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THE MIRROR IN THE BIKE SHED:
M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT'S GARDEN STORE AT
WATERLOW COURT, HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB

This article focuses on an Arts and Crafts-style garden store of 1909, designed by Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott (1865–1945) and used as a garden tool and bicycle shed by the single professional ladies who were the original inhabitants of Waterlow Court in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Waterlow Court was the brainchild of the Suburb's founder, Henrietta Barnett, borne of her social work with women in the East End. This article makes new connections to show that it was directly influenced by Raymond Unwin, who saw the model of quadrangular communal housing, based on medieval Oxbridge colleges, as a vehicle for social reform. The Store is an example of Scott's medievalism: designed like a miniature threshing barn, it mirrors the working ladies' aspirations. Bicycles held particular significance for women's emancipation and the suffrage movement, and Scott's ambivalent attitude illustrates the tensions between the male establishment and the 'anomaly' of working women. Alongside analysis of this feminist narrative, the article contextualizes the store's materiality within contemporary writing and art and relates it to other nearby bicycle spaces, revealing the importance of bicycles in daily use by women in Edwardian England before the mass ownership of motor cars.

'A bicycle shed is a building; Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture. [...] the term architecture applies only to buildings designed with a view to aesthetic appeal.'¹ Nikolaus Pevsner's much-quoted epigram opens the Introduction to *An Outline of European Architecture* (1943). He assumes that no architect would design a bicycle shed aesthetically. This article is about one that challenges Pevsner's assumption: it was completed in 1909 to a design attributed to M. H. Baillie Scott, a leading architect of the Arts and Crafts Movement, in a deliberately aesthetic, picturesque, style reflecting not only his ideals but also those of the women who were its first users.

The Store is situated in the gardens of Waterlow Court (Figure 1), communal housing for single professional ladies in Hampstead Garden Suburb.² This suburb in North London is a famous product of the Garden City Movement, reflecting Edwardian ideals of social (and socialist) living. Its founder and inspiration was Henrietta Barnett who combined ideas about urban planning published by Ebenezer Howard in his book *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1902),³ implemented a few years before at Letchworth Garden City, thirty miles to the north, with social ideals derived from her work in London's East End slums. The result was a carefully planned development meant to create a mixed community of the middle class and of 'artisans' centred on facilities for worship, education and socializing, designed alongside Raymond Unwin, who with his partner Barry Parker had been the lead planner at Letchworth.⁴



Figure 1. The Garden Store at Waterlow Court in Hampstead Garden Suburb.
Photo: Tim Daniel, July 2014

WATERLOW COURT

Waterlow is at the end of a cul-de-sac, Heath Close. The visitor opens an incongruous wooden lych-gate with ‘Waterlow Court’ painted above it and traverses a covered walkway with low walls, between gardens, to the former porter’s lodge. There is a dramatic visual contrast when emerging from the dark, narrow, covered way to look through an arch at an open lawn and planted borders enclosed by a light courtyard, now painted white as it always was.⁵ Pretty rustic stairways with wooden bannisters go from a cloistered passageway to upper-floor flats. The view from the lodge is the iconic view, shown in the Historic England Grade 2* listing and in almost every other publication which mentions the place (Figure 2).⁶

It is an arresting view of a remarkable building. Waterlow was a communal residence for single professional ladies, built by a charity at a time when single women, increasingly educated and working in clerical, not just domestic, jobs, found it difficult to obtain suitable accommodation. As will be seen, the design brought together the need for women’s accommodation with traditional models for social housing and Edwardian architects’ interest in communal dwellings to make something architecturally special.

When built, Waterlow consisted of fifty small four-room flats laid out round a central courtyard with a lawn and planted border, among communal dining, garden and social facilities.⁷ Helping the disadvantaged was a passion for Barnett, and the Suburb originally included two other accommodations for ‘thrifty working women’ of a lower class than the Waterlow residents, as well as, among other things, homes for children and the elderly, a ‘Mother’s Rest’ and a home for ‘Tired Servants’.⁸ Barnett was particularly keen to benefit working women, arising out of her experiences with disadvantaged women, which she

wrote movingly about in *Practical Socialism* (1894).⁹ Discussing Waterlow in a memoir of 1928, Barnett explicitly links the 'uncomfortable' lodgings, 'in drear neighbourhoods [...] in rooms over-filled with furniture' which poor working women from good homes were forced to use, with her resolution to get built in the Suburb a hostel for working ladies.¹⁰ Waterlow Court is thus doubly a feminine space, inspired by a woman and built for women.

Barnett was not alone. Emily Gee has outlined the (mainly philanthropic) provision of women's accommodation from the 1880s onwards and described several examples.¹¹ Some are by noted architects; one even housed the first women members of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). What is striking from Gee's descriptions and illustrations is how inspired and generous Scott's design actually was. There was nothing else for working women remotely like Waterlow in appearance or design. Early social housing, such as Henry Roberts's Model Dwellings, and early Peabody Trust buildings, have, like Waterlow, a courtyard with apartments off staircases and shared (if more basic) facilities. Scott's design, though, is more aesthetic and 'architectural' in the Pevsner epigram sense. When writing in 1933, Scott associated Waterlow with plans for a communal dwelling he published in 1906.¹² The 1906 design is, however, substantially different from what we see. It is half-timbered (not white plaster), three-sided (not quadrangular), without dormer windows and timber posts support the arcade, not piers.

Some features of Waterlow as built (roof pitch, the shape of the arches) evoke buildings by Charles Voysey.¹³ However, a closer resemblance to Waterlow (not commented on by other writers), externally at least, is the quadrangular communal dwelling proposed by Unwin in a *Fabian Tract* in 1902 which envisages the arches, dormers, staircases and covered walkways to common areas seen today.¹⁴ Scott surely read this, sharing as he did with Unwin and Parker an interest in communal dwellings, which they all regarded as an efficient and socially productive housing model. He must already have read the views that Unwin and Parker expounded in their collection of lectures, *The Art of Building a Home*



Figure 2. Waterlow quadrangle: the iconic view. Photo: author, March 2019

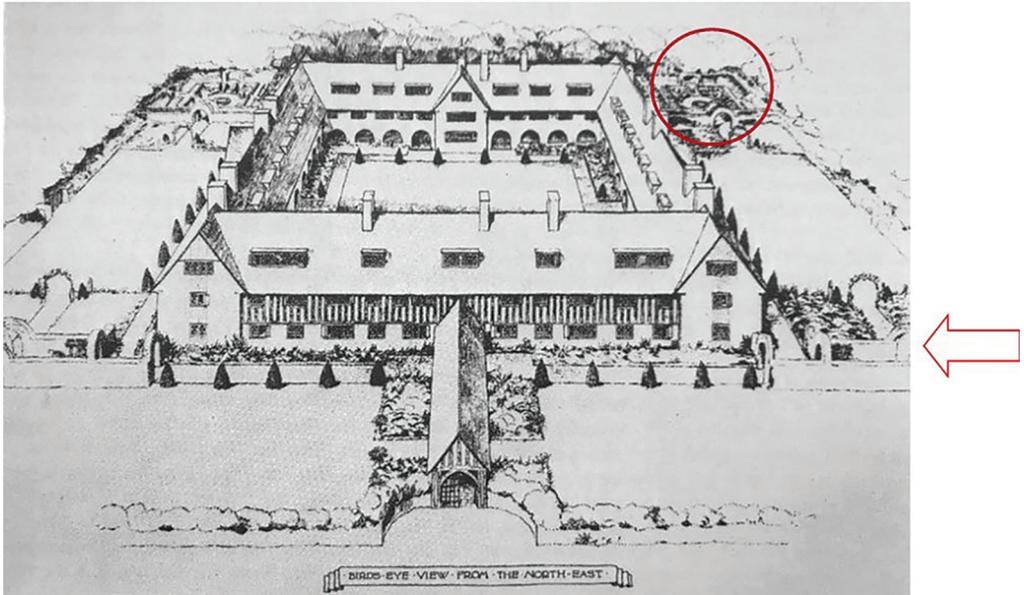


Figure 3. Perspective drawing of Waterlow Court (1909). The formal garden on the distant right, circled, is where the Store stands, and on the other (left) side, the matching formal garden is now the site of the Bungalow (originally extra servants' accommodation). The double-arched hedges and beds at the closer ends of the lawns to left and right (arrowed on the right) which remain as per the current planting scheme, but with the Store as a focal point on the right; from Anon., 'Waterlow Court', *British Architect* (9 July 1909), pp. 19–20

(1901), where they ask: 'What more satisfactory town buildings could one desire than some of the old colleges?' and propose a model of communal dwelling in quadrangles.¹⁵ Robert Fishman has described a number of quadrangular designs for communal housing, attributing the inspiration through Unwin to Ebenezer Howard, the original authority of the Garden City Movement and saying that the only quadrangle built was Homegarth in Letchworth.¹⁶ Fishman cannot have known about Waterlow which, it is clear, should be included in the tally, too (indeed, it is the quintessential example). Architectural historians have also seemingly not noticed that at least some of its design principles can be directly credited to Unwin: Barnett herself wrote that Unwin 'sketched out an ideal quadrangle', which she then promoted as the plan for Waterlow before Scott was involved.¹⁷

Wherever (and whoever) the idea came from, Waterlow is unique for the relationship between the concept of communal housing for women, the garden and the architecture. It is immediately reminiscent of an Oxbridge college. 'The kind of building one has in mind is more like a college at one of our old Universities, with its central court, its cloisters and surrounding gardens,' Scott wrote in 1933, after referring to the 1906 design which hardly looked like one. Notably, his phrasing does not claim the design personally.¹⁸ The resemblance to an Oxbridge college is apparent from a perspective published in 1909 (Figure 3).¹⁹ Oxbridge colleges were single sex in 1909, mostly for men, although all four women's halls at Oxford had been founded by then as had Newnham and Girton in Cambridge. The style fits the function as a single-sex residence for ladies, some of whom may well have studied at Oxford or Cambridge – early residents were 'mostly highly qualified [...] including doctors and teachers'.²⁰ The resulting 'conventual seclusion' was commented on by contemporaries.²¹

The quadrangular design of Waterlow in its garden setting is a convenient form with a particular resonance for a single-sex housing project, but there is a deeper significance

in the selection of a medieval building type which is important for an understanding of the Store. This was not just a charming and comfortable form of housing for respectable, hard-working ladies. The medieval style and quadrangular design are, as Mark Swenarton has observed, closely connected with Unwin's ideas about effecting social change through socialist colonies.²² Drawing from the medievalist tradition of William Morris and John Ruskin, the communal housing style was seen as reflecting and promoting particular behaviour. 'In these forms', says Swenarton, Unwin intended that 'A new life would develop', with changed relationships between people and between people and nature. Scott, less zealous than Unwin (and indeed, a man who owed his career to commissions from royalty and the wealthy), shared a medieval vision but more in terms of craftsmanship and aesthetics than social reform.²³ Medieval craftsmanship was, to Scott, the key to turning a building into 'architecture' and through architecture, to enhance the other lesser arts of painting and literature and lead to a fulfilling life. As he put it, 'If we can build a barn or cottage in the beautiful way as the medieval builders did, we might then proceed to greater enterprises.'²⁴ Scott's allusion to barns and cottages brings us neatly to the Store.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STORE

The Store in its garden setting is offset from the north-west corner of the main building of Waterlow, close to the service entrance, in the garden. It is essentially rectangular, about 12 by 3.5 metres at ground level, built of red bricks and with a steeply pitched roof approximately 3.2 metres high with striking low eaves, of Bedford red clay plain tiles (Figure 1). The materials match those used for the rest of Waterlow. On the north-east side of the Store is a porch 3.5 metres wide and 1.9 metres deep, of dark-stained timber (probably oak) with a tiled roof and two front posts attached to curved supports. The gable of the porch is covered with 'waney-edged' clapboard. Some of the timber is original and (unlike some recent work) shows a high standard of woodwork characteristic of Arts and Crafts work – and particularly Scott's – with wooden dowels rather than screws and additional pieces to imitate a truckle shape. The ridge-beam of the porch curves downward – apparently part of the original design since there is no evidence of stress to the roof structure – to resemble an old roof where the ridge-beam has deformed.

The entry to the Store is inside the porch, a solid wooden double door with the original cast-iron double hinges, latch and (probably also original) lock, the first two being the same design as is used elsewhere in Waterlow. These are from the firm of J. Pightle White of Bedford with whom Scott had connections and who supplied metalwork in other parts of the building.²⁵ The fittings were designed (possibly by Scott, who sometimes designed for White) for appearance as well as functionality – the retaining bars of the hinges, for example, extend further across the doors than is necessary and taper attractively into a little bud.²⁶ The same ones are used on the doors of Waterlow's flats. The roof is constructed with rafters attached to the top of the low brick walls and secured to the ridge-beam, with tie-beams about halfway up and struts. Similar construction was used for the roof of the covered walkway at the entrance to Waterlow and is seen in many porches in the Suburb. Two particularly visible porches in a garden building designed by Charles Wade on the Suburb's 'Great Wall' at 'Sunshine Corner' uses similar features (pitched tile roof, dark timber). The comparison with Wade's porch floating above Hampstead Heath Extension makes the down-to-earth solidity of Scott's Store very apparent.

The Store has been used for many years to store bicycles, old furniture and garden tools. Historic England describe it confidently as a 'contemporary bicycle shed'.²⁷ The



Figure 4. Photograph, dated 1909, of the north-west elevation of Waterlow showing the Store on the far right. Courtesy: Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives Trust

date is confirmed by a photograph dated 1909 (Figure 4).²⁸ The Store must have been used for garden tools as it is located next to the small allotments that Barnett planned for the Waterlow ladies and this is confirmed by a later photograph, showing a wheelbarrow outside it.²⁹ It is very likely, though, that the Store was not just meant for garden tools. As will be seen, bicycle storage was a common feature of Suburb housing and bicycles were much used for transport. There was nowhere else for the Waterlow residents to put their bicycles securely and the Store is located next to the service entrance, so the residents could conveniently bring their bicycles directly to the Store from the station or shopping, without going round to the front and through the gardens. It is big enough for bicycles – but probably too big just for garden tools even allowing for the residents' allotments.³⁰ All this strongly indicates that the Store was a tool and bicycle store from the outset.

The obvious question is why the Store was so elaborate and expensively built. The care taken with the design, such as the curvature of the roof and the metalwork, the quality of the materials (the same as the flats themselves) and the scale and simple attractiveness of the structure contrast with its function. As Pevsner implies, this is not how bicycle sheds are expected to be. The question can be answered by looking in four directions: at Scott's aesthetics; the importance of bicycling to Waterlow's lady residents;

bicycling's popularity in Edwardian times; and at the ethos of the early Garden Cities. These will be considered in turn.

THE STORE AND ITS SETTING

The Store's setting at the end of the north lawn was part of Scott's original design as the perspective drawing shows. It looks like a threshing barn 'typical of the Cotswolds and the limestone farmlands of Western England' with their broad, high expanses of roof and gabled entrances – compare, for example, those at Bradford-on-Avon and Great Coxwell (Figure 5) – but greatly reduced in scale.³¹ The massive entrances of such barns were designed for threshing and admitted laden farm carts, drawn by horses, carrying stacks of hay. Barns might be considered masculine spaces; there is an irony, to be considered below, in that the bicycles entering Waterlow's miniature barn were powered by the lady residents themselves to carry them and their accoutrements.

The barn idea seems unlikely to derive from Oxbridge. New College, Oxford's medieval Warden's Barn, set away from the quadrangles and the cloister, looks nothing like the Store. Nor does the barn at St John's, Oxford.³² By designing a mini-barn, Scott was referencing one of the fundamental components of Arts and Crafts ruralism and William Morris himself. 'Barns were always Morris's passion', says Fiona MacCarthy, and he owned a few himself at Kelmscott.³³ Morris loved Great Coxwell Barn, calling it 'The finest piece of architecture in England',³⁴ and in even firmer contradiction of Pevsner's epigram, according to Morris's biographer J. W. Mackail, 'Unapproachable in its dignity, as beautiful as a cathedral, yet with no ostentation of the builder's art.'³⁵ 'It was always upheld by Morris as one of the finest buildings in England or in the world,' adds Mackail. In *News From Nowhere*, his semi-autobiographical, semi-romantic ideological ramble, Morris describes a water mill in similar words.³⁶

James Kornwolf has analysed the architectural influence of barns on Scott and



Figure 5. Great Coxwell Barn, Oxfordshire (formerly Berkshire), built c.1292.
Photo: © Andrew Mathewson CC BY-SA 2.0

Voysey, starting with Morris's indigestible poem 'A Dream of John Ball', a celebration of an imaginary rural England, and tracing the influence on them of American barn architecture, particularly the large internal spaces and the steep pitch of the high roofs on the elevations.³⁷ But it is scarcely necessary to be so analytical to see why a barn template came to Scott when asked to design a garden store. The barn as a hallowed rural theme must have been an obvious starting point and, as the 1909 photograph shows, the Waterlow that Scott built was still surrounded by open fields. It was also an appropriately proletarian building type for a structure intended for working people.

The brief description of Waterlow Court's main building above stressed picturesque and dramatic qualities which the Store shares. Scott, like the young Edwin Lutyens as collaborator of Gertrude Jekyll, built his structures with their garden settings (which Scott often also designed) in mind – hence the names of his two books, *Houses and Gardens*. His talent for relating internal space to garden space, as seen in the Waterlow cloister, and in his work at Snowhill Manor, is regarded as one of his most important skills.³⁸ That Scott designed the Waterlow gardens himself is proved by the perspective drawing above. It is a classic Edwardian garden design with separate compartments of lawn divided by privet hedges and borders.

The Store hides the services (Edwardian dustbins cannot have been much more scenic than the wheelie bins there now) but a hedge or wall could have done that equally well. It is not obvious at first glance now, as the garden is overgrown, but Scott used the Store in his garden design. Its brickwork and structure offset the planting, a common Edwardian garden theme (Figure 1).³⁹ But more than that, the Store is a visual focus. The roof appears in side views which are now rather concealed by trees. The front of the Store, today mostly hidden behind a high privet hedge, is still visible across the north-west lawn, with the porch serving as a focal point through a double arch of privet and a path between flowerbeds (Figure 6). This view makes an axis parallel with Waterlow's main axis from the front gate into the quadrangle (and explains why the Store is placed where it is, in contrast with the former servants' accommodation in the Bungalow, similarly placed on the opposite side of Waterlow, but relatively inconspicuous, presumably to preserve the servants' privacy). The double arch and axis in the planting appear on the 1909 perspective drawing – Scott dropped the Store in at the back on the right. Set across the lawn in the days when it was clearly visible, the Store, with its timber porch, hinted at the columned portico of a classical garden building, as a temple vernacularized.

Scott's imagination had a strong visual component, as this 1915 passage shows:

But when building was the mistress art, and all other arts combined with the single idea of producing beautiful buildings, when the house was not merely a shelter for art treasures but itself the art treasure, then the same sense of relative proportion, now practised in the confines of the picture frame, spread itself over the world, and so the house was in harmony with nature and with other houses.⁴⁰

Scott sees houses as paintings brought out of their frames into real life. He shares his enjoyment of the picturesque qualities of homely buildings, brick and roofs, of walls and flowers, with the painter Helen Allingham, his contemporary. Allingham's most famous works were idealized scenes which 'looked back nostalgically to a mythical pastoral age' celebrating old buildings and gardens, the same idioms that were extolled by Unwin and Scott but without their reforming ambitions.⁴¹ The buildings in Allingham's paintings are frequently seen partially or at an angle, and that is how you are now (and probably always were) forced by the paths and hedges to approach the Store. Allingham lovingly depicted built materials and the harmony between natural beauty and old buildings;



Figure 6. View of the Store, showing its position at the end of the lawn, taken through the double-arch privet hedge shown in Figure 3. Photo: author, March 2019

Scott uses their features and the techniques employed to create harmonious modern ones.

This attachment to humble buildings is a key theme of the Arts and Crafts Movement which, following Morris in a truly radical way, elevated modest domestic architecture to a level previously reserved for grander projects.⁴² The attention lavished on a mere garden store elevates a simple building which is even humbler than a dwelling. Scott, like Morris, would not have agreed with Pevsner's epigram. As Scott said, echoing Ruskin:⁴³

It has never apparently occurred to anyone that ordinary plain building is an art. Whatever real greatness a building may possess is rooted in the essential facts of its structure. It lies in little homely everyday things and in work affectionately done.⁴⁴

Scott's architectural vision embraced 'ordinary plain building' and the high standards of craftsmanship evident at Waterlow, its Store, and in his other houses and gardens. He had no problem with designing a bicycle shed for its aesthetic appeal.

But Pevsner's epigram is not the end of the story. Architecture is not just about the aesthetics and purpose of buildings. Pevsner writes that it is also about 'the changing

spirits of changing ages'.⁴⁵ Waterlow was an appropriate location for a special bicycle shed because it reflects the changing spirit of the Edwardian age. The architects responsible for it (Scott and Unwin) were, as we have seen, conscious of the social relevance of the medieval style they used for the main building of Waterlow and intended the design to influence and reflect the lifestyle and ambitions of the residents. We should expect corresponding thoughtfulness from this carefully designed outbuilding.

WOMEN ON WHEELS

A craze for cycling swept Britain in the 1880s and 1890s. Edwardian writing abounds with fictional bicyclists, from H. G. Wells's Mr Kipps to Jerome K. Jerome's three Bummelers to Conan Doyle's 'Solitary Cyclist'.⁴⁶ There is a sub-genre of stories involving women, bicycling independently and alone, and thereby involved in escapades from which they are romantically rescued by men. An apt example, better than average, is Edith Nesbit's 'A Perfect Stranger' where the girl stops to admire the architecture of a village church and gets trapped in the crypt for two days with the (luckily, well-behaved) young vicar.⁴⁷ Even Nesbit – unconventional, socialist, bread-winner – does not rise far above the patriarchal narratives of pretty girl cyclists waiting for a man to mend their puncture.

Real bicycling women often were, and meant to be, subversive. Cycling provided women with new opportunities for independence without chaperones or male companions. Special clothes were designed – knickerbockers, divided skirts and bloomers. Bicycling garb and 'rational dress' (a version of trousers – women had to wear loose stuff on a bike) were badges of the 'New Woman', inconveniently and controversially asserting herself in society independently and even wanting the vote (Figure 7).⁴⁸ The US women's rights campaigner Susan Anthony is often quoted from 1896:

I think [the bicycle] has done more to emancipate women than any one thing in the world. I rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a bike. It gives her a feeling of self-reliance and independence the moment she takes her seat; and away she goes, the picture of untrammelled womanhood.⁴⁹

Henrietta Barnett (strong-minded visionary, but called 'only a woman'⁵⁰) was herself an experienced bicyclist as were many other celebrated women including the Pankhurst family who belonged to the Clarion Cycle Club.⁵¹ By the 1900s, as Sheila Hanlon has outlined, bicycles had become a symbol of feminine independence and were an important tool in the suffrage movement.⁵² Bicycles appeared often in protests and as transportation on suffragette affairs. Suffragettes and suffragists were active in the Suburb both organizationally (there was a Women's Franchise Society by 1911 and a branch of the non-violent Women's Freedom League as well as a local Church League for Women's Suffrage and equivalent Catholic and Jewish groups) and in making physical attacks on symbolic buildings including the Suburb Institute and Free Church in Central Square.⁵³ It is reasonable to expect that the single professional ladies living at Waterlow, to whom workplace discrimination must have been a significant part of daily life, sympathized.

Scott would have known the importance of bicycles to Edwardian ladies. Gee says succinctly that 'the purpose-built bicycle shed charmingly exhibited the architectural treatment of this other new building type used by the residents of Waterlow who exemplified the modern Edwardian way'.⁵⁴ But like Waterlow's quadrangle, the Store is marvellously unique. Other contemporary sheds are more utilitarian, for example, the numerous school bicycle sheds built at this period (behind which succeeding generations enjoyed their cigarettes and titillation).⁵⁵ Even the plan of a workshop and bicycle shed designed by Parker for Letchworth Secondary School, dated 1929, with a token half-



Figure 7. 'The New Woman. Have dinner ready at one o'clock, John!' Rational dress, a bicycle and the new feminist attitude (n.d.). Courtesy: University of Warwick Library, MSS.21/4779

timber gable and pitched roof, is anaemic compared with the robust rusticism of the Store.⁵⁶

Scott, whose writings and vision often drift into dreamy romanticism, created something different and special. Even so, there is an element of paternalism in the heterotopic, secluded, idealism of the surroundings, located on the edge of the Suburb, as well as in the miniature scale of the barn the New Women were given to use. Scott's miniature reproduction is ambiguous. At one level, the working nature of the barn design shows respect for the hard-working ladies who stored their bicycles and gardening tools inside. But Scott's views on the Waterlow residents seem to have been humorous at best. In 1933, he referred to them disparagingly as 'what W. S. Gilbert would probably have called that singular anomaly, the working lady'.⁵⁷ This is a cruel reference to Ko Ko's



Figure 8. The mirror in the Bike Shed. Photo: author, March 2019

‘Little List’ of possible execution victims in *The Mikado* (1885). The context is: ‘And that singular anomaly, the lady novelist – / I don’t think she’d be missed — I’m sure she’d not be missed!’⁵⁸ The Store may be a barn transformed into a temple, but the importance of the ladies, their garden tools and their symbolic bicycles is diminished by the small scale of the building.

Even if Scott was not gently mocking the women, others were. Contemporary newspapers called Waterlow an ‘Adamless Eden’ and ‘The Spinsters’ Quadrangle’. The clippings are now ironically displayed outside Waterlow’s porter’s lodge. Yet a dusty, cracked mirror still behind the Store door is a poignant relic of femininity in what is now a shared-gender space (Figure 8). It is not what you normally find in a garden shed. In this feminine space, presumably it was used by ladies in from the garden or taking or dismounting their bicycles, to adjust their hats and hair.⁵⁹

BICYCLES FOR THE BOURGEOIS

Beguiling though the feminist narrative is, the Store is part of a wide pattern of bicycle accommodation and use in the early Suburb. Plans of many larger early Suburb houses show an internal space designated ‘Cycles’ at the side or back, with an external door approached via a side gate. The cycle space is alongside the servants’ WC and space for coal – evidently equally essential. An example is the plan of eight terraced houses at 20–27 Heathgate where the cycle spaces for all the houses are through gated passages giving the closest road access and security.⁶⁰ In a publicity book for the new Suburb, written partly by Unwin and Scott, designs of about twenty-four houses of varying sizes and styles include seven showing specific bicycle rooms.⁶¹ Of the rest, a number have insufficient space and several are incompletely labelled (including, unfortunately, the plan of Scott’s own designs though as the plans in *Houses and Gardens* (1906) show, others of his houses did include cycle spaces).⁶² This sample has limitations (it is selective and not all were necessarily built), but it shows that cycle space was a potential attraction of Suburb properties and that bicycling was a common, though not universal, activity important enough for residents to dedicate significant space in homes. This phenomenon is not confined to the Suburb. Six of Parker’s designs for Letchworth Garden City illustrated in *Modern Country Homes* incorporate bicycle space.⁶³ Timothy Brittain-Catlin mentions cycle spaces in buildings in another garden suburb, Gidea Park in Essex.⁶⁴ The social factors described can therefore be ascribed more generally to the Garden City/Suburb Movement.

CYCLES IN THE SUBURB

Apart from the evidence of the buildings, the widespread use of bicycles in the Suburb is supported by the evidence of images in the Suburb's archive and references to the Suburb's own bicycle club in the early Suburb journals.⁶⁵ London Transport's archives contain photographs of a lady's bicycle outside the Golders Green post office in 1923 and 1927, and one from the 1920s of a bicycle store at Golders Green Station, awkwardly posed, of a man giving his bicycle to a uniformed attendant in exchange for a token from the 1920s (Figure 9).⁶⁶ The store may have been in place as early as 1911 – conditions of deposit dated 1916 survive. The fact that the store was needed (and apparently rebuilt in 1923) shows how significant bicycle use was.⁶⁷ The station cycle store was the kind of bicycle shed Pevsner probably had in mind with his epigram, a functional wooden hut with timber posts supporting a corrugated iron roof. Perhaps Pevsner himself used it twenty years later. He lived about half a mile from Golders Green station and certainly cycled to work in Broadway before living in London.⁶⁸

PEDALLING AND PLANNING

Bicycles, women, socialism and the garden suburbs were all associated. As Osbert Lancaster wrote: 'From surroundings such as these did the New Woman emerge to bicycle off to an interesting meeting of the Fabian Society.'⁶⁹ One common theme between the philosophy of the Garden City Movement and the bicyclists was escaping London: 'Don't you sometimes long to get away from it all? Away from the streets of serried houses [...] only a few miles away is a different land', ran a pamphlet of 1923 issued by a firm of



Figure 9. Bicycle store at Golders Green Underground Station, 1920–1930, as perhaps used by Nikolaus Pevsner. Photo: © Transport for London from the London Transport Museum collection, 1998/67423

bicycle manufacturers, Raleigh.⁷⁰ ‘Hampstead Garden Suburb, Real Country Five Miles from Charing Cross’ is the headline of a 1905 publicity article in *The Sphere*,⁷¹ echoed in the 1909 publicity book’s exaggerated reference to ‘An area famous for centuries for its pure, clear and bracing air, a breezy agricultural tract, although within 25 minutes of Charing Cross’.⁷² Barnett’s 1905 Suburb prospectus in *The Contemporary Review* echoed Howard and Unwin, stressing the benefits of allowing the working classes to escape the deprivation of endless mean streets.⁷³

Association with healthy living was another common theme. ‘Rosy health and a clear brain is what Raleigh gives you’, the pamphlet goes on; Unwin aimed for ‘fresh air and sunlight, the full enjoyment of which is one of the most necessary conditions of a healthy life’.⁷⁴ Hence, the availability of open space to all who lived in the Suburb.

A third theme was socialism. The bicycle became relatively cheap by the 1890s and so used by people of all classes. Many members of the Fabian Society (the leading socialist organization of the Edwardian era), including Sydney Webb, one of its most influential figures, were keen cyclists (there is a good story of Webb, Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell bicycling together: Shaw fell off, smashing Russell’s bicycle).⁷⁵ Bicycling had a levelling effect between the wealthy and the poor. An example was the Clarion Cycle Club, founded by a trade unionist MP, referred to as ‘Socialism – real Socialism’ by one writer in 1910⁷⁶ and with which the Pankhurst family of women’s rights campaigners were involved.⁷⁷

The Suburb likewise originated in socialism. The same levelling process and sociability underlay Barnett’s ‘practical socialist’ vision. The socialist background of Unwin, who implemented it, has been described in detail by Swenarton.⁷⁸ Socialism was not just in the architecture, it was among the residents, reaching a zenith with Labour politician Harold Wilson’s successive occupation of two houses in Southway from 1948 to 1964 when he moved to 10 Downing Street.⁷⁹ Scott was, as we have seen, inspired by Morris’s socialism. There is a sense of the working man or woman about the barn-Store, too. Most of these themes linking bicycling and the Suburb are brought together in suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst’s ‘Clarion Cycling Days 1896–1898’ in words that might almost describe the ideals behind the community at Waterlow:

[They] promoted a frank, friendly comradeship amongst men and women, then very much less common than it is today. [...] Week in, week out, the Clarion clubs took hundreds of people of all ages away from the grime and ugliness of the manufacturing districts to the green loveliness of the countryside, giving them fresh air, exercise and good fellowship at a minimum of cost.⁸⁰

CONCLUSIONS

Pevsner may or may not have ever seen the Store. He lived a few hundred yards away for nearly fifty years and must often have walked past the end of Heath Close.⁸¹ Yet Waterlow gets only six lines even in the current edition of *Buildings of England*, just enough to be called ‘a masterly job’.⁸² The Store is still not mentioned. By the criteria Pevsner sets out for ‘architecture’ – deliberate aesthetics and its reflection of the feminist bicycling spirit of the Edwardian age – this bicycle shed clearly qualifies. But the mirror behind the door is a symbol of a greater significance. The standard of design and craftsmanship reflect the importance of the tools and bicycles it housed to the women who used it. The Store’s form as a miniature barn can be seen as a complement to the medievalism and social ambitions of Waterlow’s main building, showing from a different angle the architects’ aim to use buildings to reflect and enhance the lifestyle of their occupants. The Store’s working-class appearance as a barn, a building for work, at one level emphasizes that

these are people who earn their livings. At another level, the miniature, though not quite toy-like, scale of the barn belittles their efforts.

Seen against a background of cycling as an occupation for the working classes (bringing personal development and mobility) and with associations of socialism, the Store's medieval style reflects the same social ambitions that Unwin and others invested in the quadrangular communal housing of which Waterlow is such a good (and perhaps the only) example. Bicycling was an agent of social progress just as garden cities aimed to improve the lives of women and working-class men with cheaper and better places to live. The Store brings these themes together. Looked at with a wider perspective, the Store is an object lesson in the way really good architects apply their flair to the small details of important buildings. It is also an excellent illustration of the intersections between gardening, architecture, art, writing and social history. For historians, it gives a tangible insight into the significance of bicycles for women at this important moment in the story of female emancipation and shows the tensions which exist(ed) between the (usually male) establishment, here the architect, and the women who struggled to find places, the 'singular anomalies, the working ladies'. And taken with the other bicycle spaces in and around the Suburb, we can glimpse how integral bicycles were to the way of life generally during the Edwardian era, in the Suburb and elsewhere, a factor which tends to be overlooked. The story of bicycling in the garden cities is not yet over, either: the use of Suburb bicycles, alongside Suburb spaces designed for leisurely pedestrians, returned as a notable feature during the Covid-19 lockdowns, demonstrating how conveniently organized the area is for a car-free way of life. Pevsner's epigram is provocatively memorable and made an important point even if few modern architectural historians would agree with it, but perhaps it is a pity that Pevsner did not walk up Heath Close further or more often.

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² In the rest of this article, Waterlow Court is referred to as 'Waterlow'; the Garden Store at Waterlow Court as 'the Store'; Hampstead Garden Suburb as 'the Suburb' and the former servants' accommodation at Waterlow Court as 'the Bungalow'.

³ Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1902).

⁴ Mervyn Miller and Stuart Gray, *Hampstead Garden Suburb* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co., 1992).

⁵ Anon., 'Waterlow Court', *British Architect* (9 July 1909), pp. 19–20, describes a visit to the newly completed building which confirms that the colour was originally white.

⁶ Listing 1064889, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1064889> (accessed on 6 April 2021).

⁷ The communal rooms converted to flats in 1934 and male residents were admitted in 1943; Helen Findlay (ed.), *Waterlow Court: From Women's Utopia to Urban Oasis* (Sherborne: Frontline Communications, 2015), pp. 36–7.

⁸ Kathleen M. Slack, *Henrietta's Dream: A Chronicle of the Hampstead Garden Suburb 1905–1982* (London, 1982), pp. 96–8.

⁹ See particularly Henrietta Barnett, 'The young women in our workhouses', in Samuel Barnett and Henrietta Barnett, *Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform*, 2nd edn (London: Longmans, 1894), pp. 136–48.

¹⁰ Henrietta Barnett, *The Story of the Growth of the Hampstead Garden Suburb 1907–1928* (London: Hampstead Garden Suburb Archive Trust, 2006), p. 20.

¹¹ Emily Gee, "'Where Shall She Live?': housing the new working woman in late Victorian and Edwardian London', in Geoff

Brandwood (ed.), *Living, Leisure and Law: Eight Building Types in England 1800–1941* (Reading: Spire, 2010), pp. 89–109; Emily Gee, *Historic England*, ‘Buildings that celebrate working women’, <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/womens-history/buildings-that-celebrate-working-women/> (accessed on 6 April 2021).

¹² M. H. Baillie Scott and A. Edgar Beresford, *Houses and Gardens* (London: Architecture Illustrated, 1933), p. 276. The 1906 plans are in M. H. Baillie Scott, *Houses and Gardens* (London: George Newnes, 1906), p. 116.

¹³ For example, the central arch of Voysey’s ‘The Pastures’, Oakham, Rutland (1901). The author of ‘An architectural appreciation of the garden suburb’, in Shankland Cox and Associates, *Hampstead Garden Suburb: Plan for Conservation* (London: Shankland Cox & Associates, 1971), p. 119, suggests the influence of the cloister at Edwin Lutyens’s ‘The Orchards’, Bramley, Surrey (1901), a quadrangle which had similar arches.

¹⁴ Raymond Unwin, *Fabian Tract No. 109: Cottage Plans and Common Sense* (London: Fabian Society, 1902), pls 2, 3, p. 11.

¹⁵ Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, *The Art of Building a Home* (London: Longmans, 1901), pp. 104–7; Barry Parker, ‘Co-operation in building and living’, in Dean Hawkes, *Modern Country Homes in England: The Arts and Crafts Architecture of Barry Parker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 140–2 (which is illustrated by an image of proposed shared accommodation in Brussels looking very like Waterlow Court, but post-dating it as the article was written between 1910 and 1912).

¹⁶ Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), pp. 70–1.

¹⁷ Barnett, *Story of the Growth of the Hampstead Garden Suburb*, pp. 20–1.

¹⁸ Scott and Beresford, *Houses and Gardens* (1933), p. 276.

¹⁹ Anon., ‘Waterlow Court’.

²⁰ Findlay, *Waterlow Court*, p. 14. A contemporary newspaper cutting on display in the lodge at Waterlow Court says that the flats were ‘for artists, journalists, nurses, secretaries and other professional women’.

²¹ See the reference to *The Builder* (1912), p. 255, in James D. Kornwolf, M. H. Baillie Scott and the *Arts and Crafts Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), p. 313.

²² Mark Swenarton, *Building the New Jerusalem, Architecture, Housing and Politics 1900–1930* (Bracknell: IHS BRE Press, 2011), pp. 114–16.

²³ M. H. Baillie Scott, ‘House building: past and present’, Lecture I delivered 15 March 1915, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 63/3284 (29 October 1915), pp. 989–96.

²⁴ ‘Colour in Architecture’, *The British Architect* (1911), pp. 161–2, quoted in

Kornwolf, M. H. Baillie Scott, p. 295.

²⁵ It is White according to Miller and Gray, *Hampstead Garden Suburb*, pp. 147, 248; and Historic England listing 1064889. Findlay, *Waterlow Court*, p. 31, says that the manufacturer of the window ironmongery was ‘a K. Low’, but does not refer to the rest of the ironmongery.

²⁶ Kornwolf, M. H. Baillie Scott, p. 249.

²⁷ Gee, ‘Buildings that celebrate working women’.

²⁸ The Shed does not appear on the 1909 perspective drawing. This may be because the drawing was prepared before the design was finalized and only published later, or (the most likely reason) because it is an idealized representation. Alternatively, the date written on the photograph is incorrect by a few months. According to Findlay, *Waterlow Court*, p. 31, the Bungalow was added in 1910 as servants’ accommodation, and the Shed may have been added at the same time.

²⁹ London Metropolitan Archive, ACC/3816/PH/02/805.

³⁰ Barnett, *Story of the Growth of the Hampstead Garden Suburb*, p. 20.

³¹ Jeremy Lake, *National Farm Building Types* (London: English Heritage, 2013), p. 5.

³² Cambridge colleges lack barns.

³³ Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris, A Life for Our Time* (London: Faber & Faber, 1994), p. 312.

³⁴ Sydney Cockerell’s diary, 10 August 1892, quoted in *The Collected Works of William Morris: With Introductions by His Daughter May Morris: The Well at the World’s End*, 24 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 18: p. xxxii.

³⁵ J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris* (London: Longmans, 1899), p. 233.

³⁶ William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (Hammersmith: Kelmscott, 1893), p. 283.

³⁷ Kornwolf, M. H. Baillie Scott, pp. 37–47.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

³⁹ ‘A grand old wall is a precious thing in a garden’, Gertrude Jekyll, *Wall, Water and Woodland Gardens* (London: Country Life, 1902), p. 42. London Gardens Trust consider that the Waterlow Court garden is influenced by Jekyll’s designs; ‘Waterlow Court (Hampstead Garden Suburb)’, in London Gardens Trust Inventory, <http://www.londongardensonline.org.uk/gardens-online-record.php?ID=BAR095> (accessed on 30 March 2020). Barry Parker commented on the dependency on walls, paving, etc. to see the beauty of flowers; Hawkes, *Modern Country Homes*, p. 121.

⁴⁰ M. H. Baillie Scott, ‘House building: past and present’, Lecture III delivered 29 March 1915, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 63/3286 (12 November 1915), pp. 1019–30, at 1023.

⁴¹ Ina Taylor, *Helen Allingham’s England, An Idyllic View of Rural Life* (London: Webb & Bower, 1990), p. 68.

⁴² Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius*, rev. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), pp. 57–67.

⁴³ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: Smith, Elder, 1849).

⁴⁴ Scott, 'House building: past and present', Lecture I, p. 991.

⁴⁵ Pevsner, *Outline of European Architecture*, p. 17.

⁴⁶ H. G. Wells, *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul* (London: Macmillan, 1905); Jerome K. Jerome, *Three Men on the Bummel* (London: Arrowsmith, 1900); Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist', in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (London: George Newnes, 1900), pp. 93–118.

⁴⁷ Edith Nesbit, 'A perfect stranger', *The Windsor Magazine* (July 1899), pp. 169–77.

⁴⁸ John Woodforde, *The Story of the Bicycle* (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1970), pp. 122–34; James McGunn, *On your Bicycle: An Illustrated History of Cycling* (London: Murray, 1987), pp. 100–7.

⁴⁹ 'Champion of her sex', *New York Sunday World* (2 February 1896), p. 10, quoted in Alison Byerly, 'Technologies of travel and the Victorian novel', in Lisa Rodensky (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 289–312, at 307.

⁵⁰ As the Eton College trustees said when she tried to buy the land for the Suburb. Barnett, *Story of the Growth of the Hampstead Garden Suburb*, p. 6, tells the tale.

⁵¹ Micky Watkins, *Henrietta Barnett in Whitechapel: Her First Fifty Years* (London: Micky Watkins, 2005), p. 120.

⁵² Sheila Hanlon, 'Pedalling days: Sylvia Pankhurst and political cycling traditions from Clarionettes to Suffragettes', Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Lecture 2018, <http://www.sheilahanlon.com/?p=2315#more-2315> (accessed on 6 April 2021).

⁵³ Alan Walker, *A Totally Preposterous Parson: Evelyn Waugh and Basil Bourchier* (London: SJH, 2016), ch. 6.

⁵⁴ Gee, "'Where Shall She Live?'" p. 103.

⁵⁵ Emily Gee, 'A bicycle shed is a (listed) building', <https://heritagecalling.com/2016/06/04/a-bicycle-shed-is-a-listed-building/> (accessed on 6 April 2021). Numerous descriptions of new schools with bicycle sheds are found in *The British Architect* during the period. A typical example is Aigburgh Secondary School for Girls (24 July 1908).

⁵⁶ There is also said to be a plan of a bicycle shed for Lutyens's Suburb Institute building in an unpacked box in the London Metropolitan Archives, supposedly by John Soutar, Unwin's second successor as Suburb architect, which would be interesting to compare (I understand from Jane De Swiet, former headmistress of the school now occupying the site, that the shed has gone). Paul Capewell has drawn my attention to a design for a store and cycle

shed by Wade in the archives at Snowhill Manor (NT1330068) inscribed 'Hampstead Tenants. Sketch of Cycle Stores' and dated 1909. This has similarities to Scott's design with the 'porch' enclosed and red brick used as well as clapboard, but is grander and taller, resembling a cottage rather than a barn, with little windows along the front and divided into rooms open at the back.

⁵⁷ Scott and Beresford, *Houses and Gardens* (1933), p. 276.

⁵⁸ Paul Howarth and Jim Farron, 'Gilbert and Sullivan Archive', <https://www.gsarchive.net/mikado/webopera/mk105a.html> (accessed on 6 April 2021).

⁵⁹ At least by lady gardeners who wore gardening gloves.

⁶⁰ These are mirrored in the four corresponding houses opposite, 21–27 Heathgate.

⁶¹ Raymond Unwin and M. H. Baillie Scott, *Town Planning and Modern Architecture at the Hampstead Garden Suburb* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1909). I also understand from Roz Archer, an architect and trustee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives Trust, that of the nine houses in the square on the north side of Corringham Road (designed by Unwin, 1912), six had cycle spaces.

⁶² Scott, *Houses and Gardens* (1906), plans for Danestream (p. 220) and The Garth (p. 234). Kornwolf, *M. H. Baillie Scott*, p. 210, also illustrates one further plan of a house by Scott with cycle accommodation, Winscombe.

⁶³ Hawkes, *Modern Country Homes*, pp. 43, 59, 62, 64, 95, 101.

⁶⁴ Timothy Brittain-Catlin, *The Edwardians and Their Houses* (London: Lund Humphries, 2020), p. 122.

⁶⁵ Slack, *Henrietta's Dream*, p. 72. For examples of articles about the bicycling club in a local magazine, see *The Record, Hampstead Garden Suburb*, 1 (May 1913), pp. 10, 163; and 1 (June 1913), pp. 11, 186.

⁶⁶ London Transport Online Archive.

⁶⁷ The conditions of acceptance show that the price was an old penny a day – about nineteen pence in today's money. This would have been quite a lot for the Waterlow Court ladies to spend regularly given their back access to Corringway, only five minutes' walk from the station, but better value if you lived farther away. The fare into Central London was 4d. (four pennies); Slack, *Henrietta's Dream*, p. 32.

⁶⁸ Susie Harries, *Nikolaus Pevsner: The Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2011), pp. 70, 250.

⁶⁹ Osbert Lancaster, *A Cartoon History of Architecture*, 2nd edn (London: John Murray, 1975), p. 114.

⁷⁰ Quoted in McGunn, *On your Bicycle*, p. 143.

⁷¹ *The Sphere* (5 August 1905).

⁷² Unwin and Scott, *Town Planning and Modern Architecture*, p. 31. It still is twenty-five minutes to Charing Cross.

⁷³ Quoted in Miller and Gray, *Hampstead Garden Suburb*, p. 45.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

⁷⁵ This was in September 1895; Jeanne Mackenzie (ed.), *Cycling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 51–3.

⁷⁶ Quoted in William Manners, *Revolution: How the Bicycle Reinvented Modern Britain* (London: Duckworth, 2018), p. 145.

⁷⁷ Hanlon, ‘Pedalling days’, second section.

⁷⁸ Swenarton, *Building the New Jerusalem*, p. 6; Mark Swenarton, *Artisans and Architects, The Ruskinian Tradition in Architectural Thought* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp.

126–66.

⁷⁹ Other Labour Cabinet ministers of his era also lived in the Suburb along with Labour MPs, and some of their families remain there still.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Manners, *Revolution*, p. 146.

⁸¹ Pevsner arrived at 2 Wildwood Terrace, across the road from the Suburb, in 1937 and lived there until he died in 1983; Harries, *Nikolaus Pevsner*, pp. 233, 795.

⁸² Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 4 North* (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 151.