

Garden Cities of Tomorrow

Streets Apart: A History of Social Housing, Series 1



Lynsey Hanley tells the story of Ebenezer Howard and the garden cities.

In 1898, a young court stenographer from London called Ebenezer Howard published a book. It was called *Garden Cities of Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform* and it would go on to transform the history of housing around the world. The book proposed using architecture to remodel city-dwellers' lives. Howard imagined a utopian metropolis, away from corrupted cities, in which the city and the countryside merged. There, workers from London could free themselves from the oppressive conditions of the city and live fruitful and happy lives.

Lynsey visits Letchworth, the first garden city, founded just six years after the publication of Howard's book. At Letchworth she finds a pretty little town predicated on the ideals of the arts and crafts movement and funded by wealthy progressive thinkers like George Bernard Shaw. But moving past the quaint buildings and green space, Lynsey also discovers the ideals of Howard and the architect Raymond Unwin ushered in a new era for housing reform and are still valid to this day.

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