarely without his sketch book, won prizes at the School of Art for his drawings of local medieval architecture and vernacular buildings. (Birmingham College of Art Prize Lists 1892, 1894, 1895). He also frequently travelled abroad, and his visits to the cities of Italy, France, Spain, Germany and America were said to have been 'a rich source of inspiration to him'. (*JRIBA* April 1951, p. 247; *BM* 17 February 1951)

It is not clear how Harvey came to be employed at Bournville. He was not a Quaker, like George Cadbury and A.P. Walker, the Estate surveyor, but it was said that 'his quiet unassuming personality endeared him to all'. (*JRTPI* February 1951). Even so, Harvey was barely twenty-one years old and an architectural novice when he was appointed Estate architect. His earliest works were relatively undistinguished. (KN&N 2062, 2238; Atkins, 1989, p.38) Nevertheless, Ruskinian ideals and an interest in vernacular architecture were appropriate prerequisites for the designer of a garden village. Harvey expressed his disgust at overcrowded slums and his distaste for the 'desolate row upon row of ugly and cramped villas' which threatened to engulf Britain's cities. (Harvey, 1906, p. 2) He was one of the younger generation of architects who were turning their attention to working class and lower middle class housing and site planning. Harvey can be seen as a promising and committed young architect who brought together 'the two movements of housing reform and the revival of domestic architecture'. (Harvey, 1906, p. 6) He clearly learned from his contemporaries as he worked his way towards 'a new conception of design applied to small and medium- sized suburban houses' and their layout. (*BWM* March 1951, p. 83) 'Harvey,' one of his successors remarked, 'was one of those pioneers of Garden City architecture who struggled to lift the design of 'cottages', as the 'romantics' of that period liked to call them, above the level of Victorian speculative builders' terraces.' (*BWM* March 1951, p.84)

Harvey first appears in the Bournville records as a witness to the designs by A.P. Walker for the first houses on the Estate in 1895. (MS 1536 Plan 14/3) His own first designs for four three-storeyed houses with timber-framing and dormers, produced in December 1895, were never executed (MS 1536 Plan 0/3) By March 1896 Harvey had clearly become the chief architect of Bournville Village, a position he was to retain until he established his own practice in 1904. During this period he designed hundreds of cottages and a number of public buildings. Even after 1904, Harvey was retained as a consultant by the Bournville Village Trust, appointed as planner and lead architect for the Bournville Co-partnership Tenants' estate and designed further public buildings on and around the Green at Bournville.

Harvey's first houses are to be found at the southern end of Linden Road, Beech Road, Bournville Lane, Mary Vale Road, Raddlebarn Road and Elm Road. He did not immediately break away from the typical tunnel-back house plan with long back projections. The Bournville plots were more generous than most suburban developments elsewhere and Harvey's facades were generally treated with greater simplicity and freedom. In the first few years, Harvey's designs were less varied than later. The same, or very similar, houses can be found on Bournville Lane and Mary Vale Road.

Harvey soon began to deliberately produce more varied streetscapes in the Village. He sought to emulate the picturesque patterns he admiringly noted in pre-industrial villages. He later argued that it was 'in the interesting disposition of houses of varying sizes lies one of the secrets of beautiful village building'. (Harvey, 1906, p.3) A series of panoramic sketches of Raddlebarn Lane and Beech Road exemplify this quest for variety. (MS 1536)

Harvey's first houses were almost exclusively semi-detached, but a few larger and more elaborate dwellings and public buildings were constructed in the late 1890s, like the detached house for J.H. Whitehouse and the timber-framed shops on Mary Vale Road. As a young and inexperienced architect, Harvey drew not only on the regional vernacular but also on some of the leading Arts and Crafts architects of the day for inspiration. The larger houses on Bournville Lane look back to Bedford Park, whilst the pebble-dashed pair of cottages and the smaller pair of shops in Mary Vale Road owe much to C.F.A. Voysey. Some of Harvey's half-timbered designs are reminiscent of Shaw's 'old English' work and that of Baillie-Scott. The three blocks of dwellings in Holly Grove, constructed in 1900, display a wealth of Arts and Crafts details. The picturesque end block, with its hand-made bricks, half-timbering, pebble-dash, angled buttresses, dormers and Elizabethan style chimney stacks was designed in such a way as to make it look as if it had evolved over a period of time. (Harrison, 1999, Ch. 4) This was a method used by the Birmingham firm of Crouch and Butler in some of their larger suburban houses in Moseley and Handsworth Wood. (Granelli, 1984, p. 44ff.)

Most of Harvey's early house designs were simpler than those described above. Nevertheless, Harvey sought to combine 'satisfactory accommodation with artistic appearances.' (*The Builder* 13 February 1904, p.159) The mainly three-bedroomed cottages were largely constructed of brick with hand-made tile or green Welsh slate roofs. Pantiles were occasionally used to good effect on unbroken or hipped roofs. Some of Harvey's most satisfying cottage designs have long sweeping roofs, which give them a comforting grounded feel. His cottages frequently have overhanging eaves, and on a number of dwellings Harvey introduced eyebrow-like curved eaves. Periodically, special treatment was given to the dormers and chimney stacks. Although a few of the houses Harvey designed for Bournville have leaded lights, the majority were fitted with casement windows – a type he found to be both cheap and pleasing in small cottages. In the early 1900s Harvey introduced Venetian windows into some of his designs for houses on Sycamore Road and Woodbrooke Road. On the whole ornament was restricted, but half timbering, decorative brickwork, pargetting, colouring and wood-carving were to be found on some of the buildings on the Estate. He gave particular attention to the houses situated at road junctions, as can be seen in the detached house at the corner of Beech Road and Bournville Lane, the semi-detached house at the junction of Willow Road and Laburnum Road and the block of three cottages with projecting wings set at an angle between Linden Road and Acacia Road. (Harrison, 1999, p. 50)

Harvey sought to achieve effect 'by variety in combination and disposition' of the house designs and by the use of irregular building lines. (1906, p.6) The same designs, with minor variations, could be used on different roads within the Estate. Even where the same plan was used, as in the three pairs of houses on Sycamore Road, the facades were treated in a variegated manner.

The majority of the cottages in the Model Village had three bedrooms and three rooms downstairs. Harvey complained about 'the useless front room in small cottages'. (1906, p31) Like Parker and Unwin he began to design houses with one large living room. (Day, 1981) Although the Trust had no difficulty letting these dwellings, the demand for traditional parlour houses continued to be accepted. (Barlow , 1913)

By the early 1900s the Village and its architect were achieving some recognition. The Trust's secretary was reporting that 'it is evident that the Village has come to be regarded as the place that ought to be seen by all who are interested in housing and kindred questions.' (BVT Minutes 4.187) It was widely regarded as an object lesson in estate development. Many contemporary accounts stressed its picturesqueness. *The Studio* noted in 1902 that Harvey had 'introduced a large variety into his designs, which are very quaint and picturesque and revive the best traditions of country architecture'. (XXIV 1902, p.168) Despite the plaudits there was some pressure to design cheaper cottages for the Bournville Estate. Harvey began to stress 'the idea and spirit of homely simplicity'. (*The Builder* 13 February 1904, p.159) He recognised that one of the key tasks for the designer of small cottages was to 'satisfy the demands of both art and economy.' (Harvey, 1906, p.6) Harvey developed a number of strategies to try reconcile these potentially contradictory demands. A move towards simplified and compact plans could achieve savings, as could the adaptation of the dimensions of buildings to the standard sizes of building materials. (*The Builder* 13 February 1904, p.159; Harvey, 1906, p. 17ff.) 'Worthy stock articles' and simple internal fittings were advocated for cheap cottages. (Harvey, 1906, pp.21-22) 'An excess of ornament should be avoided,' Harvey asserted, 'especially if the aim is economy.' (1906, p. 20) This emphasis on economy in design and materials was to be of particular importance after the First World War but it was initiated by Harvey, Unwin and the Liverpool School before the conflict. (Swenarton, 1981, p.24ff.) It can be argued that it was the simple, cheap but 'homely' designs, rather than more picturesque cottages, that provided the prototypes for the later 'Homes for Heroes'.

Harvey's earliest response to the demand for cheaper cottages can be seen in the block of four two-bedroomed dwellings in Bournville Lane of 1902. 'Economy of construction has been the main object in design,' Harvey explained. The result was certainly simple, even austere, but Harvey believed that the essentials of a cottage home – privacy, homeliness of appearance and a pleasant environment – had been achieved. (1906, p. 17) In the years following he began to pay particular attention to the disposition of such simple blocks.

Whilst there was certainly a demand for cheaper cottages, Harvey was also being sought out for larger jobs both on and off the Bournville Estate. In 1901-02 Harvey designed detached dwellings for J.H. Barlow, the Trust's secretary, George Cadbury Jnr at Griffin's Hill and, a little later, a house on Oak Tree Lane for George H. Archibald. (KN & N 921, 922, 2379) A small number of private houses in Northfield and Moseley were also built to Harvey's designs. (Kn & N& N 1233) In May 1902 Harvey was invited to prepare plans for a Ruskin Memorial building to be erected at Bournville. (KN&N 1353, BVT Minutes 30 Jan 1902, 1 May 1902, 25 June 1902) At the same time he was elected to the Council of the Birmingham Architectural Association. (BVT Minute 9 July 1902)

Harvey continued to provide designs for the cottages on the Estate. In 1903, however, concerns were raised about some of these designs. Members of the Village Council expressed a preference for sash, rather than casement, windows, stairs from the parlour rather than the kitchen, table baths instead of sunken baths and wooden floors for rooms without a copper. As a result of these representations Harvey was instructed to amend his designs for some cottages in Thorn Road to include sash windows. This was not the end of the matter. In December 1903 George Cadbury Jnr. presented a critical memorandum to the Trustees complaining about the 'unnecessary cost' of the new houses designed by Harvey in Thorn Road and Acacia Road.

Cadbury highlighted the 'unsatisfactory or expensive planning', the use of semi-circular windows, the hand-made bricks and the tiling over doors and windows. The Trustees temporarily came to the conclusion that 'in future new plans should be dispensed with as far as possible'. They also recommended 'that the time had come when W.A. Harvey should cease to give his whole time to the work of the Trust'. (BVT Minutes 16 December 1903)

On hearing about the recommendation, Harvey expressed his desire to leave the Trust immediately and set up his own practice. He was joined by two Trust employees, his nephew, H.Graham Wicks, and F.H. Bromhead. It is difficult to know if Harvey was wounded by this criticism of his work. He was, however, retained as a Consulting Architect and submitted plans for the Quaker Meeting House and the Junior School at Bournville in 1904. Harvey also started to publicise his work. A lecture to the Architectural Association in London in 1904 on 'Cottage Homes' was fully reported in *The Builder*. (13 February 1904, pp.159-63) Harvey's own book, *The Model Village and its Cottages: Bournville*, was published with the Trust's approval in 1906. Both undoubtedly raised his profile further, as did his prize-winning competition design for the laying out of the Sheffield Corporation Estate at Wincobank. This project was held in conjunction with a Model Cottage Exhibition organised by the National Housing Reform Council.(Gaskell, 1976, pp.192-96)

Harvey's site plan for the twenty acre Bournville Tenants Co-partnership scheme had also been accepted by the Bournville Village Trust in December 1906. A key feature of this low-density estate, which distinguishes it from Bournville Village, was the proper provision for recreational space as well as open areas. Harvey also designed the majority of the houses on this estate. Whilst a significant number of semi-detached houses were erected on Northfield Road and Woodlands Park Road, on Kingsley Road Harvey achieved a different effect by grouping blocks of dwellings in a simple but varied manner. Although brick and clay tiles were the dominant materials, half-timbering, rough cast, pargetting, dormers and elaborate chimney stacks were again used sparingly by Harvey to produce effect. Special attention was, once again, given to corner blocks and more richly treated houses provide a counterpoint to the simpler short terraces. These 'cottages with gardens' in 'the Beauty Spot of the Midlands' were admired locally, though they were not as widely publicised as the original Model Village.(**CHECK**)

The period immediately after the setting up of his own firm was taken up with the completion of three major public buildings on the Green at Bournville: The Quaker Meeting House, Ruskin Hall and the Junior School. The last two are usually characterised as being Tudor in style, though the School has some rich Gothic features and a fine timber-framed central hall. The Meeting House has an effective Y-shaped plan. The front has a prominent gable, a simple mullioned window and octagonal stair turret. The side arms and Norman entrance draw the worshipper into the striking but simple cruck-framed hall.

George Cadbury and the Trustees clearly had no doubts about Harvey's capacity to design public buildings at Bournville. In the summer of 1908 they decided that 'no buildings should be erected in the centre of the Village without the plans being first submitted to W.A. Harvey'. (BVT Minutes 2 July 1908) Paradoxically, Harvey's objections to Bedford Tylor's designs for timber-framed shops on the Green were ignored. Interestingly, his own Infant School, completed in 1910, and some of his houses on Hawthorne Road contained half-timbered bays. Harvey, however, only used proper half-timbering for whole sections of his buildings and provided adequate roof covering and thus sought to avoid the problems that arose when timbering was purely decorative. (Atkins, 1989, p.41-46)

Despite its obvious Elizabethan features the Infant School had a reinforced concrete floor and a hall with segmental vaults and window openings. The latter display Harvey's ability to absorb the past and think about the present. Many of the windows have leaded lights, but they are set at a low height so that the children would get the advantage of the light and the views.

Whilst working on this scheme Harvey was also engaged by Kings Norton and Northfield Urban District Council to design further accommodation for the Schools at Charlotte Road, Stirchley. (KN & N 2980)

It was suggested at the time that Harvey's design for the Infant School might have been influenced by his investigations of The Rookery (or Selly Manor, as it was later called). George Cadbury had bought the latter, 'a mere derelict in the midst of modern work of the poorest architectural character', in 1907. (TBAS 1920) Harvey considered re-erecting it on The Green. The Trustees consulted Raymond Unwin, who dismissed the idea. (BVT Minutes 17 May 1912)

Whilst Selly Manor was not deemed to be a suitable centrepiece for the Village, a Rest House, commemorating George and Elizabeth Cadbury's Silver Wedding, was. This octagonal structure was designed in 1913 by Harvey and his new partner, H. Graham Wicks. Unusually for Harvey, this was a closely based on the 16th century Market Hall at Dunster in Somerset. (JRIBA April 1951, p.247) Unlike the stone original, the Rest House is constructed of brick with stone dressings. The steeply pitched roof gives it a modest sense of drama, and the overhanging eaves provide shelter and shade for the villagers.

A 'new and fitting site' for Selly Manor was found at the bottom of Maple Road, just off The Green. It was re-erected between 1912 and 1916. As much of the original structure as possible from this complex building, constructed between the 14th and 17th centuries, was salvaged. Further appropriate material was collected elsewhere in the Midlands. (Henslowe, 1995) Whilst Harvey claimed that 'no piece of timber that could possibly be used was discarded', it is clear that Harvey was less interested in preservation than in 'interpretive restoration'. (Hofman, p.645) He introduced a staircase which had not survived, but for which there was some evidence in a painting by David Cox. Some of the timber framing and the windows, especially at the rear, were significantly changed. The end result was a more speculative and picturesque reconstruction. Selly Manor continues to provide a point of reference for some of the more decorative buildings on the Estate and gives an air of authenticity to the Model Village.

Harvey and Wicks went on to rescue the remnants of a 14th century cruck-framed house from Minworth Greaves. (BWM September 1932) Here the fragments of original material were fewer and the prospects for a historically accurate reconstruction were limited. Laurence Cadbury became interested in the scheme and proposed an approach to Harvey:

Concentrate on the main item of old construction and aim merely at producing one room which would be more or less in the nature of a hall, not bothering about the rest of the building. (BVT Minutes 21 January 1929)

Harvey accepted the basic idea but suggested that the reconstructed building be extended from two bays to three and that a 'minstrel's gallery' be included. The go-ahead for this romantic re-interpretation of the remains of Minworth Greaves House was given and it was re-erected alongside Selly Manor between 1929 and 1932. (Henslowe, 1995)

The last of Harvey's contributions to the buildings on Bournville Green was the Church of St Francis of Assisi. Although the Church itself was not constructed until 1925, the design was said to have been prepared 'early in the century'. (BWM Dec. 1929) Designs for the whole complex, which was intended to include a Parish Hall, the Church, a campanile (which was never constructed) and a linking arcade were published in 1913. Harvey and Rev. E.A. Hawkhead had presented the plans for the first part of the scheme, the Church Hall, to the Trustees in October 1912. The Italianate plans were accepted, but it was made clear that 'they are not what the Trustees would have chosen.' (BVT Minutes 16 October 1912)

This brick-built basilican church was 'a very early example of the revival of interest in the Early Christian and Lombardic styles'. (BWM Dec, 1929, p.364) It can be compared with similar

churches in the area by A.S Dixon and E.F. Reynolds and it perhaps owed something to the work of Lethaby. It was claimed to be 'the first example of the new phase in Mr. Harvey's development.' (*JRIBA* April 1951, p.248) Contemporaries noted that stylistically it struck 'a new note' in Bournville. (*BWM* April 1913, p.126) Years later Pevsner claimed that the scheme looked 'rather stand-offish and foreign'. (Pevsner and Wedgwood, 1966, p.157) It does strike an Italianate note in this corner of 'Merrie England', but despite its piecemeal construction it remains a well-crafted and internally calm church. It marked the beginning of a run of religious buildings by Harvey and Wicks in this Early Christian and Italianate style. These included the Church of Immanuel at Highter's Heath, the Robin Hood Cemetary Chapel at Solihull (*The Architect and Building News* 17 February 1933) and the imposing stone church of St Francis of Assisi, Friar Park, Wednesbury.

Harvey was also the architect of choice for some of the religiously-inspired colleges erected on Trust land at Selly Oak in the years before the First World War. He designed Kingsmead, a Quaker college for training missionaries, in 1905. Westhill College, a non-denominational college for training youth leaders and welfare workers, followed two years later. Carey Hall, completed in 1912, was a joint venture between the London Missionary Society, Baptists and Presbyterians. Westhill, with its 'Queen Anne' detailing, was the most architecturally ambitious of the colleges, while Kingsmead had a more domestic character. (Pevsner and Wedgwood, 1966, p. 162) Another venture aimed at educating working men, Fircroft, eventually found a home in the brick, stone and timber framed house that Harvey had designed for George Cadbury Jnr at Griffin's Hill in 1901.

Although the range of his work had widened, Harvey was primarily regarded as 'one of our experts on the cheap cottage problem' at the time of the First World War. (Weaver, 1919 ed., pp.19-23) Harvey and Wicks won first prize in the 1914 *Country Life* competition to design a pair of cottages for 250 Pounds. A slightly later design for a pair of cottages drawing on the Kentish vernacular was also commended by the same journal. (Weaver, 1919 ed., pp. 79-81)The firm continued to advise the Bournville Village Trust after the war. S.A. Wilmot's 1920 designs for housing types for the Bournville Works Housing Society were drawn up in consultation with Harvey and Wicks. (MS 1536) He also designed a detached house on Fox Hill for a Mrs Backhouse in 1922 and the Principal's House at Kingsmead College in 1933. (MS 1536 Plan 05/1; *The Architect and Building News* 24 March 1933, p.376)

In 1919 the Government strongly advised local authorities to employ a 'competent architect' to help them with their municipal housing schemes. (Swenarton, 1981 p.140) Architects who had made their names planning model estates and garden suburbs before or during the war were now in demand as designers of 'Homes for Heroes'. (Whittaker, 1918) Harvey and Wicks became involved in municipal housing schemes at Bromsgrove, West Bromwich and Kettering. (*JRIBA* April 1951, p. 248) The partners also collaborated with the Birmingham architect Joseph Crouch on a municipal venture at Oldham and with Adshead and Ramsay on council estates at Widnes and Newburn-on-Tyne.(Aldridge, 1923, p.167; Langstreth Thompson, p.174ff.) These estates generally contained simplified brick and tiled dwellings built at low densities but the layouts and building lines were often given careful consideration. The two Newburn schemes, at Throckley and Lemington, were commended by *The Architect's Journal*, which suggested that such ventures 'marked a great advance in the development of working class estates as far as the planning of layouts was concerned'. (2 July 1924, p.13) It was also apparent that an effort was made to introduce variety into the schemes, by using different types of dwellings and varied groupings. Special attention was paid to the windows and doorways, which show the Classical touches favoured by the Liverpool School. (*AJ* 2 July 1924, p.13; *Garden City Houses*, 1924, p.71) The estates at Lemington and Widnes show Harvey and Wicks (and their collaborators) continuing to take particular care with the landscaping and the provision of open spaces and

recreational areas. (*AJ* 2 July 1924 p.13; Langstreth Thompson, p.173-6) Clearly, Harvey's impact was being felt well beyond the confines of Bournville. 'His domestic work in many parts of the country,' it was noted, 'has become considerable.' (*JRIBA*, April 1951, p.248)

At an institutional level Harvey's profile began to increase. He was one of the founding members of the Town Planning Institute. He became President of the Birmingham Architectural Association in 1917 and a Fellow of the RIBA in 1918. Harvey's expertise was acknowledged when he was appointed as a Midland assessor for the RIBA/ Local Government Board Cottage Design Competition. (*RIBA*, 1918, p.9) He was a key figure in many of Birmingham's artistic and horticultural organisations. (See *Obits*) These included the Royal Society of Arts, the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, the Birmingham Art Advisory Committee, the Birmingham Competitive Musical Festival and the Botanical and Horticultural Society of Birmingham.) His main relaxations seem to have been travel and golf, and he was said to have a valuable collection of antiques and continental works of art. (*BM* 17 February 1951; *BP* 17 February 1951; *BWM* March 1951, p.84) Personally, he seems to have been a much-liked and admired figure. 'His courage, his integrity, and the charm of his personality,' one obituarist noted, 'won for him the respect and love of innumerable friends.' (*JRIBA* April 1951, pp.247-48; *JRTPI* February 1951)

The conservation work at Bournville was followed up by further work in this field.

Harvey and Wicks restored the Tudor Grimshaw Hall at Knowle and the early 18th century Edgbaston Hall. (*JRIBA* April 1950, p. 248) In these cases the partners were not dealing with derelict structures and their work was altogether more tactful and respectful.

After the First World War Harvey and Wicks got an increasing number of commissions for public buildings. (*JRIBA* April 1951, p.248) They designed the headquarters of the Deaf and Dumb Association in Birmingham, The Tamworth War Memorial Hospital, a number of banks, including the Westminster Bank at West Bromwich, (*The Brick Builder*, June 1930) old people's dwellings and infant welfare centres and schools for the Birmingham Education Committee. The Bierton Road Schools at Yardley were the most notable examples of Harvey and Wicks' school buildings of the early 1930s. (Maddocks and Wilford, c.1935). Their most widely admired works in this period were the Town Hall and Municipal Offices at Dudley. The first phase, which the Council insisted should harmonise with existing Victorian police buildings, incorporated a War Memorial with a clock tower in brick, a museum, court rooms and a large hall. This closely followed Harvey and Wicks competition-winning design of 1924. (*The Builder* 25 January 1924) The Town Hall and Clock Tower, with their wide expanses of brickwork, were well-received. (*The Architect and Building News*, 14 June 1929, pp. 785-89; *AJ* 9 July 1930, pp. 48-51) New Municipal Offices soon followed on the opposite side of the site. Once again simple brickwork was used to harmonise with the old Police buildings and the new Town Hall. These are well-planned and carefully crafted municipal offices with 'a semi-Romanesque loggia a la Ostberg'. (Pevsner, 1974, p.122; *The Builder* 20 December 1935, p.1110) Harvey and Wicks were awarded the Bronze Medal of the RIBA for the schemes in December 1935. (*The Builder* 13 December 1935, p. 1050) The design attracted wide attention at the time. (*JRIBA* April 1951, p.248) Their increasing experience in this particular field led to further successes in the competitions for Oldbury Civic Centre and Municipal Offices and Bedford Town Hall. H.V. Lanchester thought the design for the latter had 'great merit', 'both practically and artistically'. (*AJ* 26 December 1940, p. 513) War meant neither of these schemes came to fruition.

Further recognition from the RIBA came when Harvey earned the Distinction in Town Planning in 1936. It is hardly surprising that Harvey was later consulted about post-war reconstruction plans. (West Midlands Group, 1948) It was said that he had 'prepared plans for large construction schemes in Birmingham. (*BWM* March 1951, p.84)

W.A. Harvey had a long and distinguished career. Although much of his work was carried

out within the geographically confined area of the West Midlands, his influence was felt over a far wider area. 'His distinguished work,' one generous obituarist claimed, 'was recognised not only in this country but on the Continent and in America, and his influence on the architectural movements of the last half century has been very considerable.' (*JRIBA* April 1951, p.247) Certainly, Harvey's work at Bournville attracted much British and international attention. (Harrison, 1999, pp. 86-87) 'He brought to...Bournville's development,' it was rightly claimed, 'a new conception of design applied to small and medium sized suburban houses, and to their layout in relation to their surroundings, which had no little influence over a very wide field.' (*BWM* March 1951. Pp.83-4) The latter parts of his career were rather less well publicised, but his work remained distinguished and sometimes attracted generous praise. 'The church architecture, schools and other public buildings,' it was claimed, 'illustrate the variety of his architectural styles in which he expressed his genius, though not as a copyist.' (*JRIBA* April 1951, p. 247) It is generally accepted that Harvey was able to use old forms in an original way. It is easier now to accept his 'easy versatility', but he tempered this fluid historicism by moving towards simpler forms, even in his early work. (Granelli, 1984, p.56) Many recognised that his buildings were carefully disposed, well-designed, properly crafted and that most had 'a freshness that still appeals.' (*BWM* March 1951, p.83) 'As the years went by,' one of his successors noted, 'he came to a mastery of the use of building materials as a means of achieving colour and texture. This skill, together with his love of delicate detail, placed his work on a very high level.' (*BWM* March 1951. P. 84) Here was an architect and planner who not only helped to establish the simple, appealing and enduringly popular suburban pattern of 20th century England but also generated a body of soundly constructed and well-designed public buildings and took a prominent place in the local artistic and cultural networks. His was a life with a local focus but a wider impact.

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