Three Urban Utopias

- What assumptions does each thinker make about how people should live in cities?
- What beliefs does each hold about the relationship between city design and social change?
- What aspects of these “utopias” have actually come to pass?
Three Utopias

• Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City (1902)
• Le Corbusier’s Radient City (1922)
• Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City (1920s –1950s)
THE THREE MAGNETS.

TOWN:
- Distance from nature
- Isolation from work
- High rents, low wages
- Excess of prices, crowded dwellings
- Slums and subterranean habitations

COUNTRY:
- Hands out of work, land lying idle
- Hands of society, beauty of nature
- Hands of nature, social opportunity
- Hands of town, parks of easy access
- Hands of country, fields and gardens

TOWN - COUNTRY:
- Lack of amusement, abundance of water
- Hands of town, beauty of nature
- Hands of country, fields and gardens

THE PEOPLE:
- Where will they go?
- Hands of town, natural beauty
- Hands of country, ease of access
- Hands of town, low rents, high wages
- Hands of country, low prices, plenty to do
- Hands of town, pure air and water
- Hands of country, bright homes and gardens

Co-operation.
Diagram
Illustrating correct principle of a city's growth - open country ever near at hand, and rapid communication between off-shoots.

The Social City in its more limited realization in Garden Cities of To-morrow, (1902).
The Garden City surrounded by its agricultural belt. The notation "Diagram only. Plan cannot be drawn until site selected" was added in the second edition (1902). From *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, (1902).
One slice of the circular pie. A typical ward and the center of the Garden City. From Garden Cities of To-morrow, (1902).

WARD AND CENTRE
GARDEN-CITY

N.B.
A diagram only.
Plan must depend upon site selected.

SCALE
0 110 220 440 YDS = 1 MILE
The problem: In 1995, Letchworth's town centre was a depressing place. The demolition of Dixhounds to an out-of-town retail park led to the closure of many shops.

town centre in crisis

The solution: Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation set up the Letchworth Town Centre Board, a partnership of public and private sector interests, to oversee the delivery of a comprehensive revitalisation strategy.

strategy developed
first steps taken

Leaseholders' partnership bid for GCVF funding attracted grant support from the Home Office. Cameras were installed all throughout the area, further strengthening Leaseholders’ representation as a safe and secure environment.
Yesterday
Living and Working in the Smoke

Today
Living in the Suburbs—Working in the Smoke

Tomorrow
Living & Working in the Sun at WELWYN GARDEN CITY
A superhighway forms a triumphal entryway leading directly into the center of the Contemporary City (1922). From Oeuvre complèt de 1910–1929.
The business district of the Contemporary City as seen from the terrace of a fashionable cafe. From Oeuvre complèt de 1910–1929.
The plan of the Contemporary City. At the exact center is the transportation interchange for automobiles, subways, trains, and airplanes. Around the center are first the twenty-four towers of administration, and then the luxury apartments for the elite. Beyond the central district lie satellite cities for industry and workers. The north-south, east-west axes are aligned with the points of the compass. From Oeuvre complèt de 1910–1929.
Contemporary City (1922). To the right of the skyscrapers is the multi-tiered pedestrian promenade with its shops, cafes, and restaurants. From Oeuvre complète de 1910–1929.
A "Villa-Apartment," (1922), luxury living for the elite of the Contemporary City. From Oeuvre complèt de 1910–1929.
The vast apartment blocks where the elite of the Contemporary City live, surrounded by parks. From *Oeuvre complèt de 1910–1929.*
Louis XIV Commanding the Building of the Invalides

"Homage to a great town planner. This despot conceived immense projects and realized them. Over all the country his noble works still fill us with admiration. He was capable of saying, "We wish it," or "Such is our pleasure."