



ASSESSMENT OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE
THE POINT, 602 MIDSUMMER BOULEVARD, MILTON KEYNES MK9 3NB

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I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT



Fig. 1.1.1: Bird's eye view of The Point, marked with a blue dot, neighbouring the Grade II listed Shopping Centre (on the left).

1.1 Richard Coleman Citydesigner has been commissioned by Hammerson plc to provide an assessment of the architectural and historical significance of the building in their ownership known as 'The Point' at 602 Midsummer Boulevard, Milton Keynes, MK9 3NB. Chapter 2.0 presents a detailed study of the development of the site, based on a study of archival records, publications and site inspections, and assesses its historical significance. Chapter 3.0 introduces the architects of the building. Chapter 4.0 identifies and assesses The Point against contemporary recreation buildings. Chapter 5.0 studies recent designations such as the listing of the neighbouring Shopping Building and the rejection from listing of Lloyds Court, also in Milton Keynes, in 2011. The significance of the building is assessed under the current criteria for statutory listing, at chapter 5.0, with the overall conclusions following at chapter 6.0. The full references can be found at chapter 7.0.

Appendix I includes English Heritage's Listing Citation for Milton Keynes Shopping Building

Appendix II includes English Heritage's Certificate of Immunity from Listing Report for Lloyds Court, Milton Keynes



Fig. 1.1.2: Aerial view illustrating the location of The Point (highlighted in red), within Central Milton Keynes.

I.0 INTRODUCTION (CONTD)
I.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT BUILDING

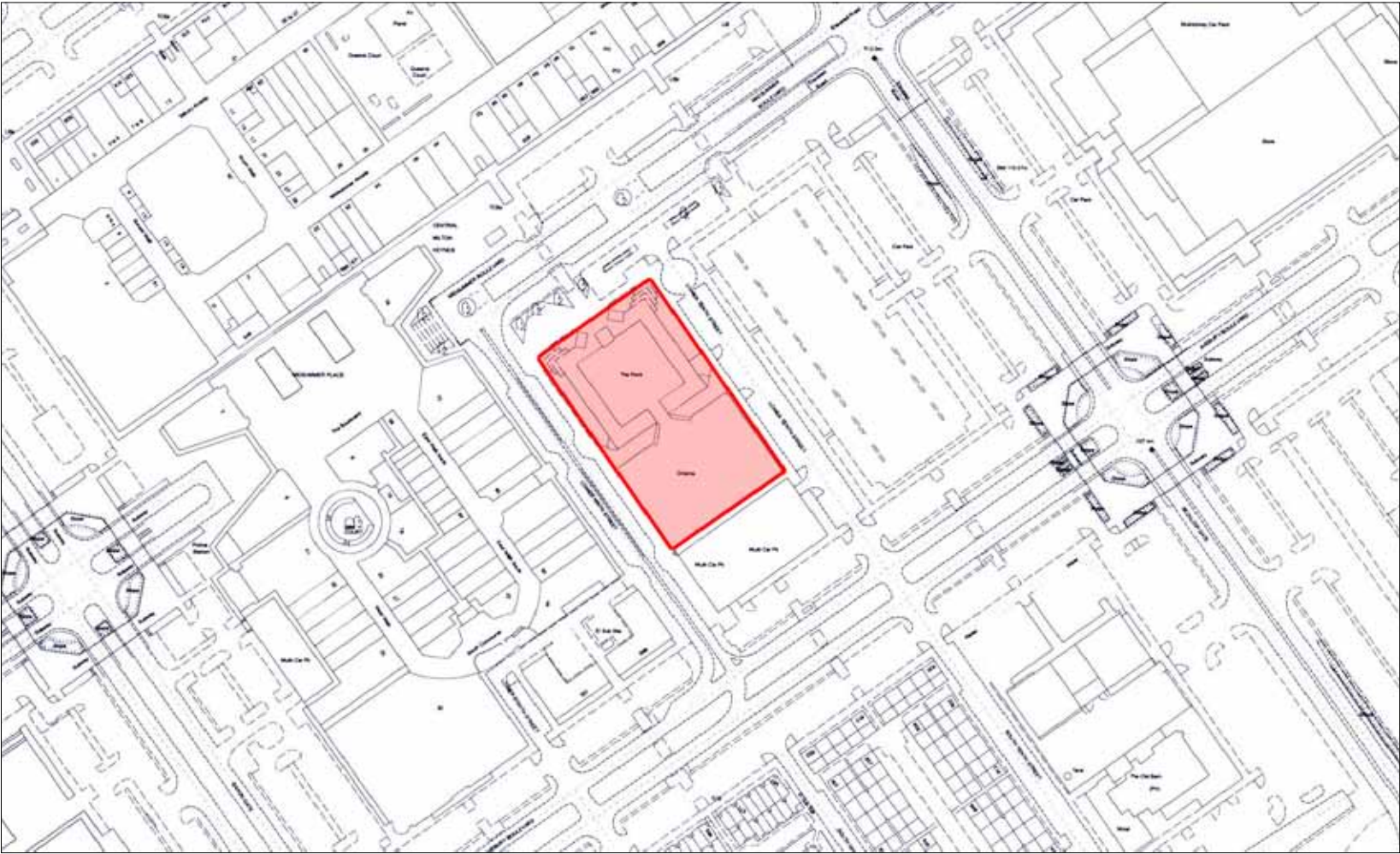


Fig.1.2.1: Site Boundary Plan.

- 1.2.1 The subject building consists of a red painted framework of a ‘pyramid’ with a ziggurat of reflective glass elements within it. It provides amenity suites alongside a larger ‘box’ multiplex building. It is located in the centre of the former ‘New Town’ of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. Before the construction of larger surrounding buildings it was more prominent. This is no longer the case. The site is bounded: to the north by Midsummer Boulevard; to the east by Lower Tenth Street; to the south by Avebury Boulevard; and to the west by Lower Ninth Street (see fig.1.2.1).
- 1.2.2 The Point is not located within a conservation area. To the north west is the Grade II listed Central Milton Keynes Shopping Centre (also known as the Shopping Building), which is the only listed building in Central Milton Keynes.



Fig.1.2.4: Current photograph of The Point.



Fig.1.2.2: Current photograph of The Point.



Fig.1.2.3: Current photograph of The Point.

2.0 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

2.1 THE HISTORY OF THE SITE

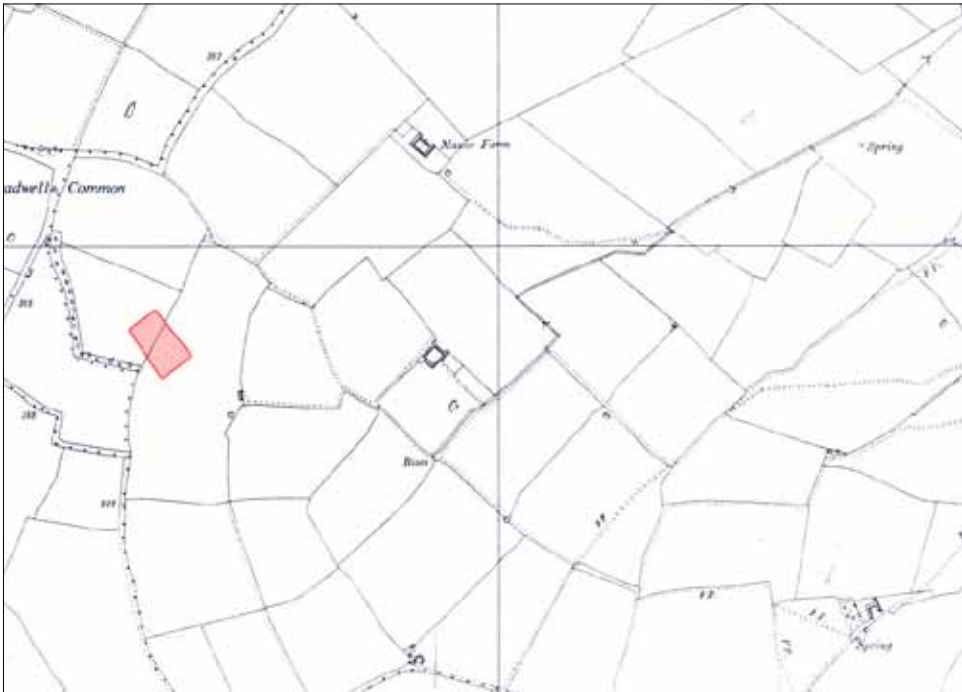


Figure 2.1: Site Boundary Plan overlaid on 1958 Ordnance Survey.

- 2.1.1 This section briefly looks at the historical background of the development site and its wider setting. It uses a series of historic maps which illustrate the changes in the urban form.
- 2.1.2 Milton Keynes was designated as a 'New Town' by Parliament in 1967. Its location was chosen for its equidistant position between London, Birmingham, Leicester, Oxford and Cambridge with the intention that it would be self sustaining and eventually become a major regional centre in its own right. Although it was built on rural countryside its planned boundaries included the existing towns of Bletchley, Wolverton and Stony Stratford and many smaller villages. The 1958 OS map in Figure 2.1 reveals the former rural character of the countryside surrounding the development site and what became the Milton Keynes urban area.

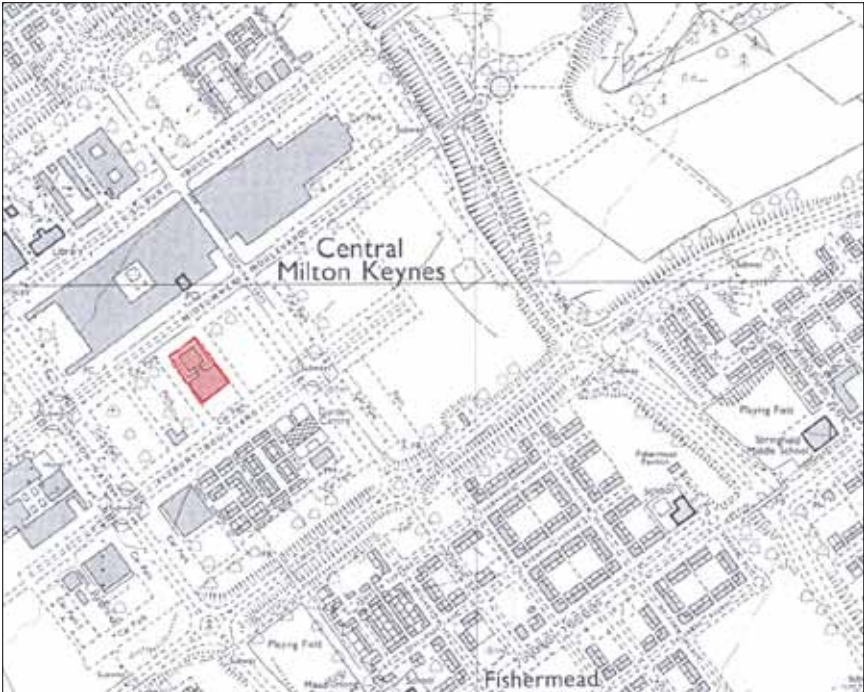


Figure 2.2: Site Boundary Plan overlaid on 1987 Ordnance Survey.

- 2.1.3 Milton Keynes became the largest of the so-called New Towns built in the UK during the 1960s. When the boundary of Milton Keynes was defined, some 40,000 people lived in the 'designated area'. By the 2001 Census, the population had reached 177,500 (181,000 in the contiguous urban area) and is projected to exceed 300,000 by 2030, making the New Town area substantially larger than many official cities.
- 2.1.4 The 1987 map at figure 2.2 reveals the extent of the urban development at Milton Keynes. The site is surrounded by large scale development, chiefly carried out during the 1970s and early 1980s, including the main shopping centre. The design and planning was delegated to the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC). Its strongly modernist designs featured regularly in the architectural magazines of the day. They set in place the characteristic grid roads between districts and

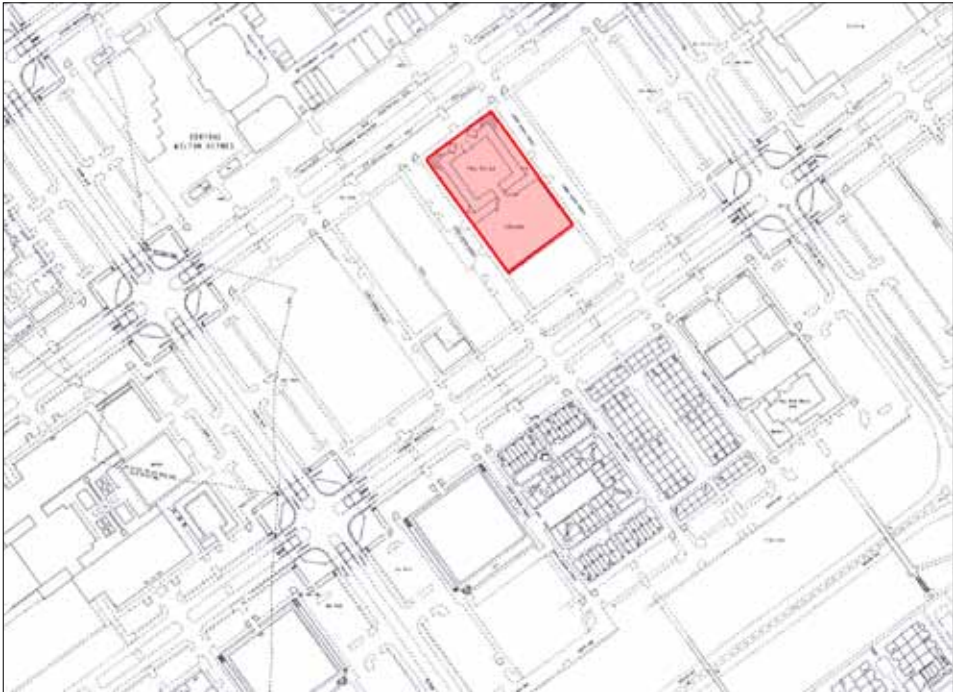


Figure 2.3: Site Boundary Plan overlaid on 1990 Ordnance Survey.

- the intensive planting and parkland that survive, in the great part, today. However, the government wound up MKDC in 1992, transferring control to the Commission for New Towns (CNT) and then finally to English Partnerships in joint partnership with Milton Keynes Council.
- 2.1.5 The 1990 map at figure 2.3 shows in greater detail the large scale development in Central Milton Keynes. This includes the construction of the Food Centre in the late 1980s which is shown to the northeast of The Point opposite the main shopping centre. By 2000 the centre had undergone further development which saw a more high density approach to construction (see figure 2.4). This included the new food halls building in the late 1980s, and more recently an extension of the shopping centre at Midsummer Place and new residential and office developments closer to the retail centre.

2.0 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE (CONTD)

2.2 THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

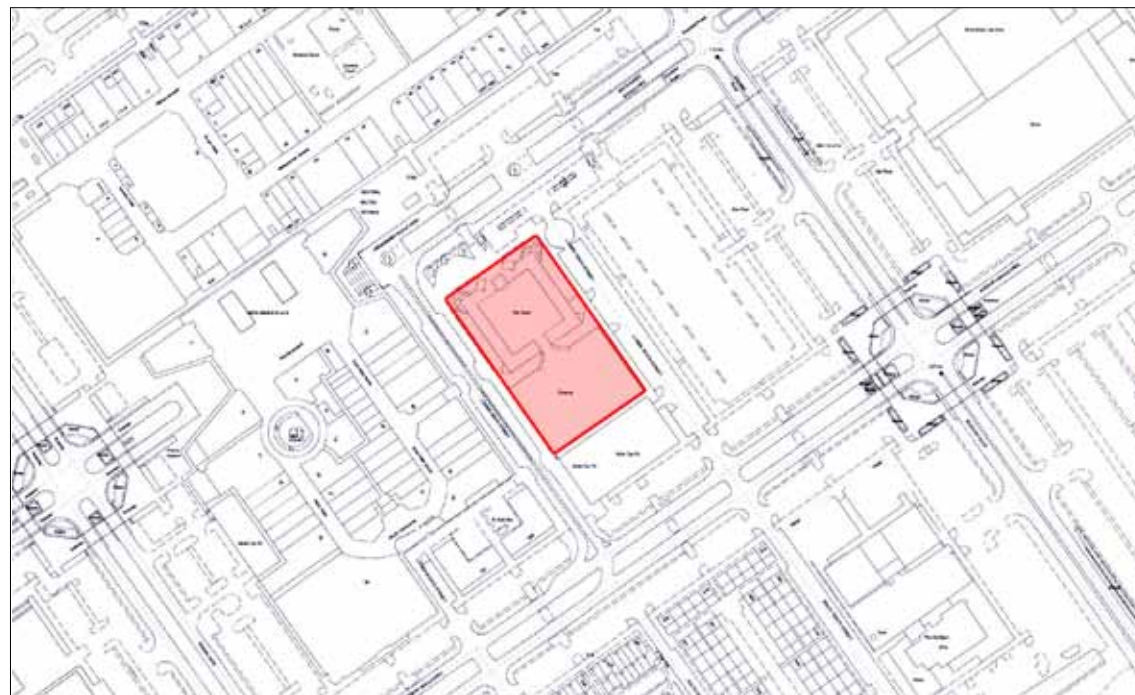


Figure 2.4: Site Boundary Plan overlaid on 2000 Ordnance Survey.

2.2.1 In the 1980s there was a real need for leisure amenities for the rapidly increasing population of Milton Keynes. The town's Development Corporation responded by drawing up a list of all the facilities required and invited developers to tender their designs. The brief was fulfilled by an Anglo-American partnership formed by Bass Leisure and American Multi-Cinema (AMC). Their collaboration resulted in the £9million scheme which included a multiplex cinema with ten screens, a 1500-seat bingo hall, a nightclub, restaurants and amusement arcades, which opened to the public in November 1985.

2.2.2 Inspired by an ancient ziggurat pyramid, the design of the centre which was conceived by the interior designer Neil Tibbatts, reflected the physical arrangement of the facilities within. The Building Design Partnership (BDP) was responsible for the architecture, structural, mechanical and electrical engineering, and acoustics of The Point. Alec Stevenson of the Manchester branch of BDP was the main architect of the project and, although the American investors were not impressed with the amount of bureaucracy and difficulty encountered in the building process, it is claimed that a 'fast track design and construction was used to meet a 70 week construction programme'.

2.2.3 The building included:

- A bar and restaurant area;
- A bingo hall in the basement;
- A ten screen Cinema at the rear (housed in a separate 'box' construction); and
- A nightclub on the top level



Figure 2.5: Artist Impression of The Point published in Building journal, dated 16 August 1985.



Figure 2.6: Interior view of The Point's cinema foyer, published in Building journal dated 7 February 1986.

The bingo hall and social centre (at basement level) required more space than the pub and restaurant level above, which in turn, needed a larger area than the club on the second floor. So the development followed a system of tiers with the smallest, top 'building block' housing the lighting rig for the nightclub.

2.2.4 The cinema, which followed AMC's standard design, was constructed as a simple rectangular box at the rear. It was originally linked to the main 'pyramidal' structure by a short glazed walkway, although this walkway is no longer in use.

2.2.5 The central mall on the ground floor was devised to connect most of the facilities and offer an enclosed area for customers to meet. It was described as having a jumble of styles and décor "from Post-Modern to Hi-Tech, taking in palm-court Art Deco and health- food striped pine en route – which spill out on the mall in playful abandon" (Building, 7 February 1986.).

2.2.6 Over the mirror-glazed stepped structure are four tubular steel lattice beams which extend from the four corners of the base and meet 21m above the ground. Painted red and originally illuminated by neon light the girders were intended to be visible from a distance. The structure has a strong identity, and was built to attract customers to an 'environment' as opposed to a building. Its profile has been described as sitting well next to the rectilinear 1960s shopping centre nearby, although its 'superslick' composition is generally seen as "not architecturally significant" (Milton Keynes Sunday Citizen, 21 October 2001). The designer himself, Neil Tibbatts, stated that "A lot of what we have done here would upset the purists. But last week they took £120,000 over the counter. That's the object of the exercise, not to win design awards" (Building, 16 August 1985).

2.2.7 At the time of its completion it claimed to be the first multiplex in the UK, although already in 1986 Chuck Wesocky, the then managing director of AMC, stated that "It was never our intention to do a one-off. There are 10 other developments currently underway" (DJ Magazine, June 1986) with similar complexes being built or conceived in Glasgow, Dundee, Newcastle, Warrington, Rotherham, Sheffield, Dudley and Bristol.

3.0 THE ARCHITECTS

- 3.1 This section introduces the architects of The Point, BDP (originally Building Design Partnership). It is important to note that the design concept was carried out by the interior designer Neil Tibbatts to reflect the physical arrangement of the facilities within. BDP was responsible for the architecture, structural, mechanical and electrical engineering, and acoustics of The Point
- 3.2 BDP is a successful multi-disciplinary practice of architects and engineers, founded in 1961 by the late Professor Sir George Grenfell Baines, “arguably the first modern British architect to engage fully with the complexities of the modern commercial world” (The Times, 14 May 2003).
- 3.3 BDP is considered the first and largest UK example of the multi-disciplinary building ethos: architects, engineers, landscape architects, interior designers, cost consultants and specialists in everything from energy to electronics, all working in teams together. They are a wide ranging practice. Since the design of The Point BDP have included cinema clusters in many of their retail/leisure complexes. For example, cinemas at Whiteleys of Bayswater in London (fig.3.1) and more recently Cineworld St. Helens, an 11 screen multiplex with a wine bar (fig.3.2).
- 3.4 BDP's most famous schemes across a wide range of building types include the following:
- Preston Bus Station, 1969 - A dramatic and Brutalist building, considered a Lancashire landmark (fig.3.3) was refused listing in 2010.
 - Halifax Building Society Headquarters, 1974 - awarded the 1975 RIBA Award for Architecture (fig.3.4). This building is currently being considered for listing by English Heritage.
 - No 1 Court at Wimbledon's All England Lawn Tennis Club, 1997 - winning many awards including the Institution of Structural Engineers Special Award.



Fig.3.1: Whiteleys of Bayswater, London (includes cinemas).



Fig.3.2: Cineworld, St. Helens.



Figure 3.3 Preston Bus Station.



Figure 3.4 Halifax Building Society Headquarters.

4.0 COMPARATIVE EXAMPLES OF CONTEMPORARY RECREATIONAL BUILDINGS

4.1 The word multiplex is of American origin, a jargon expression originally meaning 'a system of simultaneous communication of two or more messages on the same radio transmission or telephone line'. The term was popularly adopted to mean 'more than one cinema screen' or the projection of the same film in more than one theatre, at the same time.

4.2 Stanley Durwood of American Multi-Cinema (now AMC) pioneered the concept of the multi screen cinema or multiplex in 1963, with his two side-by-side theatres at Ward Parkway Centre in Kansas City, US. His insight came from the realisation that demands on cinema staff are not constant but come in bursts at the start and end of the movie. By staggering the starting time of films, projected in several linked auditoriums, one sole team of employees would be able to keep all of them operational.

4.3 The idea of the multiplex cinema was also conceived as a way of dealing with the unpredictable response the public may have towards films. There would be enough space to respond to an overwhelming successful film, which may be screened in two, three or more rooms, or the opportunity of showing a small budget film outside of an art house environment. Multiplexes were also conceived in part to combat the growing entertainment options at home.

4.4 Multiplex complexes, also referred to simply as multiplexes, combined the idea of attracting customers to view films with a complete leisure experience, within an enclosed, clean and easily accessible environment. The concept developed from the idea of shopping malls which had become very popular in America as early as the 1950s (fig.4.1). They offered convenience, indoor facilities and a wide selection of stores, and responded to the rising 'suburbanisation' and the popularity of the car. Retailers of course viewed entertainment environments as a way of luring shoppers. In their time, the multiplexes (and later megaplexes) of the 1980s and 1990s were considered as a rock solid basis around which to wrap a range of retail and catering options. Together these facilities produced a relatively standard formula for high-yielding, 'cash-cow' style investments.

4.5 Milton Keynes lacked a traditional high street and possessed a young, mobile and affluent population. Also, its grid system and layout was conceived to

accommodate the motorcar. In this respect it shared a lot of similarities with the American suburban environment. This may have convinced AMC that the tried and tested formula offered by the multiplex and entertainment centre could be exported outside the US.

4.6 Although the striking shape of The Point makes it uncharacteristic "the other components are the blue-print model for multiplexes: numerous small cinemas grouped together in one building, trading in combination with quality restaurants, shopping and ample single level car parking". (Chartered Surveyor Weekly, 7 August 1986). Other well represented features of the American integrated leisure centre are a 'themed' and dramatic exterior, open spaces which allowed people to congregate, and a variety of entertainments which would change quickly throughout the duration of a patron's visit (like films) in order to always offer a new diversion.

4.7 In its first years, The Point did appear to fulfil its function. In a 1989 RIBA Journal article it was described as enjoying an unprecedented success, having a broad appeal to a variety of generations and attracting patrons from a 50-60 mile radius. Apart from the cinema screens, the complex was praised for its car parking, spacious interiors and a dynamic atmosphere. A new standard of cleanliness and organisation inherited from the American scene had also been set in contrast, for example, to the old Art Deco picture palace.

4.8 This type of development has become outdated quite quickly. Multiplex cinemas were superseded in the late 1980s by megaplex theatres where 20 or more screens are on offer.

4.9 Today it is argued that a new breed of mixed-use entertainment centres are sought, which offer innovative and cultural projects, rather than standard 'anchors' such as multi-screen cinemas, bowling alleys and night clubs. It is suggested that the future may rest with landmark projects, such as the Lowry Centre (fig.4.2) and Tate Modern (fig.4.3), which illustrate the desire for leisure-led redevelopment combined with the interests in arts and culture and a high quality environment.



Figure 4.1: 1950s Mall in the US.



Figure 4.2: The Lowry Centre on Salford Quays.



Figure 4.3: The Tate Modern, on the Southbank in London.

5.0 RECENT DESIGNATIONS IN CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES



Figure 5.1: Milton Keynes Shopping Building, listed Grade II.

5.1 Two buildings which form an integral part of the Central Milton Keynes development have been recently considered for statutory listing. These are the Shopping Building (figs.5.1 and 5.2), which neighbours the subject building to the north west, and Lloyds Court (figs.5.3 and 5.4) at 28, Secklow Gate West, located two blocks north of the site.

5.2 Milton Keynes's Shopping Building of 1973-9, designed by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, was awarded statutory protection at Grade II in 2010. The listing notes, which can be found in full at appendix I, give the following principal reasons for its designation:

- Architectural interest: a highly-regarded, little altered, 650-metre long steel and glass structure whose design was heavily influenced by the work of the leading early-mid C20 architect Mies van der Rohe; its rigour, consistency, luminosity and user-friendliness all denote its success as a new approach to retail design
- Exemplar: as the outstanding post-war retail development in England, successfully drawing on American inspirations but creating a singular shopping centre, realised on a monumental scale



Figure 5.2: Internal view of the Shopping Building.

- Materials: for the high quality and consistent deployment of materials and finishes, all executed to careful standards of finish
- Intactness: the public elements of the shopping centre are little-altered and retain the original appearance of the design
- Adaptability: the success of the complex lies in part in its ability to accommodate fast-changing retail stores while retaining its overall architectural integrity
- Artistic interest: for its public artworks, notably Liliane Lijn's Circle of Light, which endows this retail complex with prestige and meaning
- Town planning: as the purpose-built centrepiece of Britain's last, largest, and in planning terms most innovative new town, which created a retail space realised on a civic scale.

5.0 RECENT DESIGNATIONS IN CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES (CONTD)



Figure 5.3: Lloyds Court, Milton Keynes, awarded a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in April 2011.

5.3 Lloyds Court was considered for listing by English Heritage but its listing was rejected and the building was awarded immunity from listing for five years, in 2011. Below, the reasons for the designation decision are extracted from the Certificate of Immunity from Listing, which can be found in full at appendix II.

- Architectural quality: Lloyds Court lacks the very high standard of architectural interest required for a building of such recent date to be designated;
- Historic interest: as the first commercial building completed in the internationally recognised planned development of Milton Keynes, Lloyds Court has some claims to historic interest but this properly relates to the overall planning history of the new town rather than as a reason to designate this particular building.



Figure 5.4: Lloyds Court, main entrance.

5.4 The examples above illustrate a continued interest in the architecture of Central Milton Keynes, but also a selective approach to recognising only a high quality of architecture. Qualities found in the Shopping Building such as “high quality and consistent deployment of materials and finishes” or “artistic interest” are not demonstrated in The Point. It is more likely that The Point “lacks the very high standard of architectural interest required for a building of such recent date to be designated” as is the case with the nearby Lloyds Court.

6.0 ASSESSMENT UNDER LISTING CRITERIA



Fig.6.1 Current photograph of The Point.

- 6.1

Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) imposes a duty on the Secretary of State to compile or approve a list or lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest as a guide to the planning authorities when carrying out their planning functions. The planning system is designed to regulate the development and use of land in the public's interest. The designation of historic sites enables the planning system to protect them, through the complementary systems of listed building consent and conservation area control, coupled with controls over scheduled monument consent.
- 6.2

The statutory criteria for listing are the special architectural or historic interest of a building. Many buildings are interesting architecturally or historically, but, in order to be listed, a building must have "special" interest. The principles of selection for listing buildings are set out in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings dated March 2010. These are statutory criteria and general principles applied by the Secretary of State when deciding whether a building is of special architectural or historic interest and should be added to the list of buildings compiled under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6.3 In addition to the statutory criteria and the general principles included in DCMS's Principles of Selection, specific 'selection guides' for different building types are published by English Heritage. The selection guides provide detailed technical information about each building type, and are linked to the general principles contained in this guidance. They demonstrate what features are considered significant and likely to make a building of special architectural or historic interest when assessing buildings of a particular type from different periods, regions, or styles. The statutory criteria and general principles outlined below take precedence over the selection guides, published as supplementary information. The relevant selection guide for The Point building is for 'Culture and Entertainment Buildings', which was published in April 2011.

- 6.4

Statutory criteria include:
(i) Architectural Interest; and
(ii) Historic Interest.

- 6.5

Statutory criteria may also include:
(iii) Group value; and
(iv) A building which includes a particular man-made feature, object or something fixed to or forming part of it.

- 6.6

General principles include:
(a) Age and rarity;
(b) Aesthetic merits;
(c) Selectivity;
(d) National interest; and
(e) State of repair.

6.7 The building which is the subject of this report (fig.6.1) is analysed below, based on the criteria and general principles listed above.

- 6.7.1

Criterion (i) Architectural Interest:
Elain Harwood, English Heritage's leading expert on 20th century architecture, notes that listed post war buildings must be of exceptional

quality right down to the fine detailing of the building. This is not the case here as the whole structure was designed for maximum visual impact and there was no real concern for quality or refined detailing. Inadequate expression has been given to structural support and elements of the composition demonstrate visual weakness and a muddled architectural language. The appearance is inspired by the elements of the American shopping mall and entertainment complex structures which have no ambition to be architecturally valuable. It cannot be said that the building is significant for the high quality and consistent deployment of materials and finishes or carefully executed standards of finish. The photographic surveys taken in 2006 and 2012, found at appendix III of this report, illustrate interior and external views and reaffirm the lack of significant architectural interest of the building.

6.7.2 **Criterion (ii) Historic Interest:**

The Point is part of Central Milton Keynes (CMK), the centre of what is considered Britain's largest and, in planning terms, most innovative 'New Town'. CMK was planned between 1968 and 1972 as a series of kilometre grid squares divided by roads and strips of parkland, to be lined with sleek, urban buildings. The Point was completed in 1985, considerably later than the earlier, more significant buildings such as the neighbouring Shopping Building (1973-9), Lloyds Court (1977), and housing schemes part of the wider Milton Keynes development (1972-77). There is no question that the concept behind Milton Keynes is one of historical significance in terms of architecture, urbanism and social history but its significant interest is associated with the early concept and overall planning of the new town rather than specifically to The Point, which was introduced much later on in the development. The relevance of The Point within the development is primarily a tried and tested straightforward orthogonal response to the grid. In this regard, both today and at its time of completion, it is not considered exemplary per se.

The evidence found in the previous chapters does not point to an association to Archigram and CAD suggested in English Heritage's Stage 1 Report on The Point, Midsummer Boulevard, Milton Keynes dated October 2012 (English Heritage Case No. 475407).

Furthermore, no close historical association has been found with this building. No significant historical events or people have been found to have links to it.

6.0 ASSESSMENT UNDER LISTING CRITERIA (CONTD)



Fig.6.2 Granada Cinema in Tooting by Cecil Masey, 1931, Grade I listed.



Fig.6.3 Odeon Cinema, Rayners Lane by F E Bromige, 1936, Grade II*.



Fig.6.4 State Cinema in Grays, Essex, by F G M Chancellor, 1938, Grade II*.

6.7.3 Criterion (iii) Group Value:

The Point was never intended as forming part of a group other than as part of the wider development of Central Milton Keynes. Though Central Milton Keynes does represent a specific form of post war, new town planning, The Point does not constitute a particularly fine example within this context. Being completed in 1985, approximately 20 years after the initial laying out of the new town centre, The Point does not reflect the more coherent architecture of the early buildings (such as the Shopping Building or Lloyds Court) but instead offers a gaudy presence on the street. The Point does not form a group with the nearby Shopping Building as it has a different function, aesthetic and status within CMK. It is not, therefore, considered to fulfil this criterion.

6.7.4 Criterion (iv) A building which includes a particular man-made feature, object or something fixed to or forming part of it:

The Point includes no such object or feature which would qualify it for this criterion.

6.7.5 General Principle (a) Age and rarity:

Age: The building dates from the late 20th century and is therefore far from an age which would prompt its automatic protection (such as 18th century fabric). It is established and consistently practiced, in agreement with the DCMS, that the age of a building is counted from the date that works began on site as opposed to when it was completed, which means The Point is considered to be 28 years old as works began on site in August 1984. This means the building faces more stringent tests for listing applied to buildings which are less than 30 years old. DCMS's Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings states that "buildings of less than 30 years old are normally listed only if they are of outstanding quality and under threat". In practice this means buildings under 30 years old which do become listed are normally of the elevated grades of II* or I, and such listings are rare. The Point does not possess the outstanding qualities which would grant it statutory protection considering its age.

Rarity: A great number of cinema buildings exist, from various ages, many of which are still in use today. The Point does not represent an exceptional example of this building type, when competing for example

with the Granada Cinema in Tooting by Cecil Masey (1931, Grade I listed, fig.6.2), the Odeon Cinema, Rayners Lane by F E Bromige (1936, Grade II listed, fig.6.3) and the State Cinema in Grays, Essex by F G M Chancellor (1938, Grade II* listed, fig.6.4) – buildings which express a high sophistication of design and significant heritage value. Multiplex cinemas specifically are a common sight both inside and outside town centres. Although the Point is considered an early example of a multiplex, it does not represent a rare survival of a building type. In terms of selecting from the overall body of work of the architects BDP, the building is by no means a rare example as this is a highly prolific practice with many significant and surviving developments to their name (see section 3.0).

6.7.6 General Principle (b) Aesthetic merits:

As a building designed to attract customers to leisure activities and entertainment the aesthetic qualities have been focused on visual presence. The elements of the building are not considered to offer high aesthetic merit, they are not of a high order nor, more importantly, is there a sufficiently coherent design approach.

ASSESSMENT UNDER LISTING CRITERIA (CONTD)

6.7.7 **General Principle (d) National interest:**

The concept of the design of the Point was provided by the interior designer Neil Tibbatts to reflect the physical arrangement of the facilities and the requirements of the developers, with BDP as the executive architects. Tibbatts had worked mainly on nightclub projects before moving into pub concepts for the likes of Bass and Whitbread. Although BDP are considered architects of note, there are far better examples of this practice's work, across a wide range of building types. In the 'Commerce and Exchange Buildings' selection guide entry for cinemas, the 'multiplex' is not referred to as a building type of interest. The guide states that a pre 1914 cinema would be automatically listable but architectural quality is a key consideration for later cinemas. It can therefore be assumed that unless a relatively modern cinema expresses a significantly high quality of design, it is not considered of enough national importance to be statutorily listed.

The Point, therefore, is not considered to be of national interest.

The unremarkable quality of the original detailing of The Point, both externally and internally, is illustrated in the 2006 and 2012 photographic survey at appendix III of this report.

The selection guide does not refer to multiplex cinemas in its text, suggesting that this more recent type of cinema is not considered of significant interest, at this stage, in the context of leisure and entertainment buildings.

6.8 Conclusion to the Assessment under Listing Criteria

The analysis of The Point under the above listing criteria does not suggest a likely inclusion in the statutory list. Listed buildings must merit statutory protection on the grounds of their individual quality. In particular, buildings under 30 years old must possess outstanding qualities which The Point simply does not possess. It is a largely unexceptional building that does not meet the high standard of design, construction, materials or innovation required for a building of this recent date to be designated, in addition it does not hold the historic interest required to be listed for this criterion. It does not, therefore, fulfil the criteria for listing.

6.7.8 **General Principle (e) State of repair:**

The 2012 photographic survey, illustrated at appendix III of this report, highlights some decay in the external structure. The various internal overhauls have altered the original interior design concept and removed some original internal details which were, in any event, not considered of note.

6.7.9 **Selection Guide Criteria:**

The Selection Guide specific to 'Culture and Entertainment Buildings' does not list detailed criteria in its text, but strongly reaffirms the key element of the exceptional architectural quality necessary to be considered for listing in the case of post 1914 cinemas, and in particular post war cinemas. It also reaffirms the importance of surviving original features. Due to the extensive internal alterations, changes in use, and the unremarkable quality of the original detailing The Point does not retain elements of note. In comparison, the Central Milton Keynes Shopping Building which has recently been listed has remained far more intact, its listing cites "the public elements of the shopping centre are little-altered and retain the original appearance of the design".

7.0 OVERALL CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Point was an attempt to create a visually prominent building in Central Milton Keynes in order to advertise itself with and attract customers. It was a bold move and it introduced the American model of a multiplex cinema building, at a time when cinema attendance was in decline. The Point itself however, though it succeeded in its street presence with its pyramidal framework, was actually a subsidiary element to the multiplex of cinemas which were accommodated in a lower 'box' building to its rear. The pyramid 'marked' its principal entrance and provided an upper level nightclub space. The pyramid resulted from a grandiose idea which turned out to be too big for the relatively small commodity it contains.
- 7.2 There is nothing more remarkable, architecturally, about the cinema building than the fact that it was a first in the UK; it is little more than a shed. Indeed, the architectural critic Nikolaus Pevsner described The Point as "a pyramidal stack of boxes" and a "big metal-panel-clad shed". It is quite certain that the intentions of the developers were not to produce a building of architectural value but a quickly constructed conspicuous structure to lure patrons and shoppers from a distance.
- 7.3 The 'pyramid' structure is actually a three stage ziggurat containing two levels of accommodation and a third level 'lantern' originally intended for nightclub light rigging. Compared to its overall image, therefore, the built enclosure is relatively small. One could say that this is 'generous' architecture, or one could say it is deceitful. One must question, however, whether it is architecture at all as, once its formal elements have been dissected, a considerable flaw in concept is discovered. This flaw is to do with it being in fact, two structures. The ziggurat has its own steel structure within its glass envelope whereas the pyramid, as outlined, is considered as a quite separate element. The two are aesthetically deemed to be in support of each other, but in fact what appears to hold everything up is simply holding itself up. The vertical elements hanging from the raked girders simply hang.
- 7.4 The structural expression of The Point is made from crude elements of steel, welded together without articulated joints (see appendix III for illustrations). No joy or theme is apparent in the method, nor geometry of connections.
- 7.5 The recent considerations for listing of the Shopping Building and Lloyds Court, resulting in the Grade II listing of the former and the Certificate of Immunity from Listing of the latter, demonstrate a continued interest in the architecture of Central Milton Keynes, but also a selective approach to recognising only a high quality of architecture. The reasons given to list the Shopping Centre include "the high quality and consistent deployment of materials and finishes, all executed to careful standards of finish". From the analysis presented in the previous chapters, it is evident that such qualities are not demonstrated in The Point. It is more likely that The Point "lacks the very high standard of architectural interest required for a building of such recent date to be designated" as is the case with the nearby Lloyds Court, the first building to be completed in CMK.
- 7.6 In conclusion, The Point is a rather superficial edifice whose image is not fully realised in the structural principle, its relationship to the built enclosure, or in the details of steel connections. It provided a temporary 'town centre' image and 'key feature' for a limited time, but although it may have been a novel building in the 1980s it never was an architecturally accomplished building. Unlike many Victorian structures such as railway sheds, glass houses and such masterpieces as the Crystal Palace, The Point is neither demountable, nor reusable elsewhere. It is all to do with image rather than innovation. In terms of its design it does not fulfil the criteria for architectural interest.
- 7.7 For these reasons, we do not believe The Point will satisfy the current listing criteria. It is not a key exemplar of a twentieth century building type and is not of the outstanding quality required to merit the listing of a building under 30 years old.

8.0 REFERENCES

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Archives and Databases

RIBA Architectural Library Services, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD

English Heritage National Monuments Records, Enquiry & Research Services, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2GZ

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APPENDIX I - LISTING CITATION FOR MILTON KEYNES SHOPPING CENTRE

List entry Number: 1393882
Location: SHOPPING BUILDING, MIDSUMMER BOULEVARD
Grade: II
Date first listed: 16-Jul-2010
Date of most recent amendment: 09-Jan-2012

Summary of Building

The Central Milton Keynes Shopping Building, the Milton Keynes new town’s shopping centre; designed 1972-73, built 1975-79 by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation’s Architect’s Department under Derek Walker, design architects Stuart Mosscrop and Christopher Woodward, project manager Syd Green; FJ Samuely and Partners, Frank Newby, Mike Conacher consultant engineers. West End extended 1993-94 by PDD Architects.

Reasons for Designation

Milton Keynes’s Shopping Building of 1973-9, designed by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* Architectural interest: a highly-regarded, little altered, 650-metre long steel and glass structure whose design was heavily influenced by the work of the leading early-mid C20 architect Mies van der Rohe; its rigour, consistency, luminosity and user-friendliness all denote its success as a new approach to retail design * Exemplar: as the outstanding post-war retail development in England, successfully drawing on American inspirations but creating a singular shopping centre, realised on a monumental scale * Materials: for the high quality and consistent deployment of materials and finishes, all executed to careful standards of finish * Intactness: the public elements of the shopping centre are little-altered and retain the original appearance of the design * Adaptability: the success of the complex lies in part in its ability to accommodate fast-changing retail stores while retaining its overall architectural integrity * Artistic interest: for its public artworks, notably Liliane Lijn’s Circle of Light, which endows this retail complex with prestige and meaning * Town planning: as the purpose-built centrepiece of Britain’s last, largest, and in planning terms most innovative new town, which created a retail space realised on a civic scale

History

Bletchley was identified for development to take overspill from the south of Buckinghamshire and from London in the 1964 South East Regional Plan. Subsequently, in January 1967, the decision was taken to designate a larger new town which would envelope a number of existing towns and villages and be named after one of them, Milton Keynes. This was planned between 1968 and 1972 as a series of kilometre grid squares divided by roads and strips of parkland. While many of the residential grids evolved a post-modern idiom, or responded to the village character of existing buildings, for the two kilometre grid designated as the ‘city centre’ a very different system was imposed. It was to be a true ‘downtown strip’, an American-style grid comparable in size with London’s W1 postal district, and lined with sleek, urban buildings of a Miesian character. In practice only the earliest commercial buildings designed by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation’s architects fulfil this brief: Lloyds Court, Ashton and Norfolk Houses, and - most successfully - the Shopping Building. Originally sponsored by the Development Corporation with joint funding from the Post Office Pension Fund, in 1989 the building was sold to a consortium led by the latter’s successors, Hermes, and the Dai-Ichi Bank.

The Shopping Building was conceived in reaction to the many Arndale Centres and other enclosed malls then being erected, such as Brent Cross (1976), and in particular to the American out-of-town malls such as Victor Gruen’s Northlands, Detroit, and Southdale, Minneapolis. Instead, as Mosscrop has explained, the design team here studied the history of European shopping arcades. German source books demonstrated the evolution of the arcade from the first, eastern-inspired models which appeared in Paris in the 1790s, and through their expansion as iron-frame technology grew. Derek Walker (RIBA Journal, May 1979) likens the building to the Crystal Palace, which it resembles in size, and there is indeed some similarity in the use of transepts, set-back clerestories and an all-dominating grid. Mosscrop says that his aim was to make the building the centre of the city in the way the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele (1865-67) dominates shopping and entertainment in Milan, though in plan it more closely resembles Cluysenaur’s equally monumental Galleries St Hubert, Brussels, of 1846-47. Derek Walker’s Architecture and Planning of Milton Keynes confirms the mix of late Mies van der Rohe (his Mannheim Theatre project particularly), and his use of exotic marbles, and C19 galleries. John Winter (Architectural Review, September 1980) compares its cool framework with that of Covent Garden Market, then recently refurbished and which it also somewhat resembles on plan. ‘Here we have in built form the “highly serviced

neutral technological frame” so beloved by students in the ‘50s, the recessive ordering structure which is yet strong enough to contain and control an ever-changing scenario within. It succeeds well, for the shops have their commercial fun and their coloured lights, but in no way ruffle the majestic calm of that long mirror-glass facade’ (p.152). As a synthesis of Victorian iron technology, Miesian detailing and post-war notions of ‘plug in’ architectural grids, the Shopping Building works intellectually, and architecturally, on a series of levels.

The Shopping Building was of a scale unprecedented in Britain, and at 650m long, the largest covered arcade then built. The estate agents Healy and Baker helped draw up the brief and Woodward found out what retail firms wanted. Visiting Cumbernauld and Runcorn, he was shocked by the extent of mechanisation and services required to make such megastructures on the Gruen model work. The Shopping Building is very different. It stands at a relatively high point in the city, which counteracts its low height. The large and continuous clerestory glazing of the arcades makes this one of the few shopping centres where natural light dominates, an important feature. The original design of the city centre and its grid - and thus the shopping centre, which was integral to the plan - was informed by the play of natural light and the arcades are aligned so that on Midsummer Day, the sun sets along the arcades. Explicit reference to this concept is made in the names of the avenues and arcades of CMK: Avebury, Silbury, and Midsummer.

Details

MATERIALS Steel, glass, and internally travertine marble dominate.

PLAN Parallel 650m long glass and steel arcades provide the twin spines for flanking and linking walks and shops with anchor shops at east and west ends. There are two courts: covered Middleton Hall to the east and open-air Queen’s Court to the west (this was converted to a food court in 2010).

EXTERIOR The shopping Centre consists of a single very long block, designed in a Mies van de Rohe-inspired idiom, which stands in the centre of the town. Intended to serve as a ‘high street’ for this car-centred city, it stands beside a car park and is hemmed in by arterial and access roads. The steel frame sets up a rigid 6m and 12m grid. Great care was taken with both the finish of the steelwork which was produced by Boulton and Paul by a process called ‘upward teeming’ which gave a smooth surface, and with its erection for which very fine tolerances were set for alignments. The walls of the perimeter shopping centre and the pair of parallel ranges at the upper level are expressed externally as a glazed curtain whose external frame is filled with mirrored or clear glass set in neoprene gaskets. The building provides shopping facilities on a single storey, with stores and service areas for the shops above, and rooftop servicing and delivery facilities reached by a single raised road over the development, Secklow Gate. While the overall planning of the complex was successfully managed, the service facilities - such as heating and air-conditioning apparatus - are understandably much-modified and are not of special interest.

There are 18 entrances from a long car park cum service road set slightly below Silbury Boulevard and Midsummer Boulevard to north and south. These parallel entrances give on to the two long arcades and there are no steps anywhere within the building enabling access. The shops are divided into three bands served and separated by two 12m wide and 14m high weather-protected and naturally-lit pedestrian arcades (Midsummer and Silbury Arcades) which run the length of the building. The middle band of accommodation contains the department stores and two public squares, to the west an open square (Queen’s Court) and to the east an internal market place (Middleton Hall) used for fairs and exhibitions. Queen’s Court was adapted for use as a food court and re-opened as such in July 2010. The two main anchor stores are at the east and west ends: John Lewis projects proud to the east; The original west end of the building, Dickens and Jones (now House of Fraser), was reconstructed wholesale after an arson attack; Marks and Spencer is set in a western extension that was originally envisaged and actually added in 1993-94 by PDD Architects. This extension encroached on the City Square (originally conceived as a large public square featuring pavilions, flagpoles and public amenities) and was designed in the same materials as the original building, although the full-height glass shop front is of a predominantly vertical design, as opposed to the linear arrangement of the original building. This late-C20 addition is of lesser architectural interest yet it demonstrates the ability of the original concept to accommodate change and enlargement. The bands to the north and south house smaller shops which have frontages both to the internal arcades and to the building’s perimeter. Linking the bands of shops are secondary and considerably lower pedestrian walks 12m wide run at 90m centres connecting Midsummer and Silbury Arcades to either side and giving access to the exits (the doors here are later additions).

The public squares and the arcades are the most important elements in design terms, having a clear and precise Miesian form which is unique for a shopping building. In addition to the clean lines created by the planting and seating the shop fronts are set back behind the line of the building grid and projecting signs are not permitted. The individual fit-outs to the shops are not generally of special interest, but they were originally conceived to a design guide which respects the dominance of the original frame and some retain stainless steel surrounds. Originally the building had no doors and it was intended that it should be a focus of Milton Keynes life outside shopping hours as well as during the day, but the building has been closed at night for some

APPENDIX I - LISTING CITATION FOR MILTON KEYNES SHOPPING CENTRE

years. Deliveries are made in daylight, from the roof, which is reached by a single raised road over the development, Secklow Gate.

The large Midsummer Place extension to the south of Marks & Spencer cuts across Midsummer Boulevard but this is separated from the older building by a gap and is not included in the listing.

Overall the Shopping Building survives largely as originally built. The special interest is confined to the public aspects of the envelope of the shopping centre.

INTERIOR The many entrances give on to the two long and airy arcades, whose tall, glazed upper sections allow dramatic skylscapes to unfold. The volume and airiness of the large Middleton Hall contribute to the spatial interest of the interior, as well as providing an interesting multi-functional space. Throughout a pale brown travertine marble is used for floors and wall veneer, filled for the former and unfilled for the latter; in some areas this has been renewed by another kind of similarly-coloured limestone. Running down the two arcades are 47 narrow, rectangular, travertine planters with exotic planting including palm trees. Along the edge of the planters are long travertine bench seats. Some stainless steel seats and railings have subsequently been set in to these, and this metalwork is not of special interest. The internal small shop fronts are mostly later and not of special interest; however, where original finishes do survive, such as travertine stall-risers and fragmentary survival of stainless steel surrounds, these are of special interest (an audit of the shopfronts completed in 2011 shows that about seven shops retain their stainless steel, or chrome, surrounds and about five retain travertine upstands or other travertine entrance detail). Exposed stanchions with sloped feet (added in the 1990s to help repel rubbish and dust) contribute to the aesthetic as well as forming the structure. The outside (but internal) wall of John Lewis is faced up to about 4m with various shades of brown tiles that pick out 'John Lewis' in large blocky lettering; John Lewis also retains original stainless steel surrounds and travertine upstands to its interior shop front. The interiors of the shops, being subject to change, are not regarded as of special interest; this includes the windows and doors, which have in many instances been replaced.

The Shopping Building has a number of artworks. Of particular interest for its design and position is Liliane Lijn's Circle of Light, designed in 1977 and commissioned by Milton Keynes District Council in 1978 as part of its ambitious and successful public art programme. Suspended above Midsummer Arcade this takes the form of 23 armatures wound with copper wire - a reference to electric motors - hung to form a large copper disc 6m in diameter. Electric motors slowly rotate the individual rod-like armatures, and hanging like a great rising or setting sun it picks up on the arcade's alignment with the setting sun on Midsummer's Day.

Other artworks of special interest include: the market clock in Midsummer Arcade; 'Dream Flight', 'Flying Carpet' and 'High Flyer' (bronze figures) by Philomena Davis (1989), now located in Silbury Arcade; 'Vox Pop' (a group of cartoon-like bronze people) by John Clinch (1979) in Queen's Court (although not the original location within it); at the time of listing, 'Bollards and Sundial' (an outsize sundial with the solstice points marked), by Tim Minett (1979) was in storage awaiting reinstatement in the building; and a section of a C4 mosaic pavement from the nearby C4 Romano-British Bancroft Villa, mounted on a wall internally.

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APPENDIX II - CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNITY FROM LISTING REPORT BY ENGLISH HERITAGE FOR LLOYDS COURT, MILTON KEYNES

English Heritage Advice Report 21 April 2011

Case Name: Lloyds Court

Case Number: 463290

Background
English Heritage has been asked to consider the issuing of a Certificate of Immunity from Listing for Lloyds Court.

Recommendation
1 N/A Lloyds Court Listing Do not add to List
2 1401186 Lloyds Court Certificate of Immunity Grant COI

02 August 2010 Full inspection

Context
English Heritage has been asked to consider the issuing of a Certificate of Immunity from Listing for Lloyds Court. A planning application (10/01153 FUL) for alterations to one of the shop fronts facing Silbury Boulevard was approved by Milton Keynes Council on 6 August 2010. The owners have also had informal preliminary discussions with the council on the future of the site, possibly involving demolition. The building is not in a conservation area.
Assessment

CONSULTATION
There have been no comments received from interested parties following the Initial Report.

ASSESSMENT
The 2010 Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings state that particularly careful selection is required for buildings from the period after 1945 whilst buildings of less than 30 years old are normally listed only if they are of outstanding quality and are under threat. Opened in 1977, Lloyds Court is only just more than 30 years old and the additional rigor in selection implied above gives an indication of the high degree of architectural or historic interest required in order to merit its inclusion on the list. The Principles of Selection go on to make clear that a building’s aesthetic merit - its appearance, intrinsic architectural merit, and any group value - is a key consideration in listing assessments, but that other considerations may also come in to play such as whether a building illustrates particular aspects of social or economic history or technical innovation. A building may also be listed because it represents a particular historical type, to ensure that one at least is preserved. Only the most representative and most significant examples are normally selected for listing. Milton Keynes was the last and largest of the British new towns. In making a decisive break away from earlier urban design concepts with innovative features such as a radical grid plan it attracted worldwide attention. Central Milton Keynes was designed to have a mix of retail and commercial buildings and Lloyds Court, as its first commercial building, has some claim to historic interest. This, however, relates more to its significance in terms of town planning than the intrinsic interest of the building itself. Whilst a factor in assessing its importance, it cannot be the principal reason for designation.

Looked at in terms of plan, construction and architectural design, Lloyds Court is not of particular note. Its figure-of-eight plan, despite this form being shown repeated in the conceptual aerial views of Central Milton Keynes produced by the illustrator Hemut Jacoby in 1972, was not in fact reproduced elsewhere in the town and so cannot claim to be a design prototype for future developments in Milton Keynes.

The concrete frame and waffle slab construction is not innovatory for this date; it appears for example in the Grade II listed Curzon Mayfair Cinema (1963-66). Whilst the building with its full length plate glass windows has clear Miesian influences, the detailing is not of the same standard as the Grade II listed shopping centre. The change of cladding material from the originally proposed steel plate panels to pale grey granite gives the building a rather more conservative and municipal appearance than was perhaps originally intended. The use of the courtyards as loading bays restricted their amenity function and resulted in a somewhat sterile space at the core of the building and, whilst the courtyard plan gives the office units ample natural light, the open air

walkways and utilitarian stairs are rather reminiscent of ‘streets in the sky’ public housing of the previous decade. Due to the height restrictions on the brief resulting in a relatively low building, Lloyds Court has perhaps more in common, in terms of design if not budget, with the green field corporate headquarters of the period rather than contemporary speculative city centre office buildings which, from the 1960s, tended to be high-rise. As such it does not equal more imaginative and carefully detailed buildings such as the Heinz HQ at Hillingdon (1962-5 by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill - Grade II*) or the Birds Eye HQ at Walton on Thames (1960-61 by Sir John Burnet, Tait and Partners - Grade II).

Overall this is a dignified but largely unexceptional building that does not meet the high standard of design, construction, materials or innovation required for a building of this recent date to be designated. Its historical claims apply to the planning history of Milton Keynes generally rather than specifically to this building with the recently-listed at Grade II Milton Keynes Shopping Centre, of superior design quality and detailing, already flagging the importance of Central Milton Keynes in the history of English post-war planning. It is perhaps telling that the Lloyds Court received very little attention in the architectural press at the time, being largely overshadowed by the shopping centre. For these reasons it is recommended that Lloyds Court is not of a quality to merit inclusion on the statutory list, and that therefore a Certificate of Immunity should be issued.

CONCLUSION
It is recommended that Lloyds Court should be issued with a Certificate of Immunity from listing.

SOURCES
Lyall, Sutherland, ‘Grid Preference’, Building Design’ (26 February 1977);
Pevsner, Nikolaus and Williamson, Elizabeth, The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire (1994) p 497.
‘Central MK Grows’, RIBA Journal (April 1977);
Rimmer, Graham, ‘Milton Keynes City Centre’, Surveyor (25 February 1977);

Reasons For Designation Decision
It is recommended that Lloyds Court, opened in 1977 and the first of Milton Keynes’ commercial buildings should be issued with a Certificate of Immunity from listing for the following principal reasons:

- Architectural quality: Lloyds Court lacks the very high standard of architectural interest required for a building of such recent date to be designated;
- Historic interest: as the first commercial building completed in the internationally recognised planned development of Milton Keynes, Lloyds Court has some claims to historic interest but this properly relates to the overall planning history of the new town rather than as a reason to designate this particular building.

Countersigning comments:
Agreed. As rehearsed, Lloyds Court has some Milton Keynes form planning interest but falls short of the architectural special interest required to merit listing. A COI should be issued. 26 October 2010

Further Comments:
Agreed, also. A building of local interest as one of the first phases of this significant form, but not strong enough architecturally to merit listing for a building of such recent date. 20 January 2011

Annex 1

Factual Details
Name: Lloyds Court
Location: Lloyds Court, SILBURY BOULEVARD,

History
Milton Keynes, conceived in the 1960s to relieve housing pressure in London, was the last and largest of the British new towns. Following a public enquiry in 1966 the proposals were announced by the Housing Minister, Anthony Greenwood, in January 1967 with an eventual target population of 250,000 and the intention that it would become a major regional centre. The planning of the town was the responsibility of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) created in April 1967 and chaired by Lord Jock Campbell of Eskan. A masterplan by Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forstier-Walker and Bor and influenced by the Californian planner Melvin M Webber (1921-2006), was drawn up between 1969 and 1971. This featured a radical grid plan with

APPENDIX II - CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNITY FROM LISTING REPORT BY ENGLISH HERITAGE FOR LLOYDS COURT, MILTON KEYNES

a central busines/shopping centre supplemented by decentralised local centres in the grid squares allotted to housing, as well as areas of green space. Derek Walker (b. 1929) was appointed as chief architect for MKDC in 1970 and attracted a team of young architects providing the detailed designs.

Lloyds Court was the first commercial building to be completed in the central district (Central Milton Keynes). Occupying plot D14 on Silbury Boulevard - one of the principal axes of Central Milton Keynes - and opposite the contemporary shopping centre (listed Grade II in 2010), Lloyds Court, like the shopping centre, was designed collaboratively by the MKDC Architects Department. The project was led by Derek Walker with Stuart Moss crop (b. 1938) and Ivan Pickles (b. 1939) the architects most directly involved. Moss crop had worked for Yorke Rosenberg and Mardall (YRM) when they collaborated with Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's (SOM) Chicago office in the realisation of the Boots D90 Building in Nottingham (listed Grade II*) and the exterior of Lloyd's Court, despite its different construction and materials reflects its influence. The building was originally intended to be faced with fabricated steel panels but due to technical difficulties, as well as aesthetics and cost, granite cladding was used instead. A prospectus was issued in 1974 by MKDC for potential tenants and investors for the building and it was eventually financed by a trio of investors; MKDC (which used it as offices during the construction phase of the town), Lloyds Bank (hence the name) and Lohn Lain and Sons Ltd. The building was formally opened on 14 February 1977 providing approximately 10,000 square metres of office space. Although not all the units were occupied at the time of opening they included a branch of Lloyds Bank, a restaurant and a public house (now a religious centre). At the time of visiting, the majority of the units appeared to be vacant.

Details

Constructed of pre-cast concrete waffle slab floors and roof supported on in situ reinforced concrete pillars, the building is clad in pale grey Cornish granite with the glazed curtain walls in flush, black anodised aluminium, frames. On the ground floor exterior east and west elevations, the windows have transoms, those above do not. On the exterior elevations the ground floor is set back to provide a colonnaded loggia (13 bays long by 7 wide) around the building, with the upper floor supported on square granite clad piloti. The open-air principal entrances are placed in the centre of the short north and south elevations and these lead directly to the internal courtyards, either side of the main cantilvered dogleg stairs and the lift shafts. The courtyards have first-floor galleried walkways giving access to the commercial units arranged around the courtyard. On the roof of the central block between the courtyards is a metal clad heating/air-conditioning plant. The units have glazed doors and full height plate glass windows with transoms on the interior courtyard elevations. The interiors vary in size and detailing but are largely open plan spaces with suspended ceilings covering the waffle slabs, some with the original perforated metal ceiling panels. On the east side of each courtyard are vehicle access tunnels, used as delivery areas. The hard-landscaped sunken courtyards are paved with grey concrete bricks and have concrete slab borders, with planters behind set flush with the concrete paving of the ground floor arcades.

A flat-roofed porte-clochere supported on steel posts links the main entrances of the building to the access roads and Silbury Boulevard to the south and North Row to the north. A bronze statue of a horse by Elisabeth Frink, commissioned for the buiding, stands just to the south-east, however this separate statue is not within the area we are assessing for a Certificate of Immunity.

Selected Sources

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Pevsner, N., The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire, 1994
Rimmer, Graham, 'Milton Keynes City Centre', Surveyor (25 February 1977)
'Central MK Grows', RIBA Journal (April 1977)

APPENDIX III - PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE POINT TAKEN IN 2006

The following series of photographs illustrate key features of the building. The captions indicate the degree to which these features are, or are not architectural attributes.



Main entrance route to The Point where views of the building are cut off



General confusion around the entrance



Clash of geometries, structural ideas and component details



The profile of the expressed structural frame has landmark quality but closer inspection shows that it only holds itself up. The actual building enclosures operate from a quite different, conventional structural principle



The structure is made of crude elements which are derived from a geometry lacking visual benefits. The vertical elements hang nearly to the ground and provide no support



Crude nature of the lighting strip fittings

APPENDIX III - PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE POINT TAKEN IN 2006



The foyer of the basement bingo hall has no design merit



The basement bingo hall has no architectural or interior design qualities



The foyer of the ground floor nightclub is of recent design



The interior of the nightclub at ground floor level is of very recent origin



Much altered interior of the multiplex 'box' foyer

APPENDIX III - PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE POINT TAKEN IN 2006



Figure 7.12: Lack of structural integrity expressed in the multiplex interior



Figure 7.13: The principal stairway in the building is mean in its size and muddled in its architectural language

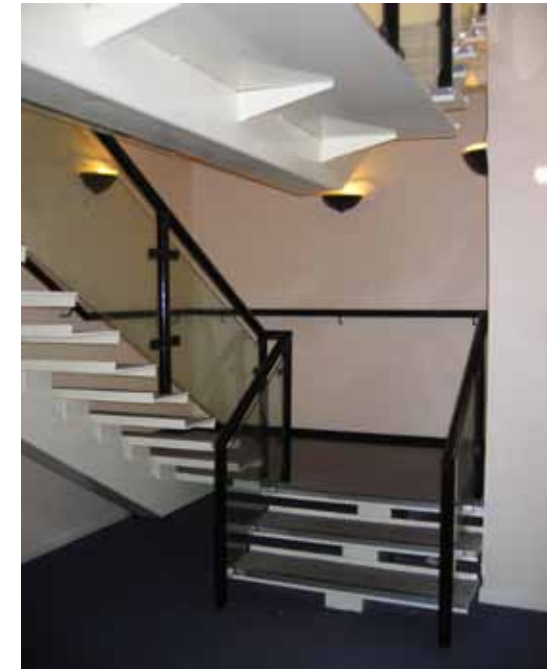


Figure 7.14: Poor quality main stair



Figure 7.15: The entrance elements do not work in harmony with the overall pyramidal structure. The arrangement of ground floor elements is poorly related to the surrounding landscape



Figure 7.16: The terrace at first floor level presents a poor sense of space. It has been covered with net to deter birds



Figure 7.17: At the upper levels, the steel verticals hang and are expressed as such, to no great architectural advantage, with 'floating' spheres

APPENDIX III - PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE POINT TAKEN IN 2006



Figure 7.18: Main structural support is founded on inadequate materials and express a notion of rotation which does not form part of the structural language



Figure 7.19: The positioning of certain structural elements gives rise to a visually weak expression of stability



Figure 7.20: The unresolved complexity of steelwork geometry severely diminishes the quality of the architecture



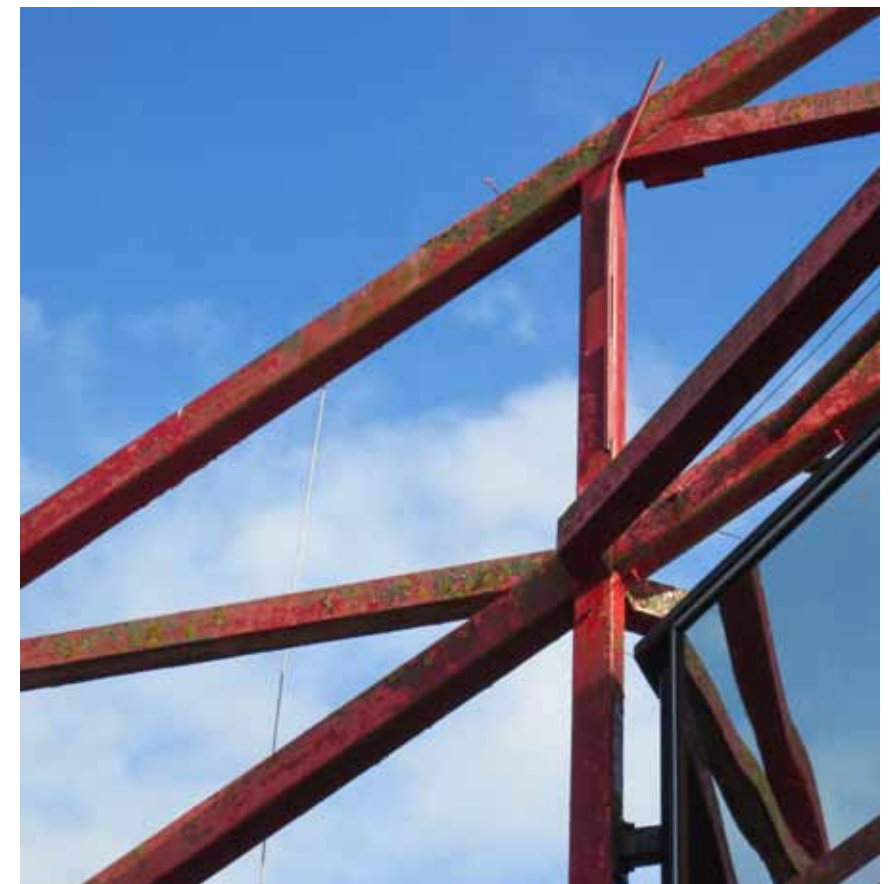
Figure 7.21: As above, the unresolved complexity of steelwork geometry severely diminishes the quality of the architecture

APPENDIX III - PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE POINT TAKEN IN 2012

The following series of photographs illustrate the decay noted from the previous survey carried out in 2006.



APPENDIX III - PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE POINT TAKEN IN 2012



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