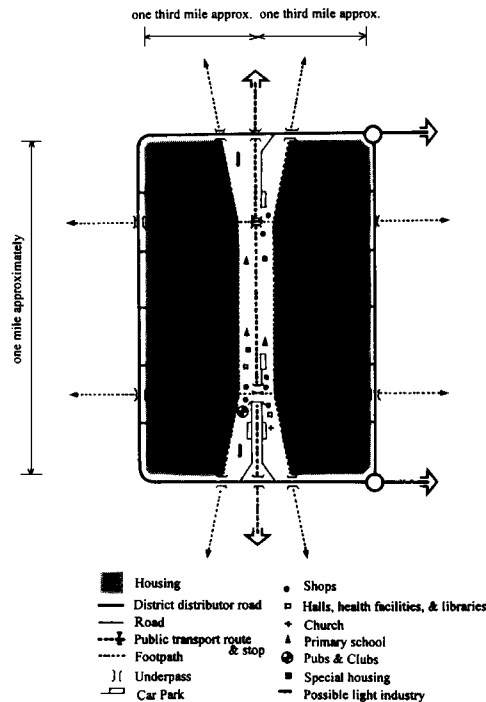


Figure 7.8 MARS plan
(Korn and Samuely, 1942)

Figure 7.9 Redditch
(Houghton-Evans, 1975)



suggested the idea of landscape fingers connecting the countryside with the city centre, an idea which reappears in *Towards an Urban Renaissance* (The Urban Task Force, 1999). The MARS Plan for London is a fine theoretical exploration of urban form. In practice, however, it was the ideas of Howard as interpreted by Abercrombie which were finally accepted as the basis for planning London and its region in the post-war period (Abercrombie, 1945).

BRITISH NEW TOWNS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A number of the second generation of new towns built after the Second World War in the 1960s were clearly based upon the linear city concept. Notable amongst these linear new town plans are: Redditch; the linear city for Central Lancashire comprising Preston, Leyland and Chorley; Runcorn; and the first proposals for both Telford and the new city for North Bucks.

In his report on a regional study for Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, Hugh Wilson advocates a linear structure based upon a public transport spine linking all new development (Wilson *et al.*, 1965). Wilson also developed this idea for the new town of Redditch, for which he was commissioned in 1964. The basic structuring concept for Redditch is shown in Figure 7.9. The fundamental feature of the plan is a road for public transport, unimpeded by other vehicles. Community facilities were to be placed on this public transport spine at the bus stops which were to act as the foci of the districts. The districts were to be of mixed use and to contain residential, industrial, recreational

and other related land uses. All parts of the districts were planned to be within half a mile or 10 minutes' walking distance of the district centre and its bus stop. These proposals in 1964 seem as fresh today as the time they were written: such ideas now appear in many proposals for sustainable development.

A regional study for mid-Lancashire included a proposal for a linear city incorporating Preston, Leyland and Chorley (Matthew, 1967). The three existing settlements were to be connected by a triple strand of routes, the central one being a 'community route' for use by public transport only. Both outer routes were to be roads for the motor car. The city region was planned for a population of 500 000 housed in Radburn-style residential development on both sides of the public transport route (Figure 7.10).

Arthur Ling, who had worked on the MARS plan for London, was the first planner since Soria y Mata to implement a plan specifically designed for public transport. Runcorn in Cheshire was the extension of an existing settlement with a population of 30 000. It already had an industrial base, and Ling planned to increase the population to 100 000, attracting additional employment outlets onto a strong local economic base. The population was arranged in a dispersed linear form: 'A linear arrangement of new residential communities, on either side of a spinal public transport route, has been evolved so that the majority of people will be within five minutes walking distance, or 500 yards, of a route which is especially reserved for buses' (Ling, 1967). It was not possible to use a pure linear form for the town because of the existing development. Ling's solution to the problem was both simple and elegant: he turned the linear structure in on itself to form a figure-

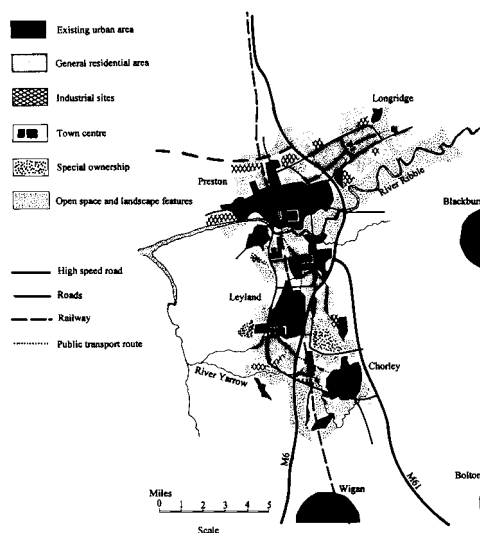


Figure 7.10 Central Lancashire (Matthew, 1967)

of-eight with the town centre in a focal position (see Figure 6.24). The spine of the plan is the bus-only road which links all the neighbourhoods to each other and to the town centre. The expressways for private cars bound the urban area and have spur roads that enter each neighbourhood but do not traverse them to form direct connections. This is the only British new town which was designed primarily for public transport: 'In many post-war new towns and suburban extensions, the tendency has been to design the road layout for private vehicles and then route buses along the most appropriate roads. This has led in some instances to a minimum use of public transport which has made it uneconomical to provide socially convenient services. It is considered that contribution of public transport to a new town is of such importance that it is essential to plan for it as an integral part of the town structure and not to provide it as an afterthought' (Ling, 1967). How appropriate these words still sound today – a promising model for a sustainable city even though