



Figure 7.52 Reston, USA

communities. If so, then a system based on the local control of land in the Howard tradition may prove more successful than the rigid nationalization of land itself or even of a national system for taxing betterment values.

Many of Howard's ideas were put into practice at Letchworth and Welwyn. Later, those ideas were to influence the planning of the first group of new towns built in Britain after the Second World War. Basically

Howard's concept for the garden city was a means of controlling the growth of cities through the building of a series of new towns physically separated from each other and from the parent city. The garden cities were to be self-contained for many needs. Nevertheless, Howard considered the urban areas so formed to be integrated socially and economically: the towns while physically separate were to be connected by an efficient transport network. Despite the social and economic integration the garden cities were physically separate, centralized and inward looking in their urban structure.

In 1945, the Reith Committee was appointed to: '... consider the general questions of the establishment, development, organization and administration that will arise in the promotion of New Towns in furtherance of a policy of planned decentralization from congested areas; and in accordance therewith to suggest guiding principles on which such Towns should be established and developed as self-contained and balanced communities for work and living'. Purchase of the land for the New Towns was to be by public authorities. The population of each town was initially to be 30 000 to 50 000, closely approximating Howard's own suggestions. Each Town was to be surrounded by a green

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belt which was to be used for agriculture and smallholdings for the production of food for the local market. The brief developed for the New Towns was comprehensive and detailed. It included recommendations for a balance of income groups in the town, a mixture of those groups in each neighbourhood and a broad base of industries.

Cumbernauld, Scotland, was one of the later of these British new towns which, by its form, most closely expresses the concept of the centralized urban structure (Wilson, 1958). The planners of Cumbernauld were concerned to correct the deficiencies, as they saw it, of the neighbourhood concept. The planned neighbourhood was thought to encourage people to look inward on their local area rather than visualizing the town as a whole. The neighbourhood also, so the argument ran, attempted to regulate social life into a fixed pattern of local communities. A compact town clustered round a single centre was proposed as the solution to these problems associated with neighbourhood planning (Figures 7.54–7.56). The town of Cumbernauld was conceived as a hilltop settlement standing in the landscape with the clear profile of Italian cities like Montepulciano or San Gimignano. For such a hilltop town both the grid-iron and linear forms of road pattern were considered to be inappropriate. A radial pattern was therefore proposed which had two ring roads, an inner one around the centre and an outer loop that gave access to the Radburn-style housing areas.

An unusual feature of Cumbernauld is the elongated multilevel centre which sits along the ridge of the hilltop and around which the rest of the town sits uncomfortably. Pedestrians and vehicular traffic are arranged on different levels. The town centre

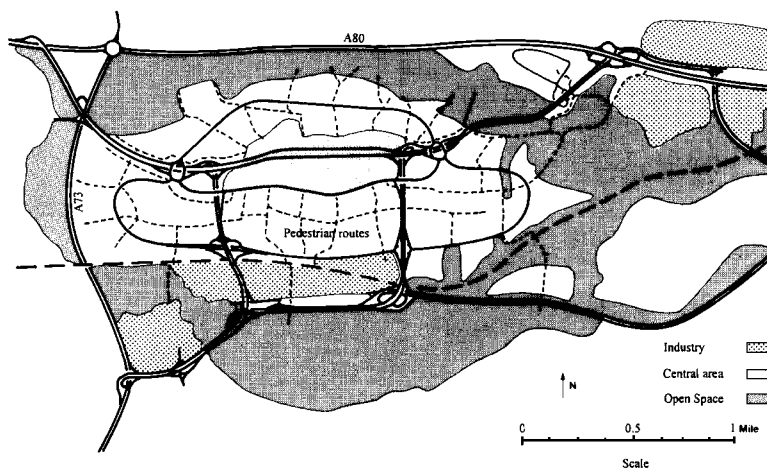


Figure 7.54 Cumbernauld (Houghton-Evans, 1975)

Figure 7.55 Cumbernauld, town centre



Figure 7.56 Cumbernauld, town centre



is windswept, without the architectural character or sunny climate of those wonderful Italian hilltop towns on which Cumbernauld was modelled. The centre is