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Matemático formado pela universidade de Birmingham e piloto oficial da Royal Air Force britânica até 1953. Em 1954 passa a trabalhar como crítico de arquitetura na *Architectural Review*, que publica a edição especial *Outrage* em junho de 1955.

Subtopia is the annihilation of the site, the steamrolling of all individuality of place to one uniform and mediocre pattern. In travelling up our route, the first impression would be of a chain of assaults on particular sites, each with its own problem, and this is presented on pp. 392-438. But Subtopia has already gone so far that it is possible to present scenes, which have become indistinguishable, and to classify the causes which have made them look alike. These causes are the agents of Subtopia.

Most of them are unwitting agents, what Lionel Brett has called the diagrams of progress, put into the environment purely as means of transmitting electricity, or improving communications, and treated by their authors as though they were invisible. With these in themselves the REVIEW has no quarrel at all. Each diagram of progress is a challenge to be taken up; intrinsically neither bad nor good, but capable of producing visually bad or good solutions. The equation that produces Subtopia out of a good idea is always the same: the mass application of misunderstood principles. That is one reason – if a negative one- for adopting the functional tradition for a vernacular of trim: it is least likely to be misunderstood, because it is common sense. To deny progress is as lunatic as the situation to which uncontrolled progress has brought us: we are *enfants de notre siècle*, and if we regard the march of progress with a mannerist compound of admiration and disgust, well, we are *enfants de notre siècle* in that too. Hereafter, if pylons and arterial roads and lamp standards are objected to it is because they represent bad solutions, not because they are bad in themselves: except —and this “except” will recur throughout

the issue – where, because of overcrowding, the whole land surface looks like being submerged by them. This “density clause” is why the REVIEW objects to the power station at Hams hall on page 410, and its corollary, that the wild places must be kept really wild, is the reason for the quarrel with the quarry and A.A. Hut at Honister on page 433. Most of the agents are unwitting, but there are two classes that aren’t. One could fairly be called the By-law and Borough Engineers’ Subtopia: the attacks on towns in the name of slum clearance, which spread sprawling estates in the suburbs, and leave the centre a collection of vacant lots. The other is the panic reflex to the spread of Subtopia, which attempts improvements using standards which are themselves Subtopian. Municipal Rustic, and the unhappy extension of Municipal Rustic back into the country along the roads. These two things are both wrong in their manifestations and wrong in themselves: typically they are the things least often regarded as eyesores. It is the great industrial plant that incites horror, however good its design, and not the cosy, but no less certain, break-open of the town with gardens and prettified car parks.

Finally, the agents are shown acting together in Standard Fringes. In the other groups there is sometimes enough character of landscape or townscape in the backgrounds for one to be able to guess where they are. That felicity has disappeared in this last set, and the REVIEW invites you on page 390 to a bitter guessing game. Is this the best that all architects, builders, engineers and planners of England can do? The REVIEW believes that it isn’t;

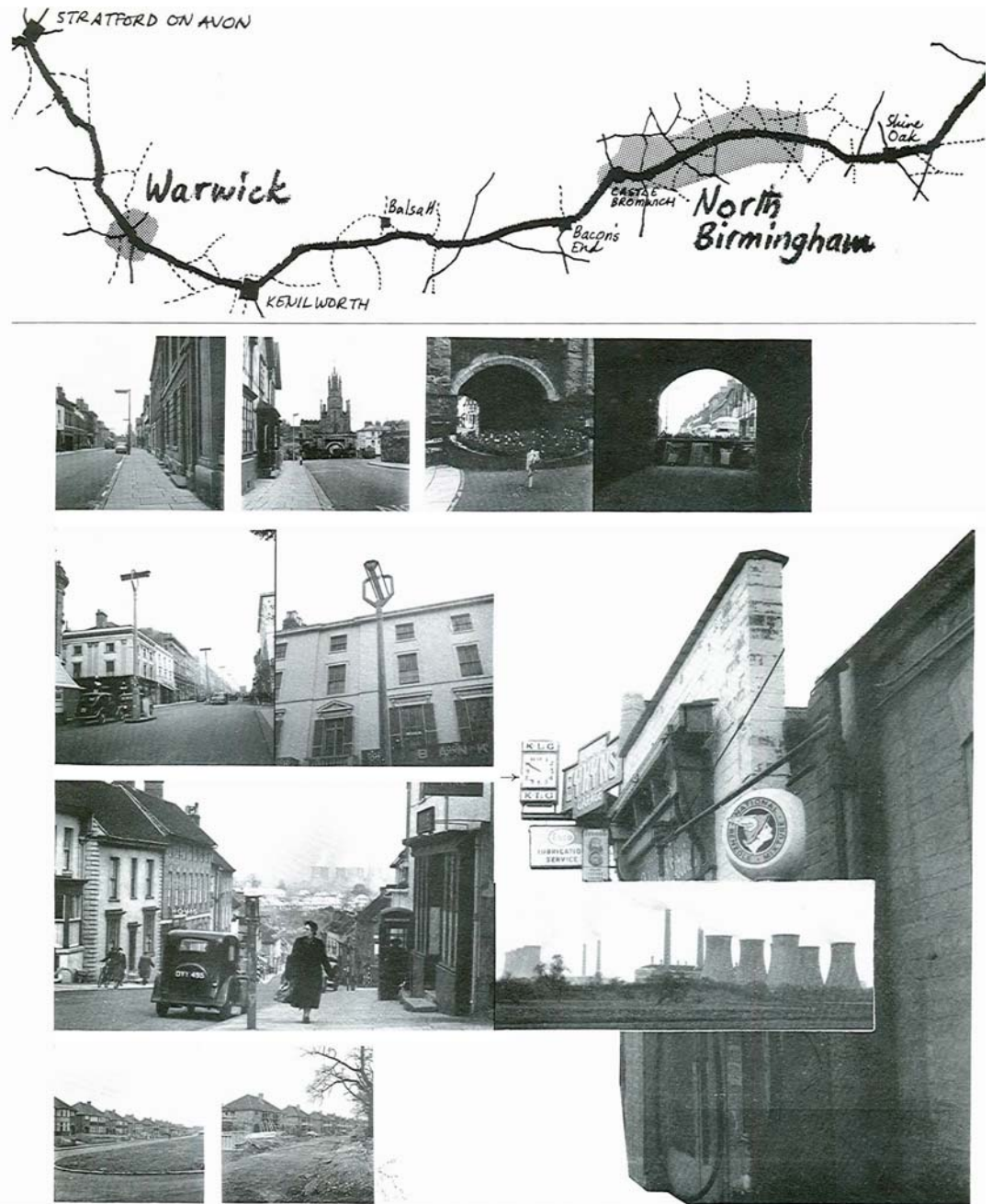


Image 1: Hams Hall Warwickshire. Source: Architectural Review, Outrage, June 1955.

and its suggestions appear at the end of the issue. But buildings affect people, and Subtopia produces Subtopians – the REVIEW also believes that, unless we are shocked into awareness, the consequences of our visual laissez-faire may make us incapable of distinguishing good from bad, and we may be mutated into sub-humans without our ever

knowing it has happened. It's not just aesthetics and art-work: our whole existence as individuals is at stake, just as much as it ever has been from political dictatorship, Left or Right: and in this case the attack is not clearly defined and coming from the other side of the globe, but a miasma rising from the heart of our collective self.