UPPER DENS

THE UPPER DENS PROJECT

An area which once housed one of the largest textile mills in the world has been transformed into a £7.5m award-winning housing development, with 231 houses providing homes for 540 residents.

Upper Dens, the 6.5 acre site of the former Baxters' Flax and Jute Mill in the centre of Dundee was developed by a partnership of three housing associations - Hillcrest, Servite and Gowrie - funded by the Housing Corporation, with landscaping by the Scottish Development Agency in partnership with the City of Dundee District Council.

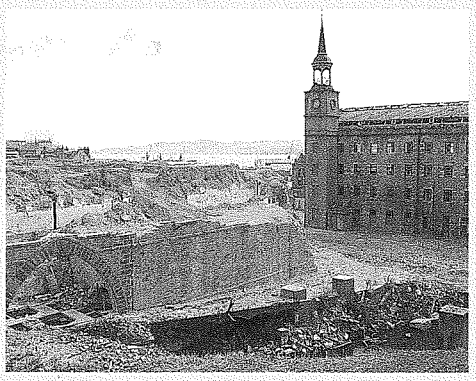
The Development is the first winner in Scotland of the Royal Town Planning Institute Silver Jubilee award. The judges' comments speak for themselves.

"We consider this scheme to be a highly original and imaginative solution to the problems and opportunities of the difficult topography and fine Victorian engineering structures, dams, bridges and cooling ponds. The integration of work by different professions and agencies has produced an outstanding example of inner city renewal, of great character and excellence. The rich housing mix is an aspect of particular merit as is the sensitive conversion of the listed mill to 73 flats."

The Upper Dens site was identified by the District Council in 1979 for an integrated housing development to include sheltered housing, conversion of the listed building and a central park. It was acquired in 1983 by three housing associations working in Dundee - Hillcrest, Servite and Gowrie. This followed a feasibility study of the site in order to secure Housing Corporation funding. The acquisition costs for the entire site amounted to £200,000 funded by the Corporation, including £50,000 for the listed building. The Housing Corporation committed £6.81m to the development of the project through the participating housing associations.

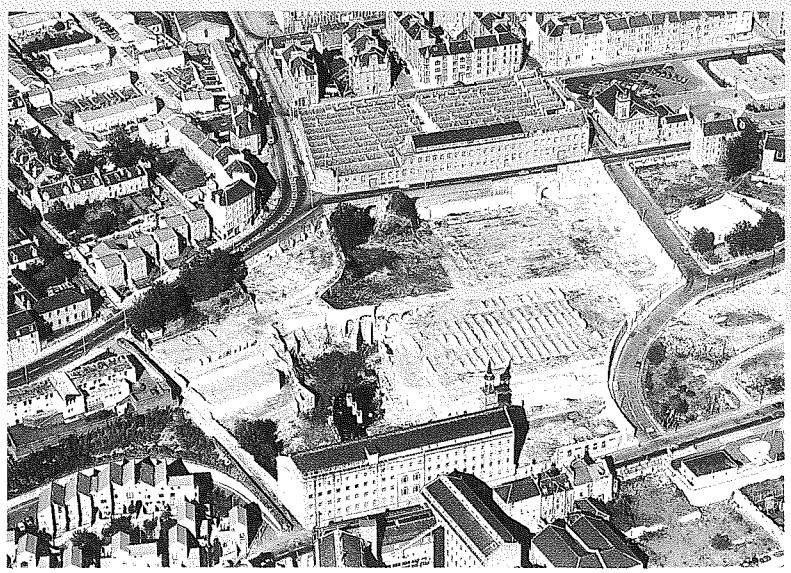
The District Council, purchased an area of land for creating public open space on the site, and the landscaping was financed through the Scottish Development Agency at a cost of £600,000. The Historic Buildings Council also contributed £90,000 to the success of the project through their finance of the listed building conversion.

From an early stage, the Housing Corporation encouraged a joint development on the part of the housing associations in order to create balanced housing and channel investment into various areas of housing need. The project therefore represented a partnership and concerted effort on the part of the housing associations, Dundee District Council, Scottish Development Agency, Historic Buildings Council and Housing Corporation. It constituted a significant undertaking aimed at regenerating an area of the inner city which had fallen into disuse. In this sense, the project can be seen as having addressed not only immediate problems of housing need, but also broader environmental issues within Dundee.





The transformation from 1984 (top) to 1987 (bottom) showing Hillcrest family housing.



Upper Dens in 1984.

Front Cover - Aerial view of the site 1987.

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THE HOUSING CORPORATION

The Housing Corporation registers, funds and supervises Housing Associations. The Corporation's budget for 1987/88 in Scotland was £120m provided by the Secretary of State. 97% of this provided homes for rent through area renewal activity and new building for people with special needs, including elderly, disabled and single people. The remainder promoted home ownership initiatives including shared ownership and improvement for sale.

THE HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Hillcrest is a Dundee based association operating throughout Tayside in area renewal work in both the principal inner cities and towns and also in the rural hinterland. Servite Housing Association (Scotland) is a devolved Scottish offshoot from Servite Housing Association formed to provide accommodation and care for the elderly. Servite (Scotland) largely provide sheltered housing for the elderly and some supported accommodation for vulnerable single people. Gowrie Housing Association is a locally based association specialising mainly in the provision of housing for single people, mentally ill and mentally handicapped people throughout Tayside and North-East Fife.

HOUSING PEOPLE IN NEED

The development, designed by Baxter, Clark and Paul, has provided much needed housing in the heart of Dundee, by a combination of conversion and new build.

Conversion

Hillcrest Housing Association have provided 73 flats for 112 people by the sensitive conversion of the listed mill building.

Family Housing

By new building, Hillcrest have also provided 53 family houses, including 2 for wheelchair users.

Servite's sheltered housing.



Sheltered Housing

Servite Housing Association have provided 38 sheltered units for 60 elderly people, with warden accommodation and common rooms.

Single People

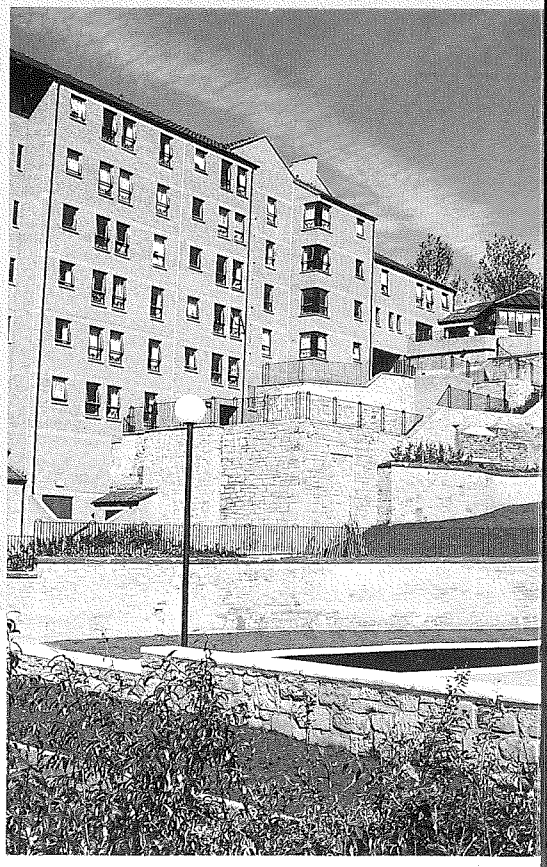
Gowrie Housing Association have provided 53 flats for 71 single people under 60.

Supported Accommodation

Gowrie have also built a family house and 13 flats for 27 people who have a mental illness or handicap, and who need some support to enable them to live in the community as independently as possible.



Gowrie supported accommodation.



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OPEN SPACE

Early in the planning of the project, the District Council agreed to aquire the area for a substantial central parkland, and in turn the Scottish Development Agency agreed to fund its development. The site's extremely complex nature called for an imaginative design. To achieve this, a national ideas' competition was promoted by the Agency and the District Council - the winning entrants, Building Design Partnership, being retained by the Agency as landscape consultants.

The £600,000 open space development has been carefully integrated with the superb housing to meet the needs of residents. The park makes full use of the unique historic characteristics of the site, including retention of water as an important feature.

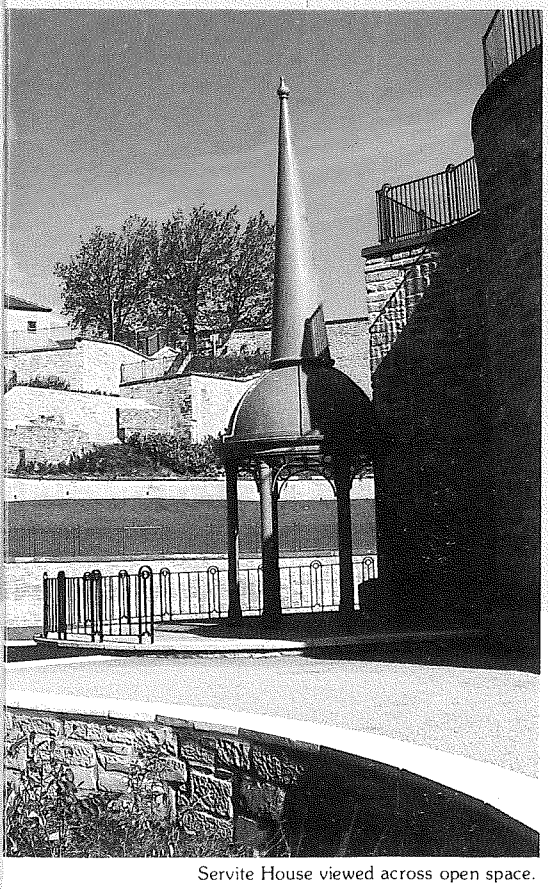
The design has tremendous variety of interest, incorporating classical stairs and gazebo, and uses the dramatic changes in level to great effect.

Using the resources of the Dundee Public Arts Programme, public art work has been introduced into the open space in both a functional and decorative manner. Artwork is also included to great effect within the converted mill building through the involvement of students of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art.

The Agency's involvement in this dramatic transformation of the site has been in close co-operation with the housing associations and the District Council, and is in the spirit of the Dundee Project partnership's regeneration of the environment and economy of Dundee - "The City of Discovery".

The mill building in 1984.

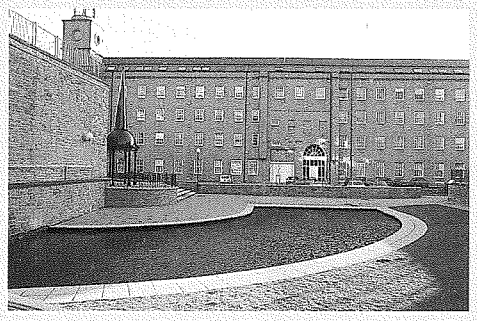




Servite House viewed across open space.



The mill building - Hillcrest Housing Association.

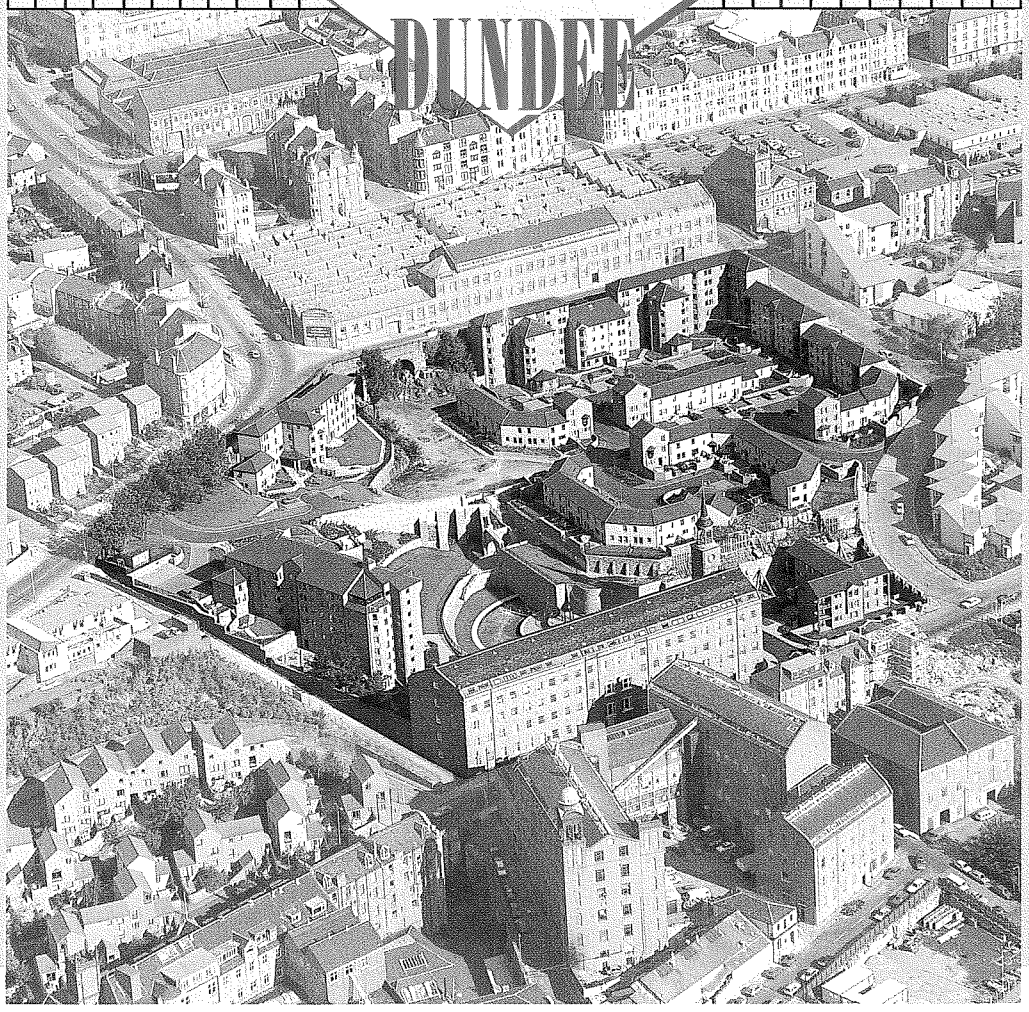




The entrance to the mill building as it was in 1984 (above left) and in 1987 (left).

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DUNDEE



ACHIEVEMENT BY PARTNERSHIP