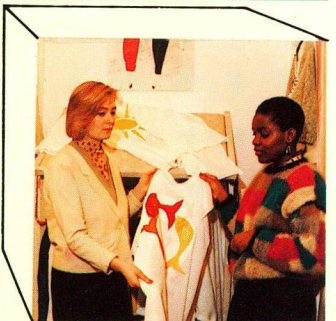
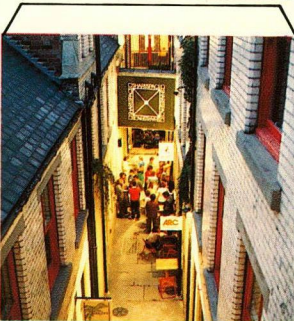
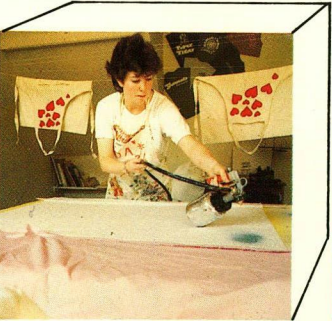
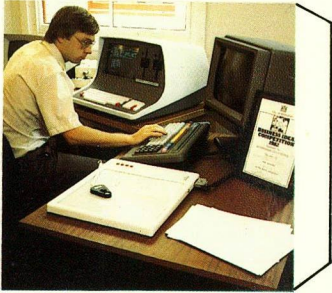
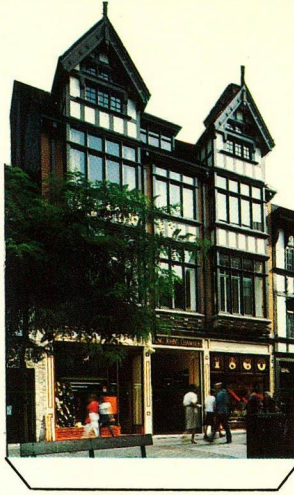
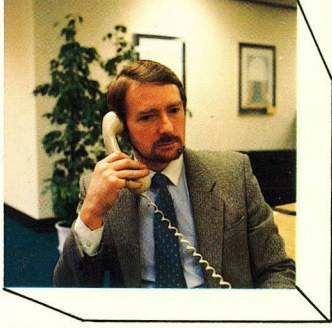


the Job Makers

Ruth I. Johns



SHARESPACE

**Case study of a working community
for small firms**

THE JOB MAKERS

**Case study of a working
community for small firms**

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ISBN 0 907895 02 6

Copies available through bookshops, libraries or direct from the publisher **Unknown Publisher**, P O. Box 66, Warwick CV34 4XE. £3.95 (post free UK).

Printed by Warwick Printing Co. Ltd., Theatre Street, Warwick.

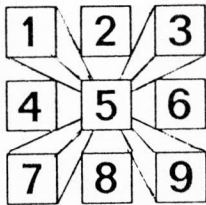
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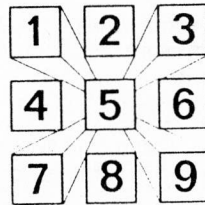
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1. Tim McArtney
2. Sharespace: Nottingham
3. Andrew James
4. Interactive Graphics Ltd.
5. Virginia Stunt: Sharespace Ltd.
6. Paul Carrington
7. Deb Arrowsmith: Artisan
8. Sharespace: The street at night
9. Ann Withers and assistant,
Jasmine Reid: Fougere

BACK COVER



1. Pamela Woodhead: Pamela
Woodhead Originals
2. Staropolska Restaurant
3. Greg Dominic: Dominic
Frampton Partnership
4. Sarah Hutchinson: James
McArtney Architects
5. Fabrikat–Interior I
6. Eileen Wood: Hankin & Wood
7. Howard Gill: Harms Gill
8. Kindergarten Toy Shop
9. John Richards: Workshop
Design

FOREWORD

When I first heard the name Sharespace I recalled from my early days in the Lancashire cotton trade the term “room and power”. This I presumed originated from the letting of parts of a mill with its communal shaft drive system to small operators who couldn’t afford a giant steam engine of their own.

Sharespace I thought updated this to “room and services” especially for new starters in business. But as I came to see and understand the “share-space” concept through Ruth Johns’ perceptive narrative I realised how much more to creating the environment there was compared with just catering for the physical and fiscal needs. Especially is this so in the area of design and for designers as people. We are all conscious of the great annual outpouring of talented and trained people from our education system concerned with Design and Technology. Many of these people seek above all to do their own thing and live by it – to freelance or start a small business be it in making and selling crafts, workshop or studio practice.

To assist them to do so there exists a plethora of sources of advice and many aid schemes, yet most of these would admit that they have only limited appeal to and success in launching designers. There are many indications of reasons for this for consideration in Ruth Johns’ work.

It is refreshing and reassuring to read so much factual evidence that a non-subsidised, commercially viable venture can establish an environment in which creative small businesses can both appear and succeed. On this last point Ruth Johns comments on a wider scale of parameters that contribute to an understanding of success as perceived by one-person and very small businesses, beyond the simple concept of maximum profits in the shortest time – indeed into the realms of job satisfaction and social contribution.

From the “maximum profits” standpoint adopted often as the major measure – if not the sole one – as the criterion of success by much of the business world, Ruth Johns comments that this is as often as not the

Foreword

stumbling block, both mentally and materially, in getting financial backing for Sharespace-like ventures.

Wryly she says it is easier to get a handout, which slots more conveniently into a corporation's charitable donations accounts, than an investment. Possibly because business managers are less sure how to invest in "Designer" people and their ideas. The originators of Sharespace do know how to do this. Truly they are in the "people" business. The environment they have created enables highly individualistic participants to share their energies and aspirations, and yet to go on to achieve their own personal measure of success. This atmosphere of concern, caring and counselling from within is an effective extension into commercial life of the ethos in our notable Design Schools.

Let us hope that reading Ruth Johns book will encourage colleagues in the business world to look anew at such innovative schemes and be bolder in backing those who initiate them. For Business Studies as well as Design Schools there is a wealth of case information to lead into debate about many of the wider aspects, a particular one being the relationship betwixt wealth creation – in terms of people being able to provide not only their own employment but to give to or create work for others – and short-term maximisation of direct profits.

Ruth Johns brings to this study not only detailed knowledge derived from 5 years association with the venture but an insight that comes from all the experiences of a rich and varied career in which a deep concern for and involvement in community enterprise has always been a prime motivation. Readers of all kinds, and there should be many, not just those who wish to set up, or work within, similar ventures, will sense this and I believe learn from the sincerity of this research and its findings.

JACK WILLOCK

Jack Willock is Professor of Design Management in the Department of Fashion and Textiles, Trent Polytechnic.

INTRODUCTION

Sharespace, Nottingham, is described as a shared workspace project, a working community, an entrepreneurial small business complex or simply as a group of businesses working in the field of craft and design.

The concept in setting up Sharespace was to enable a group of small firms, with a common link through some aspect of design, to work under one roof with shared services.

Resident firms include architects, environmental planners, graphic designers, computer engineers, textile and clothing designers, and sign painters. The fabric designer who created the beaded veil worn by Helen Mirren in the film *Excalibur* works under the same roof as those whose design flair takes them into the field of energy and pollution control.

I decided to study Sharespace, and was offered co-operation to do so, from the time the first firm moved in during February 1979 until August 1983. I had monitored the project from the idea stage. My decision was induced by frustration with the growing plethora of material about small businesses: material presented with great authority but often on extremely flimsy and superficial 'snapshot' evidence. I wanted to study a group of small firms in one of the innovative workplace environments for a significant period of time. I had no idea what the outcome of such a study would be.

But I was well acquainted with the need – in the face of rising unemployment – to explore different avenues of creating work, and to take stock of the way our society currently views employment. Therefore, I looked for a small business project in an area with substantial unemployment. I chose Sharespace, Nottingham, because I backed my judgement that those who set it up would be able to succeed, or to learn something positive from their mistakes. Although this scheme was setting off into then uncharted fields, the groundwork had been thorough.

It helped that I knew Nottingham well, having lived and worked there from 1965-76, and having been responsible subsequently for the setting

Introduction

up of the Action Resource Centre's Nottinghamshire office – in Sharespace.

The two architects, Andrew James and Tim McArtney, who started Sharespace were known to me. Prior to Sharespace's advent, we had worked together toward a possible shared workspace venture in Nottingham's Lace Market.

The Drapers' Company agreed to back that project financially in a specific Lace Market building which was for sale. But when a formal offer to purchase the building was made, the estate agents were astonished to be told by their client that the building had been withdrawn from sale.

This is not the place to air the frustration of that time. Some of us believed that all the hard work ploughed into the aborted scheme would benefit others whose interest in the potential of the long blighted Lace Market area had been aroused. Certainly that time was something of a watershed in the fate of the Lace Market, an inner city area once a lively centre of the European lace trade.

Andrew James and Tim McArtney were not daunted for long. They soon began looking at other properties, deciding to go for something rather smaller, hoping that financial support would be forthcoming. The Drapers' Company sadly lost its interest in the venture due to the delay and withdrew its support.

Sharespace emerged and its story is told in these pages.

I spent an average of one regular day a month at Sharespace over the study period, and have visited for specific reasons at many other times, held off-site interviews, received and sent many letters, documents, telephone calls and tapes pertinent to the study and it has taken me to varied places eg fashion shows and to discussions in the headquarter offices of major finance institutions.

My thanks to everyone in Sharespace for their co-operation in helping this study. In particular my thanks to Andrew James, Tim McArtney and Virginia Stunt who throughout responded to my queries and probings with courtesy and a refreshing degree of honesty, and to John Pike who let me have desk space within Action Resource Centre's office.

BACKGROUND

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WHAT IS A SHARED WORKSPACE VENTURE?

In 1979, when Sharespace, Nottingham, was set up, the concept of renovating and converting old buildings into units for small firms within an environment which offered some shared services was still very new. Or it would be more accurate to say that the wheel – of multi-workshop use – was being re-invented in modern idiom.

Multi-use buildings, deemed untidy in appearance and unsafe in practice, became one of the *bêtes noires* of post-war planners until relatively recent times. The cessation of ‘rabbit warrens’, with their fire and health hazards emphasised, gave a lot of people satisfaction: until it was realised that carved-up buildings created new firms and jobs. Banishing and bulldozing multi-use buildings and small workshops had starved would-be entrepreneurs of venues they could afford, feel comfortable in, and reach easily and inexpensively.

In the past decade, and more particularly in the last three years, the resistance to using old buildings for shared workspace schemes has slowly given way – in the face of rising unemployment – to a growing enthusiasm, not least by local authorities, to set up workspace projects. I have visited many of them throughout the UK.

A word of warning is called for at this juncture for anyone or any organisation contemplating setting up a shared workspace project. Beware the trap of assuming that there is any model within the generic term ‘shared workspace’ which describes it with any precision or which can be taken over as a panacea. I would be unhappy if the material in this book were used in any way as a blueprint, though I hope very much that it will provide some valuable information and insights.

Reports and discussions about shared workspace projects increasingly include comparative material about several schemes, and assumptions are made on false hypotheses. It would be futile, for example, to compare the Hyson Green Workshops in Nottingham, the Saltaire Workshops in West Yorkshire and the Clerkenwell Workshops in London: yet I have

known this done. Each scheme started up with quite different and distinctive objectives. The fact that each operates in a building which has been divided is a common factor. But, even the availability of some shared services does not make the schemes comparable except in a most general sense. A hostel, a bungalow and a country mansion all house people but no architect looking for a panacea for housing single people could gain much aid from this generic factor until some very specific questions had been answered. Why? Where? How? At what cost? For how long? For whom?

In trying to find a model retail outlet, it would be no good comparing, say, the local Marks and Spencer store with your neighbourhood corner shop because they both sold food and both employed sales assistants!

So far, the shared workspace schemes which are working most satisfactorily are a very diverse bunch which set up with quite specific and well-thought out objectives which could be met through using buildings and services in particular ways. The buildings and services have been the means and not the end.

The shared workspace schemes which tend to have the most problems are those set up because a local authority or other agency believes, as a matter of principle, that setting up a shared workspace scheme will fulfil a need: but without doing thorough homework to identify the precise nature of the local need, the precise nature of available buildings and the precise nature of management resources.

I have met representatives from local authorities and others who feel in some despair because they have been assigned to research shared workspace schemes and to make a proposal for their own locality. They are searching for a blueprint which cannot exist. In some instances a building is identified for use, yet nobody has thought through what local people – if any – are needing small workspaces. And not all buildings adapt well to meet specific objectives.

The Hyson Green Workshops, in Nottingham, were created because a group of local tenants in the unjustly notorious council flats over a mass of vandalised garages decided they would improve their local environment and create some local workshops to provide employment in **the** heart of their community. The garages had, for a long time, **attracted** socially distasteful activities which always reflected to the detriment of

What is a Shared Workspace Venture?

local inhabitants. Without the very special nature of this local concern and involvement, this scheme would have been a dud.

The Aire Street Workshops in Leeds were the result of a joint venture between the City Council and the local Council for Voluntary Service to provide workspaces for some of the people made redundant in the recent closures or cutbacks who had skills for which the area is well-known; skills which, if not nourished, might be lost to the area eg tailoring, leatherwork.

Shared workspace schemes have been started by private entrepreneurs, by local community groups, by co-operatives, by community businesses, by organisations, by companies, by local authorities and as joint ventures. Sharespace, Nottingham, was one of the first shared workspace schemes outside London. And one of the few funded commercially by the private sector.

Whilst there is much that we can learn from knowledge of other people's experiences, I hope shared workspace schemes will not be cajoled into forming themselves into some kind of consortium on the pretext that it will help others setting up. If shared workspace schemes become a bandwagon for middlemen to build their careers by telling other people how to do it, it will not be long before rules are invented for would-be shared workspace organisers, and fixed criteria introduced. And once again, a groundswell movement which started because people at local level felt the need to achieve control over their own future will have been taken over by outsiders who colonise the concept for their own power. In my crystal ball I hope I will not see the Association of Shared Workspaces deciding whether a community group in, say, Newcastle meets its own objectives and deciding that they don't yet conform! A joint body would absorb funds and could quickly become a pressure group dwelling on all the factors which caused planners, fire officers and health and safety officers etc to create the shortage of workspaces in the first place!

Standards are, of course, very important. With the degree of consumer participation in the schemes coming forward, there is little doubt that they will need to keep flexible and to offer value for money taken in rent and service charges.

Most organisers of shared workspace schemes are willing to spend time and trouble talking to visitors seriously interested in learning about the concept. A useful start for anyone new to the concept and wanting to take

What is a Shared Workspace Venture?

the matter further would be to read one local evaluation study *Shared Workspace Schemes in West Yorkshire* by Ernest Dufton and Michael Kelly. It is published by Action Resource Centre and available (on application) from its West Yorkshire office, c/o ICI Fibres Division, Hookstone Road, Harrogate HG2 8QN.

THE CONCEPT OF SHARESAPACE, NOTTINGHAM

The first shared workspace scheme which Andrew James and Tim McArtney planned was, as mentioned in the Introduction, thwarted by the unexpected withdrawal of a particular property from the market. But much of the planning had not been wasted, including a study which highlighted the need for workspace by local craftspeople. Andrew and Tim felt that their concept of a working community of those involved in design needed the inclusion, if possible, of practising craftspeople. So it had been important to assess whether there were craftspeople needing workspace.

The James McArtney Partnership was a young firm working from premises at 29, Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham, and anxious to extend its work beyond only responding to clients' briefs.

Tim recalls: "We set up the James McArtney Partnership on September 1st 1975, on a Monday morning. The previous day's Sunday Times stated: *"it is the worst possible time for architects to be in private practice."*

They wanted their firm to be actively involved in the processes of change in society. Physically to work in a shared community of people in the field of design in a building they had renovated and planned for the purpose was one method of doing this. They had visited 5, Dryden Street, Covent Garden, London, where the architect David Rock had created a working community, and David Rock was officially to open Sharespace on October 17th 1980.

The search was on for a suitable building for Sharespace. Several in Nottingham's Lace Market area were considered eg Birkin Building, Broadway. King Johns Chambers, 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate, came on to the market. Whilst not in the Lace Market, it was near and it had the added attraction of potential retail outlets. It was not as large as some of the buildings considered, and this seemed a plus factor for an initial scheme for which finance had to be raised because no financial backer was available.

The objectives set out for the scheme needed to be set against the constraints of the particular building under consideration. The aims set down at that time were:

- a) an alternative way to run a multi-disciplinary practice for a small architectural firm.
- b) a means of cheapening overhead costs through sharing.
- c) a means of broadening outlook by association with other design disciplines.
- d) a means of widening possible client contacts.
- e) a way of helping other small or embryonic firms.
- f) an experiment in co-operation in a work situation.
- g) a method of using James McArtney Partnership for short-term benefit of unemployed.
- h) an education tool for architectural students.
- i) conservation of building of architectural merit.
- j) investment in property.
- k) possible financial benefit in acting as landlord.

At the time, Andrew wrote: *“In the context of 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate, I would reject (g) and (j) as being irrelevant, (i) might also be considered of little importance since the building has curiosity value rather than architectural merit, but all the other objectives are worth their place although (a), (c), (d) and (f) are, to my mind, the most important.”* The original building which was withdrawn from the market would have needed major renovations and the plan had been to involve young people on a Manpower Services Commission training programme and offer them a year’s practical training in relevant skills (g).

The following is a further extract of the paper Andrew James wrote for consideration by his Partnership (September 1978) about the proposed scheme.

Development of the Project

“Initially, we expect that we will have a rent-paying lease on the three upper front floors and a no-payment head lease on the remainder. Our initial objective must be to fill the space James McArtney Partnership (JMP) doesn’t need as soon as possible, to avoid paying rent on unused space. To sell the concept and the space, the philosophy of the project must

The Concept of Sharespace

be put across effectively, and we also need to offer services over and above those that any potential user could expect from a straightforward space renting situation.

This presents a funding problem because, initially, we shall not have the lettings which would provide the cash to provide the service. This chicken and egg situation may be solved initially by offering only services that can be provided from within JMP. As tenancies multiply, JMP and the whole community's management can gradually be separated, both organisationally and physically, but in the early days we must keep them together to avoid going broke."

Services to be offered

"When fully operational, the project might be able to offer the following services, subject to demand and viability:–

- a) Telephone reception by switchboard operator, able to take messages for part-time or one man businesses, and offering inter-com between all extensions in the buildings at less than the cost of each having an external line.*
- b) Personal reception, by receptionist (who may double as telephone operator depending on the size of operation). Able to receive visitors, book conference rooms, do copy typing.*
- c) Secretarial service. Receiving and despatch of post, typing and book keeping for individuals or firms on pay-as-you-use basis. Again, might be combined with (a) and (b).*
- d) Photocopying, document reproduction, and dyeline printing.*
- e) Conference room hire.*
- f) Refreshment and catering service.*
- g) Exhibition facilities.*
- h) Heating and lighting.*
- i) Cleaning.*
- j) Insurance of premises.*
- k) Payment of general and water rates.*
- l) Technical information library.*
- m) Staff recreation facilities.*
- n) Retailing of goods made in the building.*

"Initially, we would probably be unable to offer staff recreation or retailing and all other services would have to be combined with JMP, ie other

users would have telephone extensions off JMP's switchboard, secretarial service would be by JMP, other users would be able to use our photocopier, dyeline copier and technical library.

"How all this is re-charged from JMP to the head lease company (Sharespace) and then to tenants remains to be worked out, but JMP's finances must be separated from the management company from the outset so that the management costs can be identified and JMP is not propping up the edifice to its own detriment.

"It may well be that services that start life in embryo within JMP eventually become independent trading businesses within the community. For instance, copying could flourish into a photocopying, dyeline reproduction, drawing office and artists' materials shop. The secretarial service could similarly become an agency carrying out typing, book-keeping, B/Q production – and a refreshment service might develop into a sandwich bar, cafe or restaurant."

Types of Activity

"Those more closely allied to our own interests in building would include engineers (civil, structural and services), quantity surveyors, landscape designers and graphic designers. Interior, fabric, furniture and industrial designers and manufacturers and building contractors would be compatible also.

"After that, the range widens to crafts, design and manufacture, which are only indirectly or quite unconnected with building, such as pottery, silver-smithing, printing, bookbinding, musical instrument making, signwriting etc. Manufacturing that is entirely artisan in nature would be perfectly acceptable and would prevent the mix from becoming too self-consciously 'arty'. Skills such as accountancy, advertising, marketing, the law, and finance broking, would also be useful in small measure.

"Retailing is a facet of this location which has been absent from previous attempts to launch the project. The narrow pedestrian alley obviously lends itself to small scale retailing in specialist trades. The sort of retailing businesses that inhabit Mansfield Road could find a home here – such things as antiquarian books, soft furnishings, picture framing and art books and prints – and, of course, the products of the work community itself.

The Concept of Sharespace

“A weekly market with stalls for rent at a very modest sum might be successful.

“The limits that are placed on the types of activity relate to size and nature. Activities which employ say 10-12 people may become too dominant and the cellular nature of the building would make the accommodation in the rear unsuitable for them anyway.

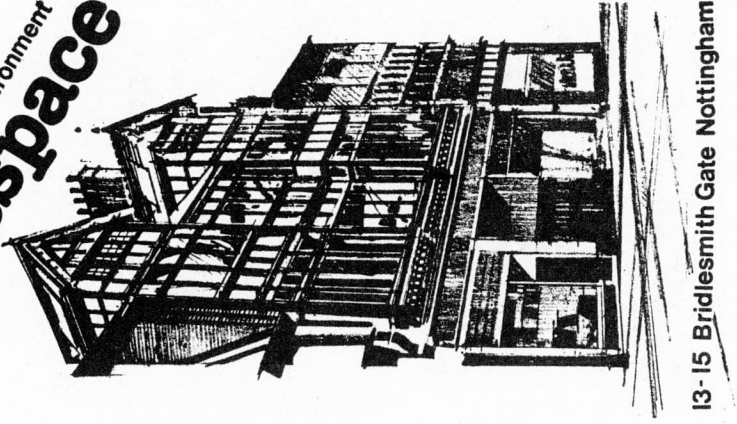
“Activities which are likely to cause offence to other users would also be excluded. This is bound to involve value judgments in setting limits, if the community is to have real cohesion. Whilst it may be able to encompass a shop selling alternative culture literature and, say, a right wing accountant, there must be some activities which must be regarded beyond the pale. This can only be a personal decision and I would exclude factions of express political and religious opinion, betting shops, fringe banking and finance operators. It should be clear that no tenant will have a franchise over the community for the service he/she provides. If it is good, it will be used by the others, but they must have free choice to go elsewhere.”

We shall see in later Chapters how far the concept as visualised and planned worked out in practice.

James McCartney Partnership sold the remainder of their lease at 29, Bridlesmith Gate and moved into Sharespace, at 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate, initially occupying some 1368 sq.ft. on February 1st 1979.

They produced an explanatory folding leaflet explaining Sharespace to the world. It is reproduced here in flat format opposite and overleaf.

a new concept in working environment
Sharespace



13-15 Bridlesmith Gate Nottingham

Space available
 (square feet)

Ground Floor	
a	329
b	438
c	536
d	633
Second Floor	
m	1020
n	396
o	474
p	688
q	720
Third Floor	
e	1368
f	459
g	499
h	688
j	633
k	413
l	294
Third Floor	
F	901

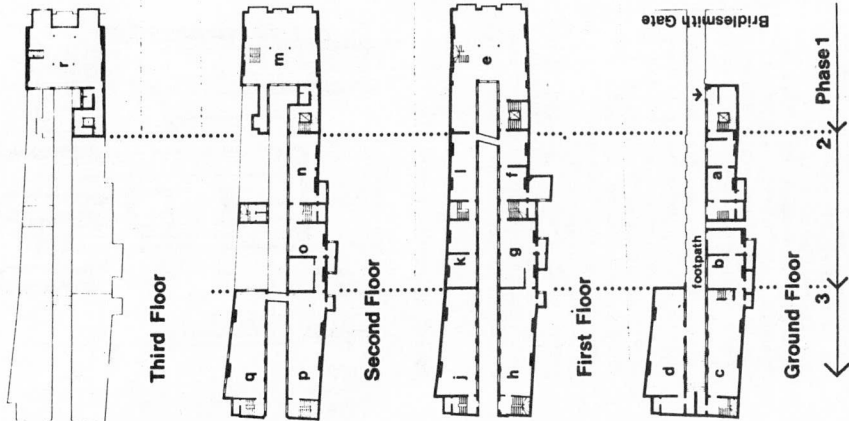
Spaces smaller than those listed are available on a shared basis and larger units can be arranged by amalgamation.

Charges

Charges are a basic rent plus a service charge for rates, heating, lighting and power and cleaning. Additional charges are made for the optional services.

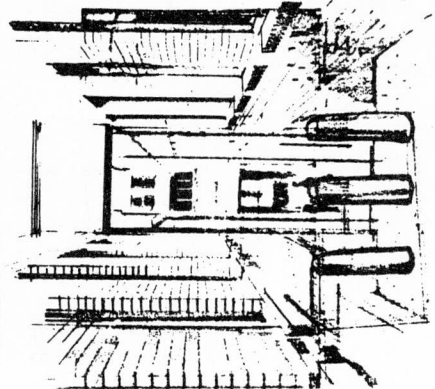
Subject to planning approval, units a - d may be available for retail use at a rent to be agreed

Sharespace Ltd.
 13-15 Bridlesmith Gate,
 Nottingham, NG1 2GR
 (0602) 581435



Sharespace is a simple idea, for a number of small firms and individuals with an interest in common to share a building and services that are just not available elsewhere with the added stimulus of working alongside other people in related fields. At Sharespace in Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham the common thread is CREATIVE DESIGN ranging from architecture through landscape, engineering, interior, graphic and industrial design, photography, audio visual media, jewellery, and fabric design, pottery and ceramics to sculpture and painting.

approach from Fletcher Gate



Sharespace

13-15 Bridlesmith Gate Nottingham

If you work in any aspect of design, Sharespace can offer you accommodation (anything from a space 10' x 10' upwards) and a range of services to suit your needs.

If you need someone to answer the 'phone while you are out, to take messages, to type your letters, to copy documents and drawings, all these services are available on a pay-as-you-go basis.

If your needs are a room for meeting clients, somewhere to exhibit and sell your products or skills and a position in the heart of Nottingham's shopping and commercial centre, Sharespace has a lot to offer.

Optional Services

Sharespace offers, for those that need them, these optional services,

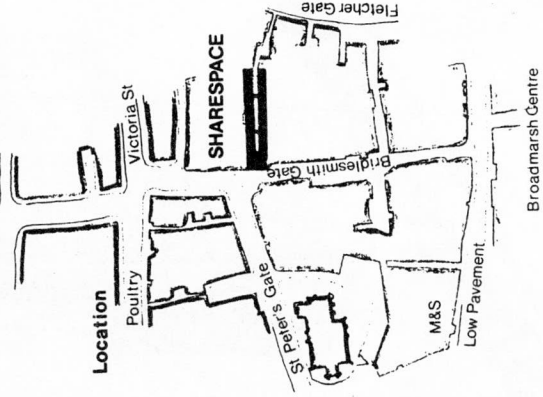
- Reception and telephone service
- Telephone answering and message taking
- Meeting and conference space
- Exhibition space
- Typing and clerical service
- Photocopying and dyeline printing

Enquiries to Andrew James or Tim McArtney, telephone Nottingham 581435.

Sharespace is strategically placed on the direct pedestrian route between Victoria and Broadmarsh shopping centres. The building is a characteristic Victorian building straddling a footpath which runs from Bridlesmith Gate at its junction with St. Peter's Gate up to Fletcher Gate, just opposite the car park. It is being progressively refurbished in 3 phases to provide ideal studio, office, workshop (and possibly retail) space.

to Victoria Centre

Location



THE BUILDING

The type of building used, and the reason for using a building, play a large part in the planning, and the running, of a shared workspace scheme. A working community, like a neighbourhood of people, is – in greater or lesser degree – influenced by the building in which it operates.

Some shared workspace schemes have started as a result of an urge, concern and determination to ‘do’ something about a particular building, possibly because it had architectural interest, historical importance or, perhaps, because unused it became an environmental nuisance. Sometimes clusters or areas of building become attractive to those involved with regeneration, whether from a civic, entrepreneurial and/or cultural viewpoint, and a shared workspace project may be regarded as a suitable component in an overall plan.

Sometimes people want to pursue a shared workspace scheme in order to achieve their own objectives, and a building is sought in which the idea can germinate.

After decades of planning blight and growing neglect, Nottingham’s Lace Market was declared a conservation area of outstanding national importance only a few months before the James McArtney Partnership started up. The area offered a rich store of challenges in the shape of Victorian warehouses designed for the offices and workplaces of the lace manufacturers who reached their heyday after the marvellous display of Nottingham lace at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The area is steeped in local history, dating back to Iron Age, Viking and Saxon settlements. It was not surprising that it was firstly to the Lace Market that Andrew and Tim looked for a building. It was a disappointment when the original plan was aborted (see p.viii), but Sharespace II will be in the heart of the Lace Market (see Appendix IV).

King Johns Chambers, 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate, with its some 12,000 sq.ft. has just under half the usable floor area of the aborted scheme. In

The Building

1978, King Johns Chambers was advertised for rental. After lengthy negotiations, Sharespace Ltd secured a lease.

The building, once occupied by Price Waterhouse, had been unoccupied for a considerable while and was near derelict in places. The property dated from the late 1880's and while the front façade was in good condition, the interior needed complete refurbishment.

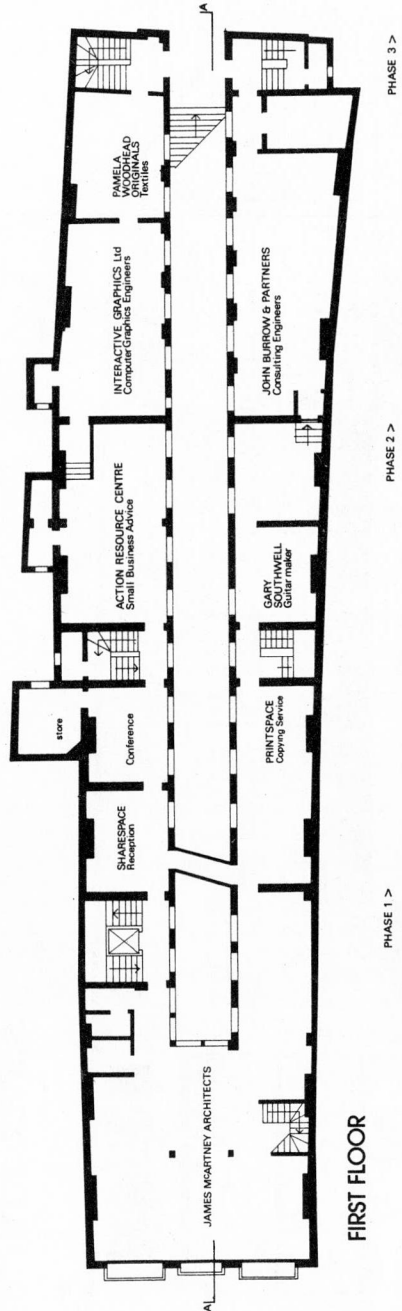
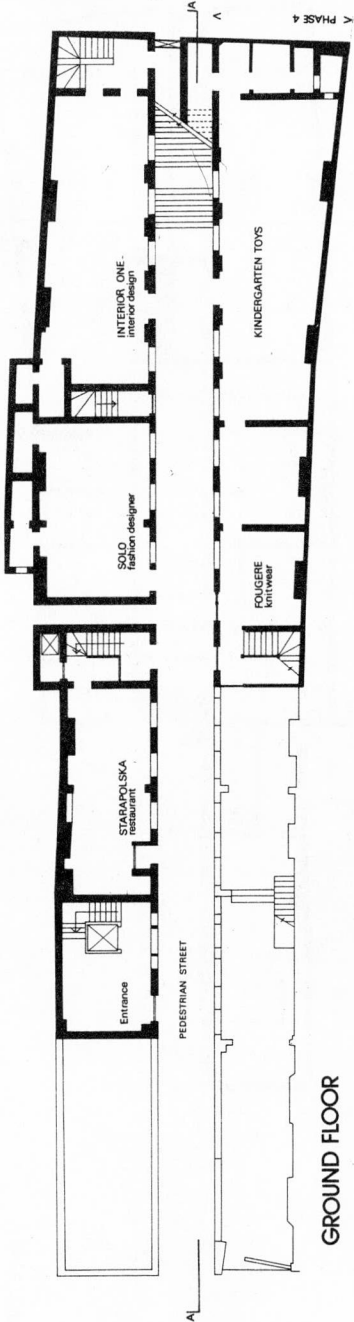
The front façade overlooks Bridlesmith Gate, now a busy pedestrian way located on the direct route between two major shopping precincts in the city, and the building divides to straddle either side of a pedestrian alley which ends up on Fletcher Gate on the edge of the Lace Market. There are internal bridges over the wide alley linking the two sides of the building at first and second floor levels.

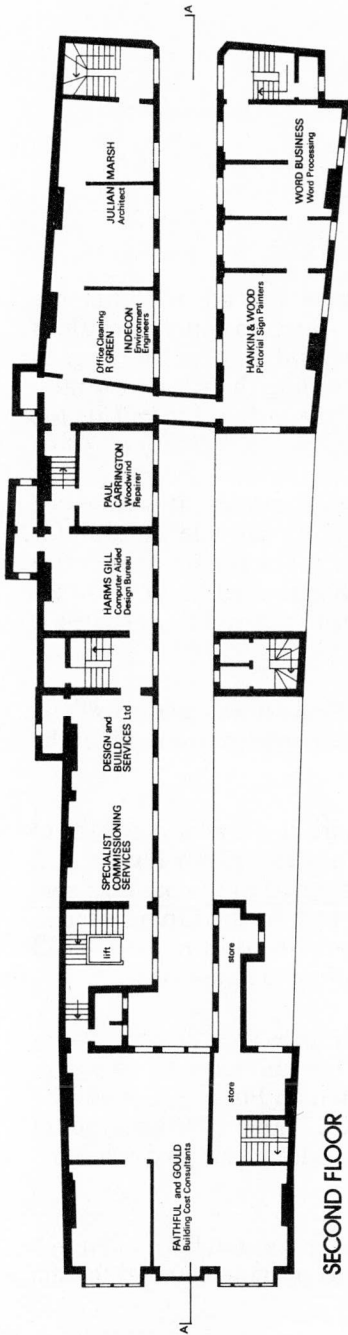
The front section has four storeys, a main staircase, a lift and an entrance hall for a small exhibition area. Throughout the rest of the building there are three storeys and basements, and two staircases on either side of the alley. A useful element presented by the building was a potential for retailing by opening up the pedestrian alley for shoppers. One half of the building is shown in section (opposite).

King Johns Chambers was felt to be a fusty and solicitor-ish name.

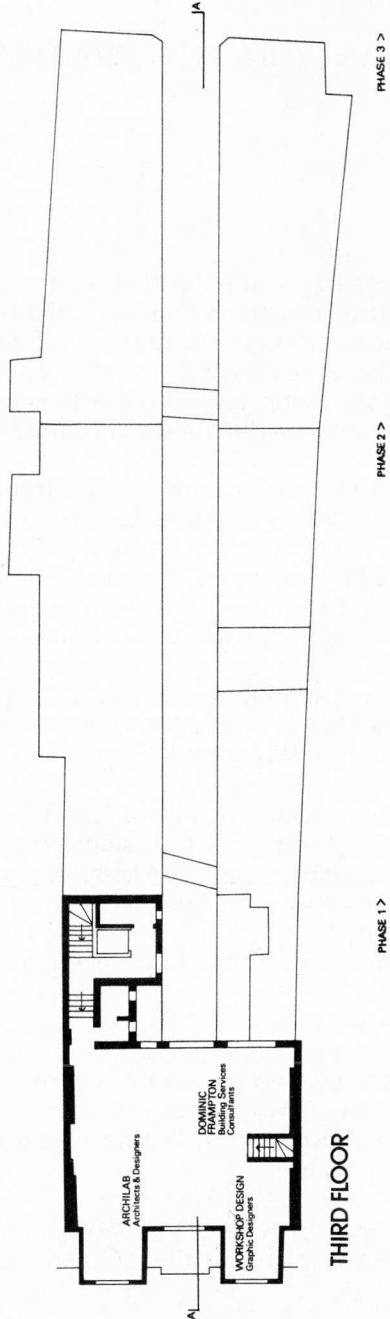
In order to establish an identity on Bridlesmith Gate to attract people, the name Sharespace was adopted, although some users prefer to call their address King Johns Chambers, this name being scrolled into the original wrought iron fascia above the gate which can seal off the Bridlesmith Gate entrance to the pedestrian alley.

The building was developed in four stages. The first phase included refurbishing the first, second and third floors in the front section of the property overlooking Bridlesmith Gate. The two existing shops on the ground floor were not part of the project. The second and third phases were completed in 1980 and 1981 and worked back through the building (see p.15–17). At a later date, the ground floor and basement on the right side going up the alley became available, and this was converted into more shops and basement storerooms or workshops. This fourth phase was opened in September 1982.





SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

FINANCING THE PROJECT

Sharespace is not the first – or the last – new venture to suffer the problems of launch finance. The two factors which eventually made it ‘come good’ were the faith shown by Andrew and Tim in the project, sinking, at one stage, the cash available from selling their lease on their previous premises, and the willingness of a Pension Fund to put its toe decisively into this almost uncharted sea.

When Sharespace took over the front part of the building, it was owned by Faracourt Properties Ltd. The owner agreed to provide £17,000 for refurbishment to be designed and managed without fee by Sharespace Ltd. The lease was £5,000 p.a. The owner also agreed to find £9,500 for arresting and eradicating dry rot in the rear part of the building because it threatened to spread into the front.

The final account was, in fact, £33,742, and the excess was met mainly by the cash made available to James McCartney Partnership from sale of the lease on 29, Bridlesmith Gate.

When estimates for Phases 2 and 3 were produced, Faracourt sought to sell the property. A provisional rental figure of £15,250 for Phases 1, 2 and 3 had been prepared and that figure became part of the package sold by Faracourt (now Greenacre Hill Securities Ltd) to the Grand Metropolitan Pension Fund. It was, in fact, Greenacre who introduced Griff Shepherd and Robert Lucas of Grand Metropolitan to Sharespace.

Andrew James said: “They grilled us about our ideas and the practicality of carrying them out, decided to back us and we entered into an agreement to take up a lease, first on Phase 2 and then on Phase 3, Grand Met providing conversion capital of £84,120.83 and £77,066.07 (final account figures) respectively. We were paid by Grand Met to act as architects/project managers.

“When an opportunity to obtain a lease of the rear ground floor of No. 15 became available in 1981, Grand Met agreed to provide £50,000 for the

conversion in return for a further rental of £3,500, this rental to be re-negotiated at the review date of February 1984 along with the head lease review.”

Sharespace rental moved up then in these steps:

Phase 1:	£ 5,000
Phase 2 & 3:	10,250
Phase 4:	3,500

£18,750 current at time of the completion of this study.

At this time it was predicted, after preliminary negotiations, that the likely rent total from February 1984 would be £35,000 p.a. It was finally agreed at £31,500.

The May 1981 edition of *Pensions World* reported: “In July 1979, the offer of a freehold investment in a mixed shop with offices over, totalling some 10,000 sq.ft.* at 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham, was received in the normal course of business by the managers of the Grand Metropolitan Pension Scheme.

“The existing tenants were two soft goods shops and the James McArtney Architectural Partnership on the first floor. The remainder of the building was void pending refurbishment. The price including the additional cost of refurbishment to be carried out by the purchaser would show a yield of 6.8% after the refurbished premises had been let, which was in line for good secondary property in that type of location.

“Before submitting the offer to the trustees, a complete structural survey was carried out by the pension fund’s building surveyor and the detailed breakdown of the estimated refurbishment costs given an independent check.

“Agreement was reached with the James McArtney Partnership to carry out the letting and supervision of the contract for the refurbishment. The fund’s own architect, David Jackson, was to be responsible for certifying the progress payments. A separate agreement was also reached with the James McArtney Partnership to enter into an overriding lease for the remainder of the premises without any proviso as to the precise user, on the basis of the Sharespace brochure.

* Before Phase 4 was added.

Financing the Project

“Final trustee approval was received in December 1979 subject to contract, and the execution of the leases for the whole of the premises other than the leases for the two ground floor shops and the first floor offices which were to be assigned.”

A prominent feature on Sharespace, with eleven colour photographs, appeared in Grand Metropolitan Group Pension Scheme's Annual Report and Accounts 1982. It introduced the subject by stating: *“The Group Pension Scheme's investment in Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham, represents an ideal example of a commercial investment in which it has been possible to incorporate a social content, without limiting the viability and essential worth of the property as a pension fund investment.”*

But Sharespace was to remain the only such project within its rapidly expanding portfolio. The market value of the Fund's Property investment in 1976 was around £7m. In 1982, it was £56m.

At the official opening of Sharespace in 1980, Griff Shepherd, then Group Pensions Manager of the Fund, said that Pension Funds should become less frightened of getting involved in such schemes. He stressed that Sharespace was not a 'protected' or subsidized community. He felt the scheme offered a good covenant because of the calibre of its instigators.

In July 1983, Robert Lucas was interviewed. He had been the Group's Surveyor in 1980 and had become Property Manager of the Group's Pension Department. Griff Shepherd has retired. In 1979/80 as Group Surveyor, Lucas surveyed 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate. Since the Pension Fund had undertaken Sharespace, he said there had been a steady number of requests to back the same types of scheme but none had been undertaken.

In property, there was need to look at the kind of portfolio which minimised day to day problems because they had only a small department. There was not so much new investment in property at the moment and a tendency to go for larger lot sizes.

“One of the problems of the Sharespace type of scheme is the small amount of money involved. It is much easier to borrow larger amounts. Anything under £100,000 is difficult. It is easier when you get over £500,000. And smaller schemes get looked at much more thoroughly because the trustees try to understand them.”

LEGAL STATUS

The Company

Sharespace was incorporated as a company limited by shares (Companies Act 1948-1976) on October 10th 1978.

The principal activity of the Company is the letting of space and the provision of services (initially at 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate for the project bearing the name of Sharespace).

There are two directors, Andrew James and Tim McArtney, each with ordinary shares of £1. Sharespace achieved a break-even point in 1980.

The existence of Sharespace Ltd as a vehicle for managing the property (and with its own office within Sharespace from 1980) was a vital factor which enabled a Pension Scheme to fund it.

Managing the property, and offering services, created the need for many decisions which are a matter of choice and opinion.

Sharespace users have debated, ignored, argued over and disagreed about the relevance of some services included in the service charge (see p.91), and they have sometimes failed to acknowledge or comprehend that being a licence-paying user is not synonymous with being part of Sharespace Ltd.

The Users

First time lettings included protected leases, unprotected leases and licences.

Broadly speaking, the more established firms took leases, and the newer ones took monthly licences. A copy of the licence is shown, Appendix I.

As the leases came due during the course of the study period, renewal of tenure was agreed in the form of licences.

“ARC and Faithful and Gould leases to be renewed in February 1982. Andrew James suggested all future lease agreements to take the form of annual licences.” Minutes, Sharespace Directors’ Meeting 29.6.81.

“When all leases are terminated, monthly licences will take their place.” Minutes, Sharespace Directors’ Meeting 11.4.83.

In view of the frequency with which firms in Sharespace change their space, or add to it, to meet their altering circumstances, licences offer the most versatile method of occupancy. A licence provides reasonable security to firms wanting to stay and an ‘easy in, easy out’ option for new firms, or for self-employed persons setting up for the first time on their own and wishing to minimise overheads, and to maximise flexibility.

THE WORKING COMMUNITY

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THE FOUNDERS

People with a sound entrepreneurial idea have a way of working themselves into a situation in which they are forced to struggle hard to make the idea succeed! It is, therefore, hard to judge whether it is the idea – or the people – which create the key factor in a script for a successful scenario. There are many examples of unlikely projects succeeding because of the calibre of the people involved, and of ‘successful’ models being introduced into apparently failproof situations and failing, because the human dynamic has been absent.

The Grand Metropolitan Pension Fund was influenced in its decision to back Andrew and Tim’s idea because of their ‘calibre’. And it would not have singled out their Sharespace project for prominent feature in its 1982 Annual Report and Accounts if it had regretted the decision. Yet, very often institutions rely heavily on backing models proven elsewhere and then only if they are carried out on a grand scale: the calibre of the people concerned becomes secondary. This theme will be explored further in the concluding Chapter.

A driving force behind Andrew and Tim’s determination to make Sharespace succeed – in addition to their concept – was the large personal stake they had in the project. They moved the young James McArtney Partnership into 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate at a very early stage of the venture, and the fates of their firm and of Sharespace were intertwined. Both had families with three children, and an ability to earn a reasonable living was essential, though neither had aspirations for becoming wealthy as a prime reason for being in business.

The juxtaposition of James McArtney Partnership and Sharespace inevitably created stresses and strains for the two men in charge. Their story, and their method of coping over this period, is therefore of interest to others who are facing, or may face, a developing business partnership.

Andrew and Tim sprang from very different backgrounds and are, to the surprise of many who meet them for the first time, very dissimilar sorts of

people. They do not pretend otherwise. Outside the workplace, they meet socially usually no more than once a year.

The following is a brief curriculum vitae of the two men:-

Andrew James

Born 1938

Education Leeds Grammar School
1947-55.

Professional Education

Leeds College of Art 1955-60
(Diploma in Architecture).
Trent Polytechnic 1968-71
(Diploma in Landscape Design).

Career

Assistant Architect with Whicheloe & Macfarlane (private practice, Bristol) 1960-65. Designing housing, flats, offices, shops, water treatment works and warehousing. Financial Times Award for Industrial Architecture for a Water Treatment Plant at Bradford.

Associate of Whicheloe & Macfarlane running branch office, Nottingham, 1965-67.

Architect with Nottingham City Council 1967-69. Designing Primary Schools.

Architect with Nottinghamshire County Council's Architects' Department 1969-73. Designing Health Centres and Sutton Centre Community School. Seconded to Home Office 1970-72 to work on

Tim McArtney

1943

Sevenoaks School, Kent. (Direct grant Grammar School). Boarder for six years

Gleeson Scholarship and County Exhibition to the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London (AA Diploma). Travelled for seven months in Russia, Japan and Ethiopia.

Taught at Loughborough College of Education in Design Department 1968-70. Developed a new course for teachers in Environmental Design. Did freelance architectural work, and hated being a one-man band!

1970-73 Architect with Nottinghamshire County Council's Architects' Department, working mainly on school design, and buildings for the mentally and physically handicapped.

External tutor to Architectural Association 1971-73 and to Nottingham University 1975-77.

Chairman RIBA Regional Education Committee 1972-75. Promoter/producer of European Heritage Year film "Building the

The Founders

design guide for community homes for children in care (published 1973 DHSS).

Associate Architect with Leonard Moulton & Partners, running Nottingham office 1973-75. Designing £20m District General Hospital in Derby, cancelled due to expenditure cuts 1974.

Founded James McArtney Partnership 1975. First commissions were Waterloo Crescent for the Family First Trust, Nottingham, and Loughborough Students Union. Offices, factories, warehouses and shop interiors were soon to follow.

Founded Sharespace, 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham, 1978-80: a new concept in a working design community.

Family 1960 Married Valerie, a primary school teacher, who returned to work outside the home 1974.

Three children: Verity (20), Emma (18) and Daniel (12).

Leisure Interests

Formed the Bridge Singers, an eight person *a cappella* singing group, 1982.

Chairman: East Bridgford Youth Club.

Hon. Architect: East Bridgford Village Hall.

Coping (unsuccessfully) with half-acre garden, narrow boat canal cruising, and resisting the family's tendency to accumulate RSPCA cats (four to date!)

Industrial Revolution" for RIBA East Midlands.

Architect with Leonard Moulton and Partners, Nottingham branch office, 1973-75.

1968 Married Stephanie, a qualified teacher. Divorced, but live close to each other and share parenting of Esther (10), Rose (7) and Nancy (5).

Wine and food, squash (to work off the calories!), live theatre and classical music. Just started painting and drawing after 15 years. Also rediscovering swimming baths and ice-rink (with daughters).

“We’re still quite careful with each other, but we are a couple of shire horses harnessed together,” is how Tim describes his working relationship with Andrew. He conceded that there had been a lot of tenseness in recent times and “this tenseness communicates itself”.

If you are devolving responsibility, you “have to let people play their own instrument”. Andrew had made decisions he had profoundly disagreed with but “If they didn’t put the business in jeopardy, whatever I’ve felt personally, they were valid and worth a crack”.

“That’s the secret of our relationship. We’ve let each other make mistakes. But we don’t bitch on each other,” he stresses.

Whenever they had a serious problem, they wrote to each other. In verbal exchanges following letters, they made progress by picking out the salient points. They had always planned and committed things to paper graphically and linguistically.

“We have a lot of chemistry that works. It’s the classic situation. You find your complement and stick to him like a leech!”

Tim described Andrew as the introvert/diverger and himself as the extrovert/converger. Andrew, he said, was still an idealist, perhaps more ‘home-spun’, believing in a very personal kind of input to achieve his goals. “I’m more detached and try to use other people and other skills. If he doesn’t succeed with a small bore rifle, he goes away. I’d bring in a bigger range of artillery.”

These comments from Tim are interesting because, over the period of the study, it has been Andrew who has mainly shouldered Sharespace and Tim remarked “he has found a role he finds very satisfying”.

Andrew said originally he saw Sharespace, not just as a business, but something running alongside James McArtney Partnership and useful and ancillary to it. “Now I’m so fascinated that I see it as the main purpose of my working life.” Sharespace II was already in an advanced stage of planning and there would be other entrepreneurial type activities in the future.

In October 1982, Andrew confided that partnerships could be difficult, and that Tim and he had their problems, which, however, had not undermined their basic mutual respect. Tim had not been ‘to the fore’ in

the past two years due to his marriage break up and he was now ready to assert himself and resented, to some extent, the fact that Andrew was viewed by some as the boss.

The motives which prompted their change in 1982 from a partnership to an unlimited company (architects cannot form a limited company) were complex. It was a move partly to try to bring about a greater degree of responsible participation in the affairs of what was to become James McArtney Architects. It extended the ownership through shareholding. In particular, it was hoped that one member of the team who had not become 'good enough' to become a partner might respond to the new stimulus.

The change gave both men a chance to have their designated responsibilities more accurately related to their actual work load, ie Andrew would spend some three-fifths of his working time with James McArtney Architects and two-fifths with Sharespace Ltd.

Toward the end of the study period, James McArtney Architects had witnessed a major shift of its staff and others were planning to leave. Members left to go it alone and Andrew commented: "I like to think the conditions have been right for developing confidence for people to do their own thing."

Andrew and Tim now have only a minority formal interest in James McArtney Architects and Sharespace respectively. "Tim and I recognised that our ambitions lie on different paths and that it is no longer sensible to hold the working relationship together in the same way. I may become a client of James McArtney Architects and vice versa."

Tim said that one motive in changing from a partnership to an unlimited company was, for him, the worry about architects' liability. It was an important issue as he was separating from his wife at the time. Whilst an unlimited company doesn't remove obligations to clients or reduce their legal redress, it protects individuals more as it has a corporate identity.

Other considerations included the tax issue: as a company more money could be retained in the firm. It was also possible to instigate a company pension scheme and, overall, to plan better financially.

"Except for Trent Regional Health Authority, no client questioned the change. It didn't change anything for them," said Tim.

But he was adamant that Sharespace had been and was a sound and successful venture for the firm to have been involved in. "It sharpened our focus. There was real advantage in the environment created. It gave us people to pace ourselves against. We'd become complacent and we weren't as good as we thought we were compared with other firms in the building which were involved in the craftsmanship of design/architecture. It started a process of resolving the present situation."

The more involved structure of staff shareholders had not produced "more gutsy feed back and honesty". One of the younger, newer members who had left to set up on his own said he thought the business was intensely personal. However frank and informal "the firm would still be Andrew James and Tim McArtney. It couldn't reflect the aspirations of younger people."

"That set me back on my heels," admits Tim. "I didn't want it to be like that. I wanted them to feel they had more to offer." The new participative management regime did not improve performance as architects. The company structure "dragged work down. People were in little huddles in corners. Coffee breaks got longer. There was a bad client image."

An attempt to work out a new approach to responsibilities in Sharespace reveals itself in the Minutes of the Sharespace Directors' Meeting 23.11.81.

*"AJ/TM Responsibilities. AJ: Maintenance, Finance, Grand Met.
TM: Cleaning, Equipment, New Lettings."*

And in the Minutes of the 6.10.82 meeting, it is noted: "*TM and AJ's responsibilities to be re-organised so that TM has more of an interest in JMA and AJ in Sharespace. TM/AJ to have discussions with JMA staff on March 11th.*"

"AJ to have majority share in Sharespace."

"Tim will want to run a rather more profitable business on a larger scale," Andrew says. "I'm looking for job satisfaction, personal control over my own fortunes and a steady income rather than a spectacular one."

What was Tim's view of James McArtney Architects? "It's grown up. We've had some hard knocks. We've learned to be streetwise. Not as

trusting, but no less idealistic I hope. We're more meticulous in getting what we want.

“Clients can take you for a ride. We've wasted a lot of time and got a lot of work from clients with no thought of pursuing it with energy. Often they were official bodies, Local Authorities or Government Departments which used the crushing weight of bureaucracy to delay or divert resources.”

But a key management objective must be “to produce the best service at a highly professional level for all our clients. Clients are sacred and we should cherish them however awkward we think they are! We are in business to serve others and we shouldn't let our personal prejudices get in the way (probably my biggest difference with Andrew arises over this fundamental concept).

“We should not be prejudiced about the source of our work unless it is personally distasteful and in conflict with deeply held political beliefs (of my own) eg defence, nuclear arms, racism.”

Interestingly, over the period of the study a parallel development in management style took place in Sharespace Ltd. After the entrepreneurial start, Andrew tried hard to involve all users of the project in administrative matters (see also p.86), found this did not work and has now evolved a style of management “which keeps my ears flapping to hear currents of opinion”. But he will make the major decisions because tenants' businesses need 100% of their attention. He admits that since its inception, management style had oscillated between being despotic and management by consent.

So Andrew James and Tim McCartney have travelled a long way together since they met as young architects in Nottinghamshire County Council's Architects' Department. Since starting their own architectural practice and Sharespace, they have been involved in shared management responsibilities in controlling both. Then both evolved attempts at participative management, and each has arrived at the same decision quite independently for his new divided responsibilities. Tim intends to head up a forceful architectural practice and Andrew to develop the Sharespace concept and other entrepreneurial ventures.

Whenever you start to discuss their business, they enthuse over their fundamental beliefs about what they are doing, and they will play down

their successes. Tim will argue for designing ‘economically’ ie doing more with less because it is a finite world of land and natural resources, and you know the firm’s work will bear the imprints of an evolving understanding of how to relate the architectural business to these wider issues.

Andrew will get quite ecstatic about the way in which buildings can be converted and used, managed and run in order to “create the atmosphere in which people thrive and prosper in their work”.

They both admit their mistakes. “In Sharespace, we made a lot of financial mistakes and paid for them. The Annual Reports don’t make good reading for a banker: £4,000 profit on a turnover of £80,000. But we learned how not to go broke, when to be tough, and learned hard lessons about what is expected of you.” (Andrew).

James McArtney Architects has continued to grow in staff since it moved to the Sharespace building at a time when many architectural firms have folded. It has been a tough time for the profession because of the recession and because “architects’ reputation had taken a terrible beating – not without justification” (Tim). In November 1981 the partnership reported an expansion in turnover over the previous 12 months of 60%. Turnover and profitability continued to increase.

The relaxation – long overdue – of RIBA rules about the activities in which registered architects can be involved has been welcomed by Tim and Andrew who, from their new stances, will undoubtedly continue to need each other. Watching the evolution of this partnership, and picking up the ripples of its impact around the multi-tenanted building, has been fascinating.

THE FIRMS

One of Sharespace's striking features is the way in which firms move in and out or around the building: they add a little space here and knock it off there. Void space is usually filled in days if not hours. At times, it has reminded me of parking on a busy street when cars hover waiting for a sign of movement from someone who is snugly stationary at the kerbside.

At only one time during the study period was there concern that a space (the most awkward one) was vacant. The approach to the problem was to think of new ways either to make the space less awkward or to offer it in a more attractive way (eg offering a bursary of a year's free workshop to a college leaver who wanted to set up a craft business. Colleges were contacted but the idea was not pursued by them at that time).

But the apparent ease with which space 'sorts itself out' is an illusion. Adaptation of size and nature of small spaces demands careful and imaginative management.

The amount of space occupied by firms is immensely variable, ranging from 75 sq.ft. to 1559 sq.ft.

As each phase of renovation was completed, firms moved in. Thus, from 1979-81, negotiations with would-be occupiers took a substantial amount of management time, as did helping firms during their settling in period and building up and maintaining services for them thereafter.

As part of this study, Questionnaires were circulated to all firms in situ at 11.11.81 and at 16.6.83. The latter Questionnaire was in two parts, the first being for firms which had been in Sharespace all along and the other for firms which moved in after 11.11.81. Another Questionnaire was sent to firms which left.

The purpose of the Questionnaires was primarily:-

- i) to help find out how entrepreneurs perceived their firm's progress in terms of achieving their personal goals; the development of their

- product, service or idea; their method of working and prospects of growth;
- ii) to find out more about how firms viewed their presence in the Sharespace working community, the management of Sharespace and the provision of services.

For clarity of description, I will refer to firms in three groupings:-

- 1) Core firms (14). These are the firms which moved in as the first occupiers of 'their' space as soon as it was renovated, and which were still in Sharespace at the end of the study period. These core firms are marked (1) in Appendix II. Twelve of these firms returned both Questionnaires fully completed, and thirteen of them co-operated fully with me throughout the study period eg interviews.
- 2) Firms which left (12). These firms moved out of Sharespace during the study period. Marked (2) in Appendix II.
- 3) Firms which moved in (11). These firms, marked (3) in Appendix II, moved into Sharespace after 11.11.81 and were in situ at the end of the study period. Some were very new i.e. they had literally just arrived as the study period was being concluded: others were well established in the building and received and returned the second Questionnaire.

Core firms in situ throughout the study

Of the 14 core firms, seven are new firms, six moved in and one was the only 'non-profit making business' in Sharespace during the study period. It is a business-sponsored charity, the Action Resource Centre (ARC). Whilst itself non-profit making, its purpose is to assist growth of employment in local communities. The establishment of the Nottinghamshire Branch of ARC in Sharespace directly and indirectly impinges on the activities both of Sharespace Ltd and some of its other users. For ease of definition, I will include ARC as a member firm, except in analysing Questionnaire replies, bearing in mind that its objectives are complementary to the concept of Sharespace and its functions include advice to

Core firms: new firms

small firms. Only one firm did not participate in this study, allowing only one interview at the start of the study period, during which I was told courteously that it would not be able to be very helpful. The firm expressly regarded the renting of space within Sharespace to be no different from any other commercial rental situation. The space had been taken simply because it suited the firm's needs and became available when it was needed. During interviews with other firms I discovered that some did not know the nature of this firm's business. By the end of the study period, it was looking for accommodation in another area, and several existing Sharespace firms had an eye on the potentially empty space!

I will give an outline of the core firms in this section, paying attention to the topics, or ideas, which those involved discussed, which can be attributed and which are not covered elsewhere in this study.

Core firms: new firms.

Archilab is a firm run by David Nicholson-Cole, a lecturer at Nottingham University. He would like to reduce his University job to part-time but has been unable to negotiate this. He enjoys the University job and needs some underlying security because he has a young family, but he would like more time for his business.

During the study period, David has sometimes had other architects working for him. For example, Michele Chuini (a lecturer who later returned to Italy) was there during the early months. More recently, Allan Joyce worked for him and now Allan has branched out on his own (see p.62).

David has won various architectural competitions and is excited by the job. His special concern is community clients, for whom he works on a reduced fee basis. Recently he designed an extension for a community centre "after the Department of Technical Services got sacked". It needed "sympathetic handling".

Early on in the study period, David contemplated stopping his work for

community clients because of the difficulties in getting paid even on a reduced fee basis. He blamed Marxist social workers who held extreme views based on theory and not experience of private architects.

Toward the end of the study period he said getting clients to pay was a general architectural problem. He had two court cases pending. One private client had told him he would pay up if pressurised by the Court: otherwise he wouldn't bother. Yet the same client said he hoped David would continue to do architectural work for him and supervise a job for him!

He does work for four Sharespace firms, has designed a house for a partner of a Sharespace firm and a flat extension for another.

As a side line, David develops microcomputer applications for small architectural practices. The microcomputer also has many uses for community groups. The last time I called, he was creating a data base for PEDALS, a local pressure group of some 330 cyclists, which had succeeded in making a survey of cycle routes through the city which the City Council has accepted, creating road links with the routes where necessary. "That's why you now see green bicycles about the place on the road."

In the early days of his venture in Archilab, David says "Tim McArtney was the godfather of my office. He now supports other new people. That is good."

Archilab has 209 sq.ft. and has moved within Sharespace.

Paul Carrington, self-employed, finished a Diploma in Woodwind Instrument Making and Repairing at Newark Technical College on June 27th 1981. Three days later (aged 19), he took 185 sq.ft. at Sharespace. He was born in Nottingham, lives in Burton Joyce with his parents and younger sister, and is one of that very quietly determined breed of young Nottinghamians who, quite deliberately, order their lives so they can stay in the area.

He used to play oboe in the now defunct Nottingham Junior Harmonic

Core firms: new firms

Orchestra. His choice of career was determined by “enjoying music and woodwork and wanting to do something which meant staying locally”. Or – to put it in business jargon – he looked for ‘holes in the market’ which matched his potential skills and ambitions. His insurance inspector father and his mother have encouraged his enterprise.

He believes the Diploma course is the only one of its kind in the country. There were some seven taking it and they “came from all over, including Australia”.

He borrowed money to buy equipment, including a lathe at £1,200, a polishing/grinding machine and a small drilling machine.

He wrote some 60 letters to schools, visited music shops and talked to music teachers. He did not advertise. Within the first three weeks, six instruments had come in for repair, including one from Andrew James. His business had begun!

By 1982, he took the option to move to another space in Sharespace. This gave him a room of his own which he could lock up, instead of open plan space. This suits him well. He works usually from 9.0 a.m. to around 6.0 p.m.-ish Mondays to Fridays, taking weekends off. “I come and go when I like during the day.” This suits his liking for personal autonomy. Most of his work comes from music shops.

He takes part in some Sharespace promotional activities but has no reason to trade with other Sharespace firms. His turnover and profit increased some 100% between the Questionnaire dates. He does not employ anybody else and has no plans for doing so. He uses an outside source for plating of metal parts.

He says he is sometimes so tired when he gets home that he simply “turns on the TV”. He is a keen member of the Sherwood Cycling Club.

A firm which has significantly increased its turnover and employees is **Design and Build Services Ltd.** Its customers include three other Sharespace firms, and Sharespace Ltd itself.

Nick Borrett, formerly an architect with Nottinghamshire County

Council for seven years, took many risks when setting up this firm. He took a lecturing job in order to build the firm up in the evenings. A senior colleague at the County Council, Al Read and he, quite independently, had said to Ted Smith, who was working with the County Council's Research into Site Management team, that he should come and work for them if they set up on their own.

"I was the cheaper, so I left first!" said Nick.

When he wanted to start the Company full-time, he finished lecturing and moved into Sharespace. Ted had joined a few months earlier when there was no work, so Al raised a loan and renovated his house to keep Ted going. Al worked for the County Council four days a week and Design and Build one day. At first there was no binding agreement between Nick and Al but both wives were directors; then they both became directors and their wives became shareholders.

When a notable local architect saw Nick's activities outlined in a Press article, he reported him to the RIBA because architects are 'not supposed to advertise'. Nick had to resign from the Royal Institute of British Architects in order to run the firm.

The RIBA has since amended its rules and become more flexible.

Nick enthuses over the advantages of a design and build operation, in terms of giving the client quality at a competitive price.

"The split in the process of design and construction is unique to the building industry. You look at any other product or any other manufacturing industry or process: the design and construction is one integral operation. You wouldn't dream of going to a tailor, or I should say designer, initially to design you a suit and then taking that design to a tailor. You'd end up getting it designed by one person whom you pay and getting it made up by another person whom you also pay. You would go to a tailor who could give you a total service. In the car industry, boat building, ship building – anything where we are producing a product – we expect one supplier who is both designer and constructor."

"If we think of some of the fine buildings of past centuries, Christopher Wren is an example of a designer and builder all in one. The design is carried out using the stone mason or the master mason as adviser and the two fuse into one. The designer works alongside the person who is fabricating it, so the designer is influencing the maker, and the maker in turn is

giving ongoing advice to the designer. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement.”

Nick isn't the only architect in Sharespace who welcomes the end of the RIBA's restrictive practices and the opportunities now available to architects “to become more involved in construction companies, in directorships and managerial positions in development companies and building companies. It has freed the professional.”

The firm is involved in all aspects of building design, construction and maintenance. It has a team of craftsmen on the building end (with Ted Smith as foreman) as well as on the professional end. Projects started with house extensions and evolved into larger contracts, including industrial work which they wanted.

One of the first clients – a baker/confectioner – “was so satisfied that he provided us with a rather splendid cake at the end of the contract with the DBS motif on and a congratulatory message”.

The last time I saw Nick he was enthusing about a job they had secured in Yorkshire (office extension to a factory). But he was also worried about cash flow because of the delays in clients' paying their accounts. “Yesterday, I spent a lot of time chasing £6,000”. Three court cases were pending.

He said they needed more time to spend organising paper work in the office: “I wish someone had made me sit down and think out business administration when I started out – and kept me up to it.”

Design and Build Services Ltd occupies 290 sq.ft.

Fougere is run by sisters Jane Fearn and Ann Withers as an informal partnership. Previously, Ann had studied knitwear design at Trent Polytechnic and Jane worked at Focus Gallery, Derby Road, whilst studying for a City & Guilds Fashion Course in the evenings and in her own time. Jane says the experience of finance and administration gained whilst working was extremely useful.

Both had been ‘doing their own thing’, making individual garments. They

come from a family which accepted art education. Mother made garments and there were painters and tailors 'in the background'.

Coming together as Fougere in a workshop in Sharespace their clear aim was to create a good reputation in specialist one-off garments, knitwear and accessories which added up to the 'whole look'.

Whilst, during the study period, their methods have evolved and they have opened a shop, the 'whole look' theme has remained central to their enterprise. During my first interview, the sisters spoke of the possibility of opening a shop, and when Sharespace Phase 4 was completed, they were able to do so within Sharespace itself.

They have continued throughout the study period to adhere to their distaste for the idea of ever developing into a factory unit. The shop created the need for making new decisions because it presented conflict over their own time – "you feel you are wasting time in it, yet it is nice to see customers". Extra staff solved this to some extent – as did moving the workshop to a basement beneath the shop, rather than having it further away on the first floor across the pedestrian alley. The business now supports a part-time machinist, and a part-time pattern grader, and 12 outworkers.

Jane's husband (an electronic design engineer) made most of the fittings for the shop which has elegant and original space-saving display shelves and rails. The shop gives the business an acceptable 'face to the world'. It has altered the way stock is organised. A range is kept in the shop, from which customers can select their size etc. But the 'whole look' theme pervades in co-ordinates, and accessories, with emphasis on texture and colour.

As the shop is only ten months old, the sisters say profitability comparison with their earlier work is difficult to assess. But turnover is increasing steadily all the time.

Promotion of Fougere during the study period has been steady and imaginative. It has included regular mailing about new lines to customers and joining in Sharespace promotions. Only eighteen months after setting up, ambitiously it took space in a Fashion Show at the Albany Hotel which put a lot of pressure on the sisters who usually try to work fairly regular hours "but late when custom is good".

Ann and Jane always appear calm and in control (they assure me they don't feel that way!). They would – in time – like to build up a small chain of shops in their name, but retaining control and doing it 'their' way.

One of the Sharespace firms which expanded turnover and profitability to its satisfaction within its first year – and since – is the **Dominic Frampton Partnership**. The firm is described as “designers of heating, air conditioning, electrical and all other services in buildings”. It also specialises in energy conservation.

There are two partners and three employees. One of the partners and one employee are part-time.

Full-time partner, Greg Dominic, told me he worked for a national firm of consulting engineers for five years, and was in a position “of complete freedom of action until I made a wrong decision”. But the event had its good side as it was the final spur to a long lurking intention to set up business on his own account.

He finds it amazing that it is not possible to join the Association of Consulting Engineers until you are aged 38. (In this age of youth I found this difficult to believe so felt compelled to check. It's true!)

In 1982, he set up another company (also in Sharespace, see p.63), which grew out of Dominic Frampton Partnership.

In 1982, he told me that 60% of the Partnership's work was subcontracted to them through the James McArtney Partnership, including a large fish restaurant, which was a “nice project”. Nice because the building needed to be highly serviced after being stripped out. It needed a commercial kitchen, air-conditioning, heating, domestic hot water, etc.

The Partnership was also trading with another Sharespace firm.

During the study period, the partnership moved within Sharespace and added to its space. Greg liked the idea of being able “to grow without moving”. The firm now occupies 259 sq.ft.

By the end of the study period, the firm had considerably widened its field of clients. The most satisfactory sorts of jobs were those which built up

steadily, peaked and fell off slowly. This pattern helped planning in a small firm. "Our business follows the national trend in the construction industry."

On the subject of cash flow, he says there are one or two big companies which they will not work for again. Big firms were the worst payers, and sometimes had a policy of not paying for 6-8 months. Local Authorities paid up. Smaller private firms varied. Some paid up on time, others "were awful".

Their firm's work continued to expand and he was optimistic. New technologies had introduced interesting challenges eg energy conservation.

He communicated a gulf between the drive needed to meet the modern challenges within his field and the fustiness of the public image of it.

For example, the Institute of Heating and Ventilation Engineers wanted a Charter and this was granted subject to certain conditions and use of the name Chartered Institute of Building Services. "It has a non-existent public image," said Greg. "Yet professional firms are restricted on advertising."

Pamela Woodhead set up **Pamela Woodhead Originals** with the help of a Crafts Council grant after a very successful student career. She obtained 1st Class BA Hons in Textile Design at Trent Polytechnic and an MA in Textile Design at the Royal College of Art. In her family, she is a first generation entrepreneur but "I've always been encouraged to do my own thing".

Her interests, eye for designs and details, and techniques are diverse. They give her varied challenges and opportunities – and problems in deciding what to do when.

When I first met her, she was making wedding veils using a beading technique which she had perfected – because she did not like bought beads. She experimented with resins until she created a resin-bead technique which pleased her. But – at that stage – it was a laborious process as it would take her three eight-hour working days to make a square metre (sold for £55).

Core firms: new firms

The resin beaded work has now been speeded up and developed. Her veils have been used by world famous hat designers (Frederick Fox and David Shilling), and Helen Mirren wore one for a wedding scene in the film *Excalibur*. Pamela won an award by the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers Company for her use of lurex and gold-plated wire.

Experimenting with and developing beaded fabrics was her way of extending her work which previously had been mostly in knitting, particularly soft silky knits in cool colours. She had also used wool and mohair yarns.

Whilst building up her business, which included an order for Janet Reger, she did part-time lecturing in the UK, and she did a demonstration and lecturing tour in Canada in 1981. She has been a guest speaker at a Crafts Council conference “being a guinea pig for people from banks”.

During the study period, she moved her studio within Sharespace, to a 254 sq.ft. lock up space in Phase 3, and she has continued to wrestle with the problem of wanting to innovate but needing to concentrate in order to make regular income.

She has tried collaborating with someone else who makes up garments to her designs but admits “I’m far too particular”. In the past six months she has done nearly 100 bridal veils for an outlet in North London.

She joins in Sharespace activities and, at a Christmas party, was grumbling about her slow progress in fixing cupboards and shelves in her new studio. Robert Maxwell was at the party (he belongs to the Lincoln branch of a firm with a branch also operating in Sharespace), and he organised the refurbishment of her studio. He also devised an airgun to enable much faster beading – “but I now put more beads on rather than making more veils!”

Robert has even got involved in beading to meet a deadline. My last visit to Pamela was shortly before her wedding (to Robert) and, as usual, she had set herself a huge task. Her self-designed wedding dress of beaded tulle had several under layers, each beaded in freesia colours. It is a highly original work of art and is being used afterwards as a sample.

She will soon be living in Lincoln, and hopes eventually to have a studio there instead of at Sharespace. She sees the possibility of being able to have space for her own creative work and a separate space for veil making.

“I like working in an introverted way. You deal with things as you get to them. I do things all wrong according to business experts. I’d rather spend my time designing than promoting and selling.”

Pamela has now agreed with the Crafts Council that everything she does between Summer 1983 and October 1984 will be monitored as a demonstration of someone who is coping but “not successful” in traditional business terms although profitability has increased. The aim is for people with ideas to meet those with administrative ability.

“They want to link people with fashion designers, retailers etc so that what they produce reaches a larger market.”

Workshop Design began in Sharespace as a partnership between John Richards and Roz Bancroft. They moved into a very small space within Action Resource Centre’s office. When ARC moved to another office in the building, Workshop Design stayed and added to its space. It now has 422 sq.ft.

It handles a wide field of graphics from conception to finished camera ready art work. Campaigns are prepared locally and internationally.

Previously, John had been working for a local design group and Roz was publicity manager for a local firm. John took care of the creative/visual side of Workshop Design and Roz the business side. She moved out into a marketing job in 1982.

By the end of the study period, Workshop Design had two full-time staff (including John), one part-timer and one consultant (60% of time). Outside people are used for photographs, typesetting, copy writing and printing.

Workshop Design has done work for fourteen Sharespace firms.

Between Questionnaires, turnover rose some 40% and profitability 5%. There was more work for less clients (ie bigger clients) though many ‘original’ clients remained.

“When we started, we did anything, now we sift jobs. Really yukky jobs are not worth doing.”

Core firms: existing firms which moved in

In 1982 John reported that they were picking up work which Agencies had been doing. Workshop Design charged a third the rate including 10% profit.

He often worked late. "You don't get as tired psychologically working for yourself.

"I can't work at home. I need to go to a place of work. It's a matter of discipline – like having a fictitious boss!"

Core firms: existing firms which moved in.

Action Resource Centre (ARC) – see also p. 33 – is a national business-sponsored organisation. It seeks to involve its 250 supporting companies, chiefly through skill transfer, in local employment generation. ARC opened its Nottinghamshire office in Sharespace for two reasons:-

- 1) It wanted a suitable city centre location.
- 2) Its aims were complementary to those of Sharespace. It could play a supportive role. It would also benefit from the experience of first hand involvement in a working community.

ARC runs small business counselling surgeries in several parts of the county, including Newark, Eastwood and Mansfield. During the study period, it instigated the highly successful Nottingham Lace Centre, now an independent and profitable venture. Toward the end of the period, it was embarking on a scheme to bring accountancy skills to the many community organisations seeking training in this field.

Within Sharespace itself, ARC sponsored a Manpower Services Commission funded scheme under the Youth Opportunity Programme, thus enabling seven unemployed young people consecutively to gain work experience in a number of the small firms. From this opportunity, all proceeded to relevant training or jobs, two remaining within the complex. Debbie Lamb developed sufficient talent to become a self-employed artist, working for much of her time on contracts for Hankin and Wood.

Carolyn Bullman stayed on to take up the new post of running Sharespace's Printspace (see p.99).

ARC moved once within Sharespace during the study period and was to move again just after its completion. The Trent Small Business Club used office space within the ARC office involving its own part-time employee. ARC manned its calls at other times.

John Burrow and Partners, consulting engineers, already had three offices in England and five in Africa (all employing between 3 and 20 people) when it opened its Nottingham office in Sharespace with four employees.

During the study period, turnover and profit increased. This branch's biggest customer was the rest of the firm for which it offered specialist services.

The firm inter-traded within Sharespace, and occasionally used additional outside professional help. It was very satisfied with the Sharespace environment, and felt the time to move out would be when it needed to employ its own full-time secretary/receptionist when the economics of paying for shared facilities would no longer be of benefit to it. This would probably be in about 2-3 years time.

The firm believed it was essential for a successful working community "to have a theme."

It altered its space during the study period and now occupies 846 sq.ft.

Fabrikat-Interior I (formerly Interior One). Interior One was the retail showroom for John Churton Interior Design, a limited company first registered in January 1979.

Core firms: existing firms which moved in

Interior One divided itself into two main areas: a ground floor retail showroom displaying items of furniture, fabrics, wallcoverings, carpets and lighting and a basement showroom where contract furniture such as desking systems, conference and reception furniture for prestigious commercial situations was displayed.

In 1981, John Churton said he had some regrets at going into his own business. He reckoned it affected family life. He had worked for a contract furnishing firm for five years and then joined a shop fitting firm with prospects of an executive position. However, after twelve months he had no promotion so decided to go it alone. For the first months, he operated from home.

In those early days, a debt from a client (a multi-million company) of some £13,000 had severely handicapped him. But by 1981, he had a staff of four and an American design student working for him.

Clients were companies and private customers. He had just completed a large private contract at a Manor House which he enjoyed "and was paid on time, which is very unusual".

At this time, he was the most pessimistic of the firms interviewed about the prospects for Sharespace: "We are all new companies with financial problems." He felt that in ten years time they could all be thriving if both sides of the alley were opened up (which afterwards happened).

By 1982, Interior One was a subsidiary of a larger company with international connections (Fabrikat). They could develop at a much faster rate using the new company's in-house expertise. The new shops in the Sharespace alley had helped trading, but most new customers still came via word of mouth. His office had moved from the basement to the ground floor and a new internal staircase had been constructed.

He was critical of Sharespace management. He didn't think the firm would renew its lease when it came up for review in a year's time.

In the event, the firm which occupies 1267 sq.ft. was planning to leave a few months after the close of the study.

He said that, with the wisdom of hindsight, he would still have moved in.

Faithful & Gould (formerly Fleetwood Partnership), quantity surveyors and building cost consultants, moved into 812 sq.ft. in Phase 1 of Sharespace.

Peter Bishop, partner, told me at the start of the study period that the firm would not be able to take part. He regarded the firm's presence within Sharespace purely as a business arrangement and was not involved with the broader aspects of the concept.

Whilst this is a point of view, it was one not understood by several firms who asked me during the study period what this firm did and, when I gave the factual answer, I was made aware that more was hoped for from my answer! There was some resentment that the firm occupied space which "might have been better" let to a firm or firms wishing to make use of the Sharespace concept.

The firm planned to move out soon after the end of the study period.

Hankin and Wood is a partnership between Peter Hankin and Eileen Wood. They describe themselves quite briefly as pictorial sign painters.

They had been working for a year together before moving into Sharespace. They enjoyed working for themselves but never had any spare time, painting for up to twelve hours a day seven days a week.

By 1981, they had a six year programme of doing pub signs for Allied Breweries and were to get other brewery contracts. Pub signs have become their speciality: they have even supplied a prototype of a typical English pub sign to an advertising agency in Sweden.

People in breweries "are deeply conservative and don't like taking risks," said Peter. Pubs were steeped in tradition and this was reflected in pub signs. He liked to introduce "a little irony or humour or strangeness". He wanted to make a pub sign a talking point.

So there was considerable skill in researching the subject, keeping the theme sufficiently familiar but also with that "little extra something." I now look much more carefully at white harts and kings' heads swinging outside pubs! Peter enjoyed medieval type pub signs best.

Core firms: existing firms which moved in

They also painted wall murals and had done one for another Sharespace firm; one for a Swansea client was 30' x 12'.

When I first saw Eileen and Peter they were talking of the irrelevance to them of being at Sharespace. They felt they ought to be working somewhere rural which they would prefer, but it was an asset being local to libraries etc which they needed for research.

They were increasingly using outworker artists.

They found Sharespace difficult for lack of vehicular access (pub signs were quite bulky when not swinging on their hooks outside 'their' hostelrys). They had no particular plans for moving out and occupy 420 sq.ft.

James McArtney Architects, the firm run by the progenitors of Sharespace, was the first firm to move in and an account of its progress cannot be divorced here from the development of Sharespace because of the interaction of the two partners, Tim McArtney and Andrew James. It occupies 1559 sq.ft.

Whilst both Tim and Andrew can talk to most people about James McArtney Architects without discussing Sharespace, because of my involvement with the Sharespace research, conversation invariably overlapped into Sharespace. I have therefore included a section on The Founders, p.24, which gives insights into James McArtney Architects.

James McArtney Architects did complete both Questionnaires as a Sharespace member firm and its answers are included in the analysis, p.50.

Julian Marsh, architect, had been working on his own for some months, sharing an office. Previous to that he worked part-time for a local firm of architects and taught part-time.

He moved into Sharespace because of the small size of units on offer, its image, its central location and its telephone answering service.

The emphasis in his business is interiors, perspective illustration, exhibition design and teaching. He has traded with five other Sharespace companies.

Between the Questionnaires, turnover went up and so did the number of employees (now three, including Julian and a part-time secretary), but not profitability. The firm is also linked to a part-timer in London and offers work to two outside part-time architects.

Just before the end of the study period, Stuart Jackson joined Julian Marsh and, with George Grocowski, would become partners shortly.

The same type of work would continue, but more work was coming in and jobs were getting bigger. Fifteen projects were on the go including extending factory premises and refurbishing the existing buildings, renovating an office in London's Holborn, perspective drawings for a firm of London architects of a 'sensitive building' in the City which needed presenting to a Planning Department, altering a group of launderettes and a feasibility study for a warehouse building.

Though architects still cannot advertise, there is now – says Stuart – a new image of architects. They go out and get work. And they sometimes got it as a result of mention in, say, Architects Journal and Building Design.

There are several architects in Sharespace which, to the outsider, may look like duplication. But it is not. They all do different things, or similar things in different ways. What was special about this firm I asked?

It is "place making". It is a reaction to so much of what has happened in the Twentieth Century ie "object making". Object makers design on drawing boards, quite isolated from contexts.

This approach is not an attempt to knock planners who, I was reminded, "kept our green belts and they're better than in most countries". But there is no middle-ground between architects and planners "and that's where problems arise". Planning constraints on architects mean they cannot do things in urban terms. For example, road engineers have set the scene. "We've got to explore the middle ground and set up guidelines which,

Core Firm Questionnaires

when you slot buildings in, can manipulate urban environments for the better.”

An expression of Place Making will be seen at an exhibition which Julian Marsh is setting up some months hence at the Midland Group. It will include ideas for the Lace Market. For example, it should “be hard at its edges” – a place you have to enter, to go to.

Core Firm Questionnaires

Two Questionnaires (11.11.81 and 16.6.83) were completed by twelve of the 14 core firms. In the following summary, only replies from eleven will be included as I propose to leave out the replies from Action Resource Centre because, as explained (p.33), it is not strictly speaking a firm. One firm did not complete Questionnaires but responded verbally. Its replies, whilst incorporated in this study do not form part of this section.

I am avoiding use of statistics and tables as they would not provide an accurate means of exploring our subject matter. For example, if I had listed the available services and asked firms to tick off which they used, ‘toilets’ presumably would have been ticked off in each instance if toilets had been on the list. However, I wanted to find out, in the space of a short Questionnaire (small firms hate paper!) the way in which firms **viewed** shared services, more particularly because in discussions it became clear over several years that service charges were a growing subject of debate. So I simply asked firms to state the services which they used. According to Questionnaire replies only one firm uses toilets! Most used services listed are photocopier and printing, secretarial, telephone switchboard and availability of a Conference Room.

The availability of services is a fundamental part of the Sharespace concept and the subject is dealt with in more detail later (p.91).

There seem to be two sorts of language surrounding small firms. The language of many small firms’ advisers and the language of the small firms! The former seem to assume that all small firms have problems and

during the course of the study I spoke to small firms, advisers from three agencies with knowledge of Sharespace. Two of the agencies thought the firms were getting the “classical problems” which I now perceive more as a justification for advice givers than an accurate picture of the way small firms view **themselves**.

By the date of the second Questionnaire nine out of the eleven firms had not sought any business advice except from their accountants and, sometimes, solicitors. Two firms visited the Small Firms Centre (Dept. of Trade and Industry), one of them also sought advice from Action Resource Centre and specialist advice on Trading Standards (see also p.54).

In Questionnaire I, four firms said they had no particular business problems, four said the only problem was cash flow, one said his only problem was shortage of time, one was having some difficulties establishing retail orders (and subsequently went into retailing), one said the only problem was delivery and storage. Only one firm out of the eleven said it was not satisfied with progress to-date.

By Questionnaire II, in spite of the recession, five firms reported no business problems, two said cash flow was a problem, two said their problems were temporary and related to customary periodic swings in trade, one said there was not enough work about and one said the main problem was getting through all the work on hand.

In Questionnaire II, ten reported an increase in turnover in the past two years and one said there had been little change. Seven reported an increase in profitability (up to 60%), three said there had been little change and one reported a contraction of profit. Nine had taken on more staff, two had not.

During the study period, all but one of the firms either moved within Sharespace to workspace more suited to their evolving requirements, or took on additional space adjacent to their original space.

In Questionnaire I, all stated satisfaction with their accommodation. In Questionnaire II, six were satisfied, one was planning to move out in the near future, four reported needing more space (but three were making no plans to move). Only one of these four was generally dissatisfied with Sharespace. Seven firms, including James McArTney Architects, thought

they would move out in the distant future, ie not sooner than 2-3 years time.

In both Questionnaires, firms were asked to state, in their own words, the main advantages and main disadvantages of Sharespace. They were asked to specify up to three advantages and three disadvantages. In both Questionnaires there was complete unanimity that the central location was a main advantage. In Questionnaire I, eight said it helped to have close contact and trading opportunities within the shared workspace community, eight believed having shared facilities was important, three said Sharespace helped them to create the right image for their firm. Other plus factors were stated as a good atmosphere, short leases, the fun of joining a new concept, not having to worry about maintenance, and economy of costs. In Questionnaire II, in addition to central location other main advantages were stated as giving the right image without appearing to be too expensive, the stimulus of surrounding businesses, and availability of services.

Disadvantages in Questionnaire I were stated as 'none' by three firms. Three said lack of parking/unloading facilities, three put lack of expansion possibilities, three put lack of privacy, two disliked the method of fixing service charges and one said "a slight and rather abstract feeling of institutional life. This could well be a personal neurosis as it seems to lessen as time passes." In Questionnaire II, six mentioned lack of privacy, two lack of car parking, five the method of fixing the service charges and one saw no disadvantages (and this was not James McArtney Architects!).

In both Questionnaires, firms were asked if, with the knowledge of hindsight, they would have moved into Sharespace and there was a 100% yes reply.

When asked in Questionnaire II what advice they would give to a new firm moving into Sharespace, several said none, one said "beware", two said make sure you use the communal facilities as much as possible, one said "be nice to Virginia" (Company Secretary of Sharespace Ltd), one said "work with other businesses to promote the community aspects", and one said "check your privacy and expansion requirements".

And any advice to anyone thinking of setting up a shared workspace project? Choose the location well, do not provide more services than you can really afford, you must have an overall theme, and you must get the mix of personalities and businesses right.

Was Sharespace well managed? In Questionnaire II, six firms said yes (some giving reasons like “it is easy to get answers” and “all work is carried out on a professional basis”), one (James McArtney Architects) abstained, two said it was all right. One said it was not well managed and one said it was over-managed.

Questionnaire I asked how firms thought Sharespace would develop. Five had no view, five said craft users would disappear (a situation some thought would be detrimental; others favoured it: see also p.92), one thought all vacant space would be taken over by expanding firms.

By the time of Questionnaire II, all but one of the firms had done some inter-trading within Sharespace. One firm had received work from 14 firms, one from five, four from four, two from two and two from one.

Whilst information from Questionnaires and other ‘snapshot’ studies may have some limited value, I counsel caution in relying on them as evidence of anything except the broadest trends in the field of small firms where diversity makes comparability almost meaningless (see also p.2).

For example, the Common Services Schemes, listed in a Table (1981) in *Helping Small Firms Start up and Grow; Common Services and Technological Support (HMSO)*, are so different that a list showing the common services they offer is not very helpful – nor is it accurate.

Sharespace is noted as having Reception, Canteen, On-Site Manager, Business Advice, Typing and Copying. Sharespace does not have a canteen but its users are able to eat on the premises as customers of a restaurant. Sharespace does not offer business advice, but one of its occupiers (Action Resource Centre) can provide business advice as part of its services. Both the restaurant and ARC pay rent, so in no sense can they be said to be services provided by Sharespace Ltd. This and similar important facts would be totally missed by readers making their own conclusions from this Table. Of course, there is not room on a Table to state all this detail, but over-simplifying the issues (eg calling restaurants canteens) adds up to a lot of partial truths which can create a distortion of reality (including projected costs!).

That so many of the core firms in this study completed Questionnaires is, in some degree, a result of the co-operation built up. Yet, having observed Sharespace users at work over a significant period, I am able to say categorically that whilst replies in the Questionnaires are truthful, they

only tell part of the truth. Should this part-truth have been taken for the whole, it would certainly have been misleading.

I am not saying that there is never good use for charts, tables etc – only that in the study of small firms, a fervour to tidy them up into categories, types of problems etc, can militate **against** gaining an understanding of the nature of these firms. And if they are not understood, how can an environment be encouraged in which they – in all their diversity – can flourish so that more people enjoy the satisfaction of developing their talents and creating their own living/wealth?

Let me illustrate just two topics in which Questionnaire replies (i.e. written facts ‘in summary’) are at variance with the ‘actual’ living facts of day to day operation within the Sharespace context:-

1) Whilst nine firms in Questionnaire II said they had not sought any business advice other than from their accountants and solicitors, I know (because I was there when they discussed it) that over half of these firms have had ‘advice’ which, for example, has sometimes occurred as a result of meeting someone from Action Resource Centre informally. Whilst the advice was deemed helpful at the time, it was not noted in the Questionnaire, presumably because advice (when considered for a written reply) is perceived as something you must go out and get? In addition to the Action Resource Centre, there have been a number of informal advice networks in Sharespace. These may be short-lived and volatile but play an important role at a particular time. It is impossible to ‘capture’ the nature of the informal advice networks for any kind of ‘scientific’ analysis. The moment a question is asked about an informal occasion of advice-giving, its nature (and possibly its efficacy) changes.

2) Where Questionnaire II asks for firms to state the number of Sharespace firms with which they have traded, the answers only relate to formal inter-trading. But there is a wealth of other types of inter-trading, which include direct barter in goods and services. There have been occasions when one firm has paid its debt to another in skills rather than cash, an arrangement which has served to mutual advantage when, for instance, cash flow is bad and a firm requires something another one has. Rather than create a worse cash flow situation, skill is taken in payment. Then there are the occasions when two individuals from different firms undertake a joint venture. For example, Sheila Laskowski, of Staropolska, and John Richards, of

Workshop Design, are producing a book of Polish recipes. Dimensions of inter-trading pop up frequently eg Andrew James takes a flute to Paul Carrington to repair; a house has been designed for someone in a craft firm by a Sharespace firm, a flat for another. Even on the minority of occasions when principals in firms have been suffering from a touch of techiness with each other, you will bump into others working for them who are co-operating. The community itself, therefore, has a wide number of checks and balances in the way in which it operates and which may well go some way to explaining the higher than average survival rate of firms in Sharespace.

Firms which left

Seven of the twelve firms which left Sharespace during the study period were traced in the two months prior to termination of the study. Six of these firms returned a Questionnaire sent to them in July 1983. Another, Artisan, had already returned a Questionnaire as a Sharespace occupier but moved out at the end of the study period. Attributable details of these firms are given below, and confidential material is integrated into the overall study.

Of the five other firms, one closed (Bridlesmith Gallery; see below) and four moved out to continue in business. These four did not return Questionnaires so I tried to establish whether they were still in business. One I traced to the address she moved to upon leaving Sharespace. Her card was still on her workshop door and I met a customer so it is reasonable to assume she is still working there though she was out twice when I called. Two of the others are known still to be in business but I was unable personally to call. I have no knowledge of the fourth. Whilst at Sharespace, three of these four firms consisted of a self-employed craftswoman.

My main purpose in trying to trace firms which left was to establish whether those involved were still in business (ie self-generated employment) and, through the Questionnaire, to establish their views, with hindsight, of Sharespace and its influence upon their firms and them. Obviously, I had more contact with those firms which left after a considerable period within Sharespace, particularly Artisan alias Imprints

alias Printer's Devil (see Appendix III and below).

Artisan (formerly Printer's Devil then Imprints) just fell outside the definition of Core Firm. It was first occupant of its space, completed both Questionnaires but moved out just before the end of the study period. The firm was visited in its new location. A case study appears as Appendix III.

This firm ceased trading soon after the end of the study period and the case study, therefore, is an exception to the time limits of the main study. The development and outcome of this firm offer useful insights into a first-time business, including exploration of untried hunches in preference to developing successful work.

The case study raises a useful notion about self-training in a transitory business of one's own.

Bridlesmith Gallery was an enthusiastic attempt by thirteen full and part-time craftpeople to create their own retail outlet. It was stylish and attractive. But it had problems. A fire, started by an arsonist in the restaurant below, wrecked the Gallery as well and it lost weeks of trading whilst being refurbished, so had to start up all over again (see also p.89).

After a short period with a manageress, the craftspeople ran the gallery on a rota. Thirteen was found to be too large an administrative group so an Executive Group of five was formed.

The Gallery sold crafts for all its partners, and bought in selected crafts from other people. It worked on a 50% mark-up sale or return.

In the early days, the pedestrian alley was not well-known. Indeed, the Gallery had closed down before the shops (Phase 4 of the building) were opened, bringing more people to the narrow thoroughfare.

The Gallery closed after twelve months with most involved believing they had gained a lot from the experience. The partnership formed for the purposes of running the Gallery was disbanded. As a venture, therefore,

the Gallery failed but its closure created no loss of jobs (ie no individuals 'failed'). At the end of the study period, five of the ex-partners were full-time craftpeople and the rest were continuing with their 'normal' employments and making crafts in their time-off.

On one occasion when I called in the Gallery on a Saturday, I spoke to a doctor who was taking a turn on the sales-rotas. He is a spare-time potter. He told me that he had customers' express disapproval of the fact that doctors 'should have any spare time!'

Throughout the remainder of the study period, most Sharespace occupiers intermittently expressed a belief that a Gallery should be an essential ingredient of Sharespace, and Andrew James was himself beginning to plan to open one in the space to be vacated in a few months time by Fabrikat- Interior I. Some of the original exhibitors will once more have their crafts sold from Sharespace.

Two of the craftspeople who were involved in Bridlesmith Gallery were **Denise Bass**, who makes batiks, and **Marilyn Robertson**, who makes handprinted cards and stationery. For five months, Marilyn and Denise rented 160 sq.ft. together in Sharespace as a joint workshop concurrent to their involvement in the Gallery over a rather longer period. They decided that they preferred working from their own homes.

Marilyn said that her daughter was only young at the time and she could integrate her work and her need to be with her daughter better by working from home.

In January 1983, her family moved to Wirksworth, Derbyshire, and she and her husband opened Paper Kite, one of two shops converted in an old property by the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust. Their shop has living and working space adjacent. Marilyn works full-time with Paper Kite and her husband continues his own career.

Marilyn's range of paper goods is being extended and is sold, with other selected paper goods, from the shop. Since moving to Wirksworth, retail outlets for her work have increased from 40 to over 100 and she has three agents. The firm supports one full-time, one part-time, and two

Firms which left

occasional workers and one outworker.

“On reflection, Sharespace taught us a good deal,” says Marilyn. “Sharing can be difficult as it offers so many distractions.”

She didn’t regret moving into Sharespace though the fire (to the Gallery, see p.56) was awful at the time. But “it gave us the experience to take the plunge. No development of the business would have happened if we had not moved.”

Braithwaite and Dunn, a partnership, already had one business, in Nottingham’s Victoria Centre, when it took 254 sq.ft. within Sharespace as a contract pictures and print publishers.

The Victoria Centre firm offered a personal service to help architects and designers choose original and reproduction prints for interiors.

The extension into Sharespace, says Peter Dunn, was the natural development from running a gallery, being an architect and a lecturer in interior design.

He wanted to close the Victoria Centre operation but the lease-out arrangements were so costly that both operations had to cease in their existing form. Turnover had been in six figures.

Thereafter his business has taken a different direction, mainly in architecture and design. One recent project is designing and building a new house for himself in the shape of an eight point star.

He didn’t regret moving into Sharespace. There were “relaxed, interesting people” to work alongside but, at the time, “poor secretarial services”. He regretted moving out because it meant the end of an eight year period in pictures and prints. The firm was in Sharespace for six months.

Cullen, Carter and Hill, Architects, moved into Sharespace as Cullen Associates, knowing the accommodation was a temporary staging post

whilst establishing a practice and working toward their own premises – to which they moved in July 1982 at 1, Kayes Walk, The Lace Market where they have 1615 sq.ft.

The period within Sharespace was twelve months with 905 sq.ft.

Sharespace was suitable because it was central, local to their on site projects and close to drawing office suppliers, photographic shops etc. There were certain disadvantages, like the noise from the adjoining boutique's record player.

The move to Sharespace was not regretted. Their firm was stable within its first six months.

Now the practice has its “own identifiable image” with four full-time and one part-time person being employed. The work load is still increasing. The firm does business with one Sharespace firm.

James Davies and Partners worked within Sharespace for just under one year in 94 sq.ft. The firm is one of consultant ecologists with associates in various research centres in the East Midlands.

The principal interest is in assessing the impact of development on plant and animal habitats, and designing new wildlife habitats. Secondary interests are basic landscape design and landscape interpretation.

The reason for moving out (a decision made with regret) was lack of cash and pressures on taking examinations.

“Frankly I blame my own inefficiency, and tendency to do too much voluntary work. No shortage of ideas!” said James Davies.

At present, James Davies teaches. The firm operates from one room and employs one full-time and 2 part-time people, another on an occasional basis and one outworker.

He is still in touch with some of those working in Sharespace.

Firms which moved in 11.11.81-16.6.83

Kenchington Little and Partners, Building, Civil and Structural Engineering Consultants, moved into 905 sq.ft. for sixteen months to enable their own office building in Castle Place, Nottingham, to be refurbished. This was an arrangement which was mutually satisfactory. The firm left in October 1981.

Barbara Manuel had a 75 sq.ft. ceramics workshop in Sharespace for fourteen months. She specialised in slab pots in free flowing lines, and started creating a distinctive reputation for her work. It was exhibited on several occasions outside Nottingham, and is exhibited at Rufford Craft Gallery.

She moved out to her own studio at home.

Firms which moved in 11.11.81 - 16.6.83

Seven firms moved in between the dates of the two Questionnaires.

R. Green and Sons is a partnership specialising in industrial cleaning, decorating and building maintenance. The firm occupies 78 sq.ft. as a base for its operations which, obviously, are out and about. During the study period, cleaners who came into Sharespace in the evenings directly responsible to Sharespace Ltd became responsible to this firm which thereafter assumed the job of cleaning within the building. Peter Green said his reason for moving to Sharespace was to give his company a professional appearance.

IGL (Interactive Graphics Ltd) develops and markets computer aided design systems and is a small firm with growth in mind. I first met

Mike Bayfield, Director, at the end of 1982. He had worked for British Rail from 1970 in the Research and Computer Services Department. At the time, David Brooke was still working for BR but soon to become full-time at IGL. David was very entrepreneurial and Mike had developed Brightpad. The recession was on their side because customers were concerned to find something cheaper.

There is a lot of enthusiasm within IGL, and it has attracted grants, loans and it won joint first prize in the City of Nottingham Business Ideas Competition 1982.

British Rail developed an effective engineering drafting package, known as Brightpad, to run on a GEC 905 computer. In the late 70's, however, BR was faced with the problem that when it wished to extend and enhance its CAD facilities, not only was the machine for which its system was developed no longer in production, but there was no new machinery compatible to existing software. Converting the package to run on another machine presented more problems than changing to an off the shelf turnkey CAD system.

IGL Directors purchased a licence from BR at nominal cost and BR will receive royalties on sales of Brightpad, which IGL have not converted except in minor details. Their solution has been to build a machine to emulate the original host. They believe they are now offering the first micro-based CAD system with a fully proven software package.

The arrival of IGL created new discussions around the building and it inter-traded with several Sharespace companies early on. It also recognised the value of shared experience (for example two Sharespace companies happened to have the same computer: Superbrain).

By August 1983, IGL had three full-time employees and a student from Trent Polytechnic doing a year with IGL funded by the Manpower Service Commission's training in computer skills scheme. They found his inquisitiveness an asset and when he left, two more students would follow. Six people were paid on an agreed fee piecework basis. IGL occupies 435 sq.ft.

Allan Joyce had been working for Archilab (also of Sharespace) since he left University before he branched out and started up on his own. He describes himself as an architect with emphasis on small scale design. He set up in April 1983, and David Nicholson-Cole, of Archilab, said “he’s been honourable and not filched from me”. They still co-operate on occasions. Allan, who uses occasional outside consultants, had a variety of projects in the pipeline at the end of the study period including work in churches, domestic and warehousing buildings, mainly refurbishment but some greenfield sites. Landscape work involved a leisure site and a large commercial one. Currently, Allan works within Archilab’s space.

Harwood Gordon and Christine Hughes started a toy shop in Hockley, Nottingham, two years before moving it to Sharespace. It is called **Kindergarten** and occupies 847 sq.ft.

Previously, Christine had worked in administration for large companies. Harwood has other business interests. The first time I met him he was about to go to Africa. He’s into contracting external cladding on pre-fabricated buildings. When he decided he should leave his Aberdeen home, he went to Brighton. “You can’t go further!” He then got himself accepted at Southampton University, decided he wasn’t academic so went into contracting.

The idea for a shop developed. “We decided we wanted to do something which wasn’t just profit orientated. Why toys? Well, about seven of our friends produced babies about the same time. We found there was nothing around for them which we wanted to buy.”

They set themselves constraints – only toys for the under 10’s and no war toys. And to specialise partly in toys for kids with special needs. They are guided by the toy libraries for what is best. Quickly, custom grew from playgroups, nursery schools and they found they were being invited to talk about and show toys.

Harwood did all the interior for the shop himself, including an attractive play area.

For the first few months trade was slower than they wanted because not enough people were coming up the alley. But things improved. When Imprints moved out, Kindergarten took over the extra 165 sq.ft. space temporarily (Sharespace Ltd is anxious in time to create two separate shops again for diversity.) Three are employed full-time and two part-time.

Two young women who lived near each other had a common interest. Janet Webber went to Leeds College of Fashion and Anne Zborowski did City and Guilds at Clarendon College, Nottingham. They then had a go making things and wholesaled for three years before getting a little shop in another central Nottingham location. It was closed for redevelopment and they came as Web-Zeb to Sharespace. Anne recalled that the first garment she made remained fresh in her mind. It was in white linen, a kind of triangular piece of material narrow at the bottom. "I could hardly walk in it!" In 1982, they were only making ten of each design in the same cloth. The garments had 'the European look' and she said they travelled for ideas. They would like to have shops in several towns but keep to their original look.

Web-Zeb, however, changed to **Solo** as Anne Zborowski moved out and started Zborowski Designs from a workshop in the Lace Market, and a manageress was employed by Janet Webber in Solo. The designer clothes sold in Solo are made in the Lace Market. The amount of business had remained steady for the year to June 1983.

Solo occupies 438 sq.ft.

Specialist Commissioning Services Ltd developed from Dominic Frampton Partnership (also see p.40), one of the core firms. Greg Dominic is a partner in one firm and a director in the other. The firm has commissioning engineers for all types of building services; air conditioning, pressurization systems, process control systems etc. Dominic Frampton Partnership found there was a need for the services made

available in the new firm. The firm occupies 97 sq.ft.

Sheila and Jan Laskowski have been in management together since 1969. Jan has been in restaurant management since 1964 and in the trade since 1955. They bought a restaurant in Sherwood, Nottingham, in 1976 and sold it to open up **Staropolska** in Sharespace (885 sq.ft.).

During the day a ground floor licensed restaurant serves inexpensive food like ratatouille and stuffed marrow, for example, and soups, salads and puddings like plum cake and apple cake. In the evenings until late, a basement restaurant provides an a la carte Polish menu and offers an authentic atmosphere and style.

The restaurants have brought more life to the alley in the evenings as well as daytime, and six months after opening Jan and Sheila were pleased with their progress.

The restaurant has become a focus for some of the news-exchange between Sharespace people, and Jan and Sheila have provided buffets for Sharespace functions and occasions.

Running both restaurants creates long hours of work for Jan and Sheila but at the end of the study period they were still satisfied with progress, though they could have done without the gastro-enteritis they picked up when they went for a much needed holiday overseas, and which meant delays when they returned until getting clearance from the health inspector.

They report a growing enthusiasm for genuine Polish food and, in response to people's requests, Sheila and John Richards of Workshop Design are preparing a Polish Cookbook.

Questionnaires of firms which moved in 11.11.81–16.6.83

Of the seven firms outlined in the previous section and which moved in before the date of the second Questionnaire, six returned the 16.6.83 Questionnaire completed.

When asked to specify up to three advantages and three disadvantages of operating in Sharespace, all six stated the city centre position as a major advantage. Other main advantages were availability of services, friendly atmosphere, reasonable rental and pleasant surroundings. Disadvantages were less general and more specific to particular firms. One disliked restrictions imposed by the landlord (eg in methods of advertising in the alley), two the standard of the reception service, one the fact that visitors found it difficult to find and another said the rent was expensive. One firm found no disadvantages.

All but one firm said that, with the knowledge of hindsight, they would still have moved in. All were satisfied with the progress of their businesses since moving in.

A firm which reported an 80% increase in business within the previous year stated that it had a problem in needing more cash to grow.

IGL reported that it was having to be careful with expenditure because the ratio of development time to product sales had increased, but the market reaction to its product was pleasing. Staropolska said that the long hours involved in catering were always a problem but not peculiar to Sharespace and there was still some lack of public awareness about the pedestrian alley through Sharespace. The others said they had no problems.

There was a complete conflict of view over whether rent/service charges were reasonable. One firm which only marginally used available services thought the charges reasonable; another which used most of the services thought they were “no longer competitive” but admitted that this was not as a result of any proper evaluation.

The photocopying service is the most used according to Questionnaire replies. As with the core firms, no mention was made of some services eg

Firms which moved in after 16.6.83

toilets! The question in relation to services was, quite deliberately, "Do you use any of the shared facilities? Yes/No. And if 'yes' which?" Two firms said they used none of the shared facilities. All replies were proof of the extent to which services were taken for granted (ie used but not recognised. See also p.91). Less services were recognised at 16.6.83 than by firms completing the 11.11.81 Questionnaire, yet the standard and range of services had significantly improved.

Firms which moved in after 16.6.83

Four firms moved in after the date of Questionnaire II. Two of them literally qualify for inclusion in these pages by a matter of five days in one instance and one day in the second. Two moved in some three weeks before the end of the study: Harms Gill and Indecon.

I was able to interview principals in both these, and was able to establish their reasons for moving in.

Howard Gill and Adrian Harms, of **Harms Gill**, are architects with experience here and abroad. Both have had a long-term interest in computers and an extensive knowledge and experience in the use of the GABLE system which they believe has the right approach to Computer Aided Design.

They were both made redundant from a computer company when it moved: now it has ceased trading.

Harms Gill offers a bureau service, particularly for architects (including those which are too small to consider purchasing a system). Other services offered will include training, CAD courses and client support.

They felt that Sharespace with its emphasis on design offered the right kind of environment to enable them to get properly established with minimum difficulties. They have 200 sq.ft.

Indecon was originally formed as a partnership to provide a consultancy service in the field of mechanical engineering and, in particular, in the areas of noise and vibration control. The team has now expanded to include specialists in other environmental disciplines, and now – from its Sharespace base – Indecon is set to tackle a wide range of projects in the fields of Noise, Vibration and Environmental Pollution.

The partners are David Shirley, who formerly worked for a large company of consulting engineers and scientists (he works from an office in London) and Peter Pentecost who, prior to joining Indecon was in the Product Support Department of Rolls Royce Ltd.

Steve Mather, who lectures in noise and vibration control at Nottingham University as well as carrying out a very active research programme into the generative mechanisms of noise in machinery, was working with Peter on noise work for a large company in London, where they met David, who decided he wanted to start up on his own. “Steve and I started three years ago, David last November (1982),” Peter told me.

They “could not contemplate an office like this in say the Westminster Buildings, near the Theatre Royal (Nottingham), for under £6,000 per year” because they would have to find their own secretarial services etc. There was a specialised kind of business and to keep up that sort of office would mean “five of us would have to be working out and about full-time and a secretary would be under-utilised”. Their work was singular (ie own relationship with a client) and it did not need an office which people came to.

They heard about Sharespace quite by chance – by reading about it in the Nottingham Evening Post. Estate Agents were not helpful because they had nothing to gain by publicising Sharespace.

This firm felt the Sharespace environment had a lot to offer them. They have 115 sq.ft.

Firms which moved in after 16.6.83

Gary Southwell, guitar maker, moved into 158 sq.ft. space vacated due to a change of requirements by John Burrow and Partners. Like Paul Carrington, Gary's move into his own firm began as soon as he left his training.

Word Business, a word processing and telex bureau, moved into 275 sq.ft. space on a temporary basis.

N.B. A few days after the end of the study period a design jeweller, C. John Wright, moved in. I mention this only in so far as it indicates that craft businesses are still coming forward.

PERSONAL GOALS AND NEW BEGINNINGS

The wide variation in types of firm, and the aspirations of those involved, will be evident 'between the lines' as well as on them throughout much of this book.

Of the thirty-seven firms which occupied Sharespace during the study period, at the time of taking up their workspace, fourteen were either self-employed persons/sole proprietors, sixteen were partnerships, six were limited companies and one was a registered charity.

The status of Limited Company proved to be the one in which the least changes occurred, though one limited company became a subsidiary of an international company. Partnerships ranged from the formally contracted type to the informal: both types demonstrated the problems and the strengths of the format. Problems occurred because of evolving and diverging aspirations of partners. The strength of the format is the relative ease with which change is possible. Four of the partnerships saw quite dramatic changes, in three instances with a partner leaving to set up their own enterprise elsewhere. As several self-employed firms moved toward taking on more staff, partnerships became established. 'Sole proprietor' and 'self-employment', as expressions of business status, tend to mean different things to different individuals, according to their type of business and their stage of development within it. Legalistic definitions and arrangements tended, in more than half the firms, to be of secondary importance to ability to be flexible according to progress.

My measurement of a firm's success rested upon my assumption that if the person/s running it continued to do so for a significant period as their means of making their livelihood, then survival of their firm must, if they are satisfied, be deemed a 'success'. At a time when the whole debate about employment/unemployment and the future of work is about the need to find new solutions to the problem and challenge afforded by the technological revolution, there can be no doubt that someone working at a job they find satisfying, which provides their income to a level which they find satisfactory and in a manner which they find satisfactory, is a 'success'.

Pertinent to this assumption of 'success' is the fact that, throughout the study period, those operating firms in Sharespace showed no serious desire to be involved in any different field of activity to the one in which their firm operated. Which is not to say, of course, that people never felt frustrations or dissatisfactions. But the enthusiasm for their fields of activity is a feature which continues to leave a lasting picture of Sharespace firms upon visitors.

Significant, too, is the incidence of setting up in business 'almost by accident' or with a decision made almost inevitable after a period of involvement in the chosen activity, either developed from home or as an extension of paid employment. The step taken in renting space within Sharespace, with its 'easy in easy out' licence* arrangements and small units and its support services, is not a huge one which need create a sense of failure if an enterprise fails to take off – it is this natural and realistic bridge which Sharespace offers into the arena of setting up in business which perhaps explains why the success rate of those crossing it defies the national average of new firm failures.

I find the argument put forward by some advocates of small businesses, that growth in scale is the main or only measure of small business success, denies the facts as they exist, and ignores the future world of work as it is likely to be. Whilst growth is an option preferred and taken by some small firms, it is not, as demonstrated by this study, one preferred and taken by others, who quite specifically organise their firms and themselves to operate on a small scale. Which is not to say they are unaware of market trends and the need to adapt. But smallness to them is a key priority.

When I questioned Sharespace firms about their intention to grow, I came to expect the topic to be regarded – by a substantial number of them – as an irrelevancy. And, as soon as their workload grew, they would prefer increasing their informal networking arrangements to internal growth. The nature of some of these networking arrangements demonstrates how new people are gradually brought into the working economy through friends who, when their own firm is stretched, put pressure on others to do work – by the hour, by the day, or on a regular basis. I became very aware of the blurry frontiers between unemployment/employment, often created by a personal pressure on the unemployed to do work by those who are succeeding at it.

* Copy of Licence Appendix I

The very small firm which wants to stay small is in a good position to exert this pressure into the community of unemployed through personal contacts, which exert the necessary influence and confidence to persuade people to have a go at something new and unfamiliar, whilst exacting a high degree of competence because the small firm's reputation is at stake through those it recommends or with whom it co-operates, even if the work is not part of its own turnover.

Blurry areas exist too in other directions. One Sharespace firm was well on the road to building itself up whilst a partner was still employed full-time by a large company, and on one occasion he had to duck a publicity photo for fear of his dual life being discovered! Eventually, he left his job to become full-time in his firm, as did several other people in Sharespace firms. David Nicholson-Cole has tried to become a part-time lecturer in order to have more than his vacation and weekend time for his own firm, but has not been allowed to do so, though an un- or under-employed lecturer might be very pleased to take on the part-time David is willing to relinquish.

Of the firms which have grown and wanted to grow, some view increase and extension of their operation and increase of staff as inseparable. Others view growth in terms of turnover and profit, with more of the work being delegated to outside contractors and consultants.

One firm which has grown significantly desists from seeking publicity because it already has a large share of its market, and publicity would only "encourage competitors".

Sharespace certainly develops in people a desire to do their own thing. It is not only partners who leave partnerships who create new enterprises. So do staff who leave the firms. For example, three former employees of James McCartney Architects now work on their own but in co-operation with each other in a recently converted shared workspace project. I visited them without prior notice; twenty minutes later Andrew James walked through the door. Such is the continuing network!

I asked Andrew James what had given him the biggest sense of satisfaction in Sharespace and was told "getting J. to the point where he was employable" (see p.98).

Some Sharespace firms operate normal working hours, others much more flexible hours. Some firms run by women moved out so that business and

home life could be integrated whilst they wished to be at home for personal reasons. But several people who left to work at home felt the working disciplines acquired at Sharespace would stand them in good stead.

John Richards of Workshop Design says he cannot work at home, and “going to work” to your own firm is “like having a fictitious boss”.

It is a pity that public debate on small businesses often creates the impression of stereotyped business needs and uniformity of purpose of those running them. Sharespace firms, though they all chose to operate in the same business environment, have fiercely differing goals. Firms do not only expand, or remain small, according to commercial opportunity, but according to the aspirations of those running the firms. Whereas the main carrot for some is growth, to others it is the chance to test an idea; to others it is the opportunity to work doing something enjoyed. And, of course, motives can overlap and change.

There is far less chance that a firm unwilling to grow will get loan finance when needed than a firm with a definite strategy for growth. Whereas the commercial common sense of this may be said to be obvious, if growth can be perceived not only in the size of a particular firm but as the ability to create new jobs (eg through networking as mentioned above), then the very small firm which is financially sound and unwilling to grow may be a wise investment when it asks for help, eg to purchase new equipment. But it will be asking for small sums and few institutions see the point in lending small sums. Which may be why Sharespace Ltd is hoping to introduce its own scheme for small loans to its members.

SELECTION OF FIRMS

From the outset, Sharespace was to be a community of firms within the broad design field. Today, the field includes high technology firms, professional firms, craft firms and retailers. It is policy only to have one firm in a specific area of activity. Therefore, if – as with architects – there is more than one firm in a generic category, each will have a very different emphasis and style of operating. The theory behind this policy is that it will help to create a stimulating environment, inter-trading and prevent direct competition within the complex. If there is likely to be any direct area of competition, the lines of delineation are made clear and agreed at the outset. For example, toward the end of the study period, Word Business moved in as a temporary arrangement. There are certain areas in which this firm could, if it chose, undercut Sharespace's Printspace (see p.99) simply to attract trade for its other services, but there has been agreement not to do so.

Slight delays in filling vacant spaces have sometimes occurred not due to shortage of potential takers or expansion pressures from within but through a conscious decision by management to limit the use of the space to firms likely to create a new or extended dimension to the overall Sharespace community.

It could be said, therefore, that there is a conflict between maximising commercial objectives in running Sharespace in the shortest possible time, and developing a longer-term strategy which, whilst embracing commercial practice and judgements about profit making, also includes as one primary objective the need to make judgements and to take risks to achieve the continuing creation of a business environment which is stimulating and flexibly supportive for small firms in the design field. Inevitably, the long-term strategy involves a great degree of pro-active management detail, which is costly, and which must be regarded as a service.

Opting for its long-term strategy, Sharespace challenges some common assumptions about wealth creation and commercial wisdom,

which I will discuss in some detail in the concluding Chapter.

The following list of firms which seriously enquired about Sharespace will give an indication of those who wanted to be considered. During the study period three firms decided to move in and then changed their minds at the last minute. Those which wanted to come in, and could not, failed to do so primarily because there was no space available at the appropriate time. But, in some instances, they were prevented as they would not have added to the community in terms of its criteria for entry outlined above.

Professional firms: architectural technician; architect; landscape designers.

Textiles: textiles design/embroidery; textile design; knitwear; dress-maker/designer; knitwear; knitwear; textile/batik/patchwork/fabric printing; limited edition clothes/knitwear; dress designer; textile design (furnishings); textile design (fashion/illustration); dress designer.

Graphic Design/Publicity: graphic designer/silk screen printer; graphic designers; graphic design/international publicity/PR; Press/publicity/marketing; advertising programmes/magazines; magazine publisher; graphic designer.

Crafts: weaver; jeweller; silversmithing/jewellery/pottery; leathercraft; machine punk embroidery; recycled toys/children's equipment/craft products; jeweller; furniture stripping/old Hollywood pictures; furniture restorers; cartoonist/film animation; film maker; clock and watch repairer; mural artist; leatherworker; ceramics.

Miscellaneous: interior design organisation; interior designer; stock taking/credit control/valuations; bulk materials merchants/quarry operators/consultancy for mining minerals; engineering contract designers; photographer; exhibitions.

Shops: showroom for blouses; French kitchenware; hand knitwear; health foods restaurant; health foods/perfumery; second hand books.

A few firms (eg a photographer) were allowed to use Sharespace's address for a period as a postal/message centre in return for a small charge.

The selection of firms according to criteria makes Sharespace, like all

communities which are able to operate without coercion, some kind of 'in group'.

But the firms which are admitted by selection to the 'in group' have, in many instances, no traditional commercial credentials to substantiate or suggest that they might be able to succeed. Twenty-six of the thirty-seven firms which were Sharespace based during the study period were totally new firms, selected because those involved wanted to pursue their business idea which fell within the overall Sharespace vision of a working community involving diverse elements in design skills.

Therefore, Sharespace – through its record of almost total success in terms of business survivals – calls into question commonly held views about those able to succeed in business.

The in-grouping then is successful not because of any previous allegiances or background (the old school tie syndrome!) but suggests that a diverse mixture of people **with some common but not directly competitive direction of interest** can, in an enabling but fully commercial environment, achieve their individual goals (see also p.69).

One of the most difficult areas of the study lies within the highly fluid and volatile relationship between firms and Sharespace management and, whilst I will be dealing with this at more length on page 85, it will be clear from the above that management fulfils functions which are sometimes regarded as contrary. That is it is both relatively inflexible in the implementation of its perceived long-term strategy, yet very flexible in its interpretation of those able to operate successfully within that strategy. For example, Paul Carrington started his enterprise repairing woodwind instruments within three days of completing a Diploma in Woodwind Instrument Making and Repairing. He was 19 with no background of entrepreneurship.



Torrential rain at the end of last month pierced our roof defences.

Investigating the leak, Ted Smith of Design & Build Services found that a gutter was blocked by a pair of black knickers and a suspender belt with stockings still attached!

All this twenty feet up!

Could we gently advise members that there must be more comfortable venues for nocturnal passion, that don't block our gutters.

The offending objects may be recovered for a small fee from Ted!

Excerpt Sharespace Newsletter: June 1982

ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORKING COMMUNITY

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RENT – AND HOW FIRMS DISCOVERED SHARESPACE

There is very little which can usefully be said on the rent question except that the rent per square foot in Sharespace is in line with the market norm for other centrally located commercially let space in Nottingham. I went the rounds to find out what space was available and at what cost.

However, rent is by no means the overriding factor in firms' decisions to move in. Whilst they would be unlikely to be willing to pay above the market rate, within the market they consider many other factors like precise location, size of unit to requirement (ie no point in having more space than required) and availability of services.

Whilst in the Questionnaires, only two of the core firms mentioned size of unit as a reason for moving in, in interviews it became clear that the availability of very small units is a big advantage especially for new firms. Small units in a central location and in an environmental condition which creates 'good image' and 'confidence' for a small firm are hard to find.

It is difficult – almost impossible – to find out from estate agents what shared workspace schemes ('working communities') are operating in or around Nottingham. After I had discovered this for myself, one of the firms which moved into Sharespace at the end of the study period confirmed this. The principals had made enquiries from many estate agents and had only been told about conventional types of units available. The firm heard about Sharespace by accident. The majority of firms which moved into Sharespace heard about it through word of mouth or through reports in the local media.

When a particular workspace was to become vacant, Sharespace management tended to take two main courses of action:

- 1) investigate the current list of enquirers to see if any fitted into the criteria for selection (see p.73).

2) make it known in circles from which likely tenants might come forward. These circles tended to be informal and unconventional rather than established business networks. (See also p.32).

It becomes very evident that potential businesses or new ones find it difficult to know what alternatives are available locally in terms of types of workspace, and that, as stated above, estate agents are not likely to offer general information, because their own interests are served in offering only the accommodation for which they will collect fees upon letting. Sharespace has no need to let its space through estate agents because it fills them satisfactorily without this kind of intervention. Indeed some estate agents either have no knowledge of Sharespace or they are unwilling to offer any information. I tested this point.

Prospective tenants could get information from the local authority about available shared workspace schemes, but (see also page 2) the generic term means different things to different people. Enquirers need to know that they should ask for details of commercially let shared workspaces as well as local authority schemes eg Enterprise Workshops which are very different. Other advice agencies, eg the Department of Trade and Industry's Small Firms Centre might be able to help but, again, there is an element of uncertainty depending on the special knowledge of those involved in dealing with a particular enquiry.

There would be very definite advantage to future potential shared workspace occupiers if they could have more knowledge. Whilst there is no functional need for Sharespace management to alert relevant bodies to the fact that it exists and provide a regular up-date on lettings, there would be obvious advantages to future potential new firms if the concept and existence of shared workspace schemes were better known.

Rent within Sharespace at the end of the study period varied between £1.20 per sq. ft. (some of the basement area) to £5 for ground floor retail space. Workshop and office space at first and second floor levels varies between £1.75 and £3 depending on situation, type of space, and the state of the review period ie new arrivals will pay the latest rate. Some firms in situ will catch up on the appointed review date, now annual.

INTER-TENANT RELATIONSHIPS

Twenty-six out of the thirty-seven firms, because they were new ones, had no previous experience of business relationships let alone relationships with other firms working in a shared workspace environment.

Because the building was rehabilitated in phases (see p.14) and because the space available in Phase 1 was more suited to professional users, professional firms had a well-established foothold in Sharespace before craft firms and retailers were present. Perhaps inevitably, this led during the first year in particular to a polarisation between professional and craft firms with each tending to take into Sharespace its own assumptions about the sort of people who work in the other! To professional people, craftspeople are unlikely to be good at business and, interestingly, those craft firms which have demonstrated that they are good at business are now usually termed 'professional firms' by individuals within the professional firms. For example, Fougere which started in a workshop and then took on a retail shop has often been referred to as 'professional' toward the end of the study period, whereas in the early days they were 'craft'!

Polarisation has been breaking down and, whilst individual firms among professional, craft and retail users may opt to remain relatively aloof from any inter-trading or shared activities, there is now far less groupiness and a real sense of community. The change has come about for a number of reasons:-

- 1) The exceptionally high success rate in firms of all kinds has – particularly at a time of national depression – created a sense of unity among very different sorts of firms and individuals. This has tended to reduce previous concepts about, say, 'arty crafty people'! And because most of the professional firms are run and staffed by individuals anxious to demythologise their own professions, the skills involved in these professional firms have become better understood.

- 2) Inter-trading. Almost all firms have inter-traded in some way within Sharespace and some receive a substantial amount of their work from within the complex (see also p.53 and 54). Some of the inter-trading has created bridges between 'professional' and 'craft' firms.
- 3) Retailers. The introduction of retailers helped to create new foci, especially with the advent of Staropolska as a restaurant offering cheap interesting meals mid-day and Polish a-la-carte in the evenings.
- 4) Some of the smaller professional firms, in common with craft firms and retailers, wanted more promotion of Sharespace as a complex (see below).
- 5) Nothing succeeds like success. Because existing firms are succeeding, they offer a relaxed atmosphere for firms moving in, and quite a lot of practical help. At the end of the study period, several firms were moving in and benefitting from the environment which had been achieved. Anyone starting up or moving a small firm knows just how difficult it can be to synchronise all aspects of the move whilst trying to appear confident and in control.

With hindsight, it may seem obvious that confidence has been created by success which leads existing firms to take a positive interest in the newcomers. But, bearing in mind that some firms within Sharespace would have preferred to absorb any spare space to allow for their own expansion (see p.89 and 93), it leaves more room for speculation about reasons for welcoming newcomers. I deduced that the strong policy from Sharespace Ltd toward maintaining and encouraging a community of small firms helped to create the more positive approach shown to newcomers toward the end of the study period. Existing firms, left in no doubt about the policy of allocating space (even if they disagreed with it), did not see newcomers as filching 'their' potential space.

Problems between firms have been minimal. There have been actions and attitudes which caused temporary annoyance but which were resolved, eg a retailer's record player annoyed the firm working over till a solution was reached.

Access to some workspaces (depending on arrangement of particular areas) is gained only through other workspaces and this has – in three instances – created temporary difficulties. Two were solved through re-alignments of space and one still feels "as if I'm working in a corridor

Inter-tenant relationships

when people walk through". Others find working in close proximity a stimulus though a minority claim it can get "too noisy". Attitudes to different types of space certainly prove the thrust of one user's comments that, when going into business, it helps if you know what sort of person you are. What motivates you? Can you work with noise? Can you work without it? Some like to be behind a closed door: others to feel bustle all around them.

As far as it has been possible adjustments of space have been made and all but one of the core firms altered their space during the study period.

Personality clashes, of course, occurred, as they do in any environment! But the incidents which became entrenched amounted to two and one was a ritual which both needed and 'enjoyed'. Usually, differences were expressed in a workmanlike way and they were resolved through agreement, compromise or agreeing to disagree. Essentially, the environment is positive and individuals enjoy working within it and amongst each other and are not willing to risk jeopardising their own security for the sake of someone else in the building who "gets up my wick".

The role of management inevitably gets discussed between users and, when management introduced meetings of tenants (see also p.86) in 1980, the occasions tended to be used by a minority of users for stirring up problems which the majority felt did not exist but which were being introduced for ideological reasons.

The meetings, far from developing a community spirit, created dissension.

However, the meetings did draw attention to one real cause of contention. Some users wanted Sharespace Ltd to publicise Sharespace (a service for which they were willing to contribute), whereas the larger professional firms felt no advantage would accrue to them from any such publicity and declined to participate, thus creating (as some saw it) a division between those interested in the Sharespace concept and those who were not. This also accentuated polarisation between the professional firms, who were not allowed to advertise and who saw no benefit in any indirect advertising through Sharespace because they already had their client networks, and the smaller professional firms, the craft firms and the retailers.

As some of the smaller, newer professional firms were not able to

advertise directly because of professional practice, they welcomed indirect advertising through Sharespace publicity.

A leaflet about all users was produced. A minute of the tenants meeting 9.1.81 reads: *"It was decided that those companies who require such a brochure could contribute as much as they can afford and the areas will be apportioned accordingly. Sharespace Ltd will retain a stock of brochures from which contributing members can draw and copies will be sold to other members at a price which is higher than actual production costs."*

However when the shops (Phase 4) opened in September 1981, and more particularly because two workspace users (Printer's Devil and Fougere) opened shops, there was an impetus by craft firms and retailers toward more pro-active joint promotion, which created a new kind of polarisation. Their initiative was aptly called "Us Downstairs". At around the same time, Action Resource Centre moved from the front to the back of the building, new professional firms moved in and the new restaurant took shape.

My point in noting the changes in groupings and polarisations is to indicate the importance of management not overreacting to such changes, whilst obviously being very aware of them. One of the leaders of Us Downstairs, Deb Arrowsmith*, told me after she left Sharespace that some people felt she had spent too much time on Us Downstairs, but she had found it of great value in her own development.

The focus for tenant discussion and participation increasingly became public relations. For a time it looked as if a jointly funded appointment by the Manpower Services Commission and Trent Polytechnic for six months might make a good contribution to Sharespace marketing but a very promising appointment was unable to be continued for external reasons. Us Downstairs came up with some fresh ideas which included painting the steps at the top of the alley every few months, starting with a Christmas tree and changing at the appropriate time to a Valentine theme and later to others, designed by schools. Jan and Sheila from Staropolska organised a Pancake Race which was covered extensively by the local media (see p.102).

These events made a welcome addition to the efforts of Sharespace Ltd in promoting brochures, open days, events timed with Nottingham Festival and co-operating with the Press for the occasional feature.

* see case study Appendix III

Inter-tenant relationships

But still the overall marketing needed a coherent policy and finally Sharespace Ltd decided to include a levy for PR in the service charge (see p.94) and to make it part of the overall service for small firms, thus again demonstrating a policy in favour of the small and the new firms which are the least able effectively to promote themselves.

Handout to passers by during Nottingham Festival

sharespace celebration! Saturday 13th June Today!	Omega Jazz Band 2-4pm Batik and spinning Demonstrations
Craft open day, street café, live music	

LANDLORD/TENANT

Whenever management of buildings is needed, whether for housing, industrial, business, service or other uses, the relationship between management and users operates on many different levels. Sharespace is no exception.

Management personnel in Sharespace Ltd are involved, visible and easily approached. Therefore, they have featured in many comments I have received from personnel in user firms. My neutrality between landlord and users sometimes gave both 'sides' a listening ear and sounding board. Over a period of time, definite patterns became clear in the landlord/tenant relationship.

The roles into which users cast management divided into four main headings: necessary, ideological, functional and emotional. These roles, of course, overlapped:-

1) Necessary. All users accepted that management of Sharespace was essential and desirable. The majority of firms at any one time were satisfied with the management: exceptions are mentioned later in this chapter.

2) Ideological. I checked out criticisms of Sharespace management to find out the extent of their validity. At some time during the study, over half of the core firms took a view of Sharespace management which I term ideological ie their view stemmed from preconceptions about the role of landlord rather than being based on the 'here and now' practical experience of the particular landlord's management ability. There were particular people who held to an ideological view of landlordism in verbal communication, but who, when making a considered reply in Questionnaires, stated that Sharespace was well managed. Conversely one stated that it was badly managed in one Questionnaire – but verbally added that this view was too subjective.

In the early days, perhaps because users took into Sharespace their ideological views and expectations of landlords, conflicting attitudes to

management created tensions which, inevitably, were felt more by management than by users who operated within the cosy framework of a group within which allies could be found.

To begin with, management held regular meetings with users the majority of whom were upset by the minority who dominated the occasions to air ideological or irrelevant grouses rather than dealing with matters of practical concern to all or some users. For example, on one occasion one user demanded that Sharespace Ltd should make its annual accounts public. Access by Sharespace firms to the Service Charge Accounts has always been given but annual accounts of Sharespace Ltd – as annual accounts of user firms – are not subject to an arbitrary inspectorate, although any firm could inspect the accounts via Companies House.

3) Functional. Aspects of the functional relationship between landlord and user firms will be dealt with at some length in the Chapter on services (p.91) in which I state that the provision of services became the “dynamic interface between management and member firms”.

It became clear that a firm working out its future to its own satisfaction tended to be very positive to Sharespace management, limiting criticism to practical issues which needed to be resolved positively and co-operatively. This functional relationship tended to become the dominant one between landlord/tenants as the study period progressed and ideological attitudes subsided in the light of experience.

4) Emotional. The landlord/tenant relationship which I term emotional occurred often in minor degree, and, on a handful of occasions, in more significant dimension. The ‘minor degree’ occasions tended to stem from ideological attitudes or self-dissatisfaction with performance within a firm at that particular time: the projection of the landlord as ‘baddie’! For example, I was talking to someone going through a tough time and she complained that Andrew James was remote and always hard to find. At that precise moment, we were looking out of the window overlooking the alley where Andrew and Harwood Gordon (Kindergarten Ltd) were fixing a Christmas tree on a girder across the alley! I challenged her statement on the ‘here and now’ evidence. Was it rare to see Andrew? “No” came a spontaneous response: “He is **always** around the building”. Heads you lose and tails you don’t win! But this person throughout the study period stated that Sharespace was well managed. Maybe such emotional criticism is a sign of a close knit community?

An emotional contretemps of more significant dimension can be illustrated by the refusal of one company director to talk directly about a problem to the relevant member of Sharespace Ltd staff, rationalising this action by stating that she was not the appropriate person to talk to. A number of occasions of this type built up and focused on the person of the Sharespace secretary, Virginia Stunt, who – in the reception office – personified “the landlord” and who had to find her way out of the trap she unwittingly fell into.

Virginia Stunt joined Sharespace in 1980 and, to many, is its public face. As secretary in Sharespace, she manned the reception office, answered the switchboard and put calls through to member firms, took messages, collected rent, dealt with day to day problems which arose, interviewed prospective tenants who called in, did the bookkeeping etc. The job continually grows and now includes use of a computer for accounts and budgeting, PAYE has to be done, new spaces costed, the job of PA to the Director grows as does running the business side of Printspace (Sharespace Ltd now running its print, copying and binding services as a separate business). Being responsible for the keys in Sharespace, the Conference Room lettings, planning special events like an open craft day, being interviewed on local Radio, dealing with repair people from the GPO or lift maintenance firm, receiving requests from users for new light bulbs or to mend a leaking sink and instigating action, discussing a new colour scheme, showing a new Sharespace user how to use the photocopier: all in a week’s work.

Problems began to arise because Virginia, whilst finding her feet in her first management job (for which her previous career very adequately prepared her) was not always perceived by users as the person monitoring and creating the day to day linkages necessary to the smooth running of Sharespace.

The company director, for example, who wanted to go over Virginia’s head and to talk to a Sharespace Ltd director viewed her, on the one hand, as ‘just a secretary’ or ‘general dogsbody’ and, on the other, as the ‘face of landlordism’ (ie she collected the rent). This firm was very satisfied with Sharespace, but this did not come across in the personal contact!

Being central to what was happening but not knowing how to resolve matters meant “I was horrid for a few months,” says Virginia. “I could see what was happening but could not stop it.” Eventually, she

'blew-up'. The problems were aired. Her position was made clearer with the designation of Company Secretary. Part of the problem was caused by the fact that Virginia would turn her hand to anything and enjoyed it. She tended to be viewed as the dogsbody who attempted to manage, rather than a manager who realised that things in Sharespace would only tick if she was prepared to do whatever needed doing. I cannot help thinking that if Virginia had been male, 'he' would have been accepted as a manager who evoked sympathy for having to do 'menial tasks'.

It would be grossly unfair and incorrect to over-emphasise landlord/tenant difficulties but some comments on the cause and effect interactions may be helpful. Management was not expecting the disruptive use to which the early meetings of tenants were put by a minority of users for what earlier on I called ideological reasons. And sometimes management has been frustrated at what appeared to be lack of any commitment to the concept of Sharespace on the part of some users.

Andrew had assumed, quite wrongly, that everyone in Sharespace understood and accepted the purpose of the experiment. One of the first puzzled questions at a tenant meeting was "what are you doing this for?"

The early belief that firms would only move in if they were committed to the concept proved to be true in only about one quarter of instances. The central location, size of units and availability of services were initially the main attractions. The benefits of a working community have tended to emerge and grow, and it says a great deal for management and users that both have learned that traditional attitudes were pretty irrelevant in the context of Sharespace. Expressed differently "setting out to create an innovatory working community" put a lot of pressure on traditional assumptions! The almost total survival of firms is an indicator that all concerned found benefit from adapting to new methods of working.

But if open tenant meetings did not work in the early days, they did provide the incentive for other types of co-operation. For example, tenants forming their own groups to help publicise Sharespace to attract more members of the public into the alley (p.82).

Since management has expressed a clearer (or more assertive) picture of the Sharespace concept, tensions toward it have reduced. It is, of course, easier now than earlier for management to be confident because of Sharespace's proven record of success.

As lessons were learned, management developed a style which Andrew describes as “keeping my ears flapping to hear currents of opinion” (p.30). Toward the end of the study period he was considering setting up a consultative group, chaired by John Pike, Manager of Nottinghamshire Action Resource Centre, and including representatives from the professional firms, craft firms and retailers.

Part of the clearer policy has been to take a firm line on the marketing of Sharespace which had been a cause of some dissent (p.82). From 1983, a levy in the service charge for publicity clearly demonstrates that marketing the concept and those working within it is regarded as essential to future success.

During the study period, several issues of a Sharespace Newsletter were produced and created some focus for the concept and a vehicle of news exchange (eg information about new firms moving in) and humour (eg see p.76). But it tended to be of most interest to the firms already very much in touch with each other.

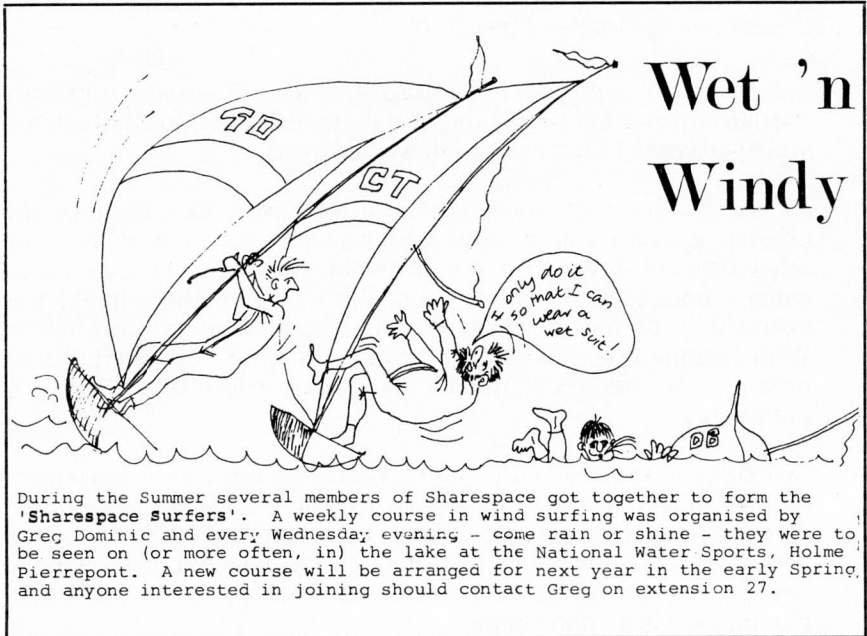
The following are particular happenings which have affected landlord/tenant relationships for those involved:-

- one firm had a professional disagreement with James McCartney Partnership and, because of the joint directorships of this Partnership and Sharespace Ltd, the occasion ‘spilled over’.
- an unfortunate event soured relationships for a spell between the original restaurant proprietor and management as well as some other firms. A fire which started in the restaurant, causing much damage both to the restaurant and Bridlesmith Gallery (p.56) was assumed to be due to faulty electrical equipment in the kitchen. Whilst humanly speaking this might be a ‘natural’ reaction it proved unfair as the fire was started by an arsonist who was subsequently prosecuted.
- two firms wishing to grow were dissatisfied because management decided in favour of letting vacated space to new small users rather than allowing spare space to be soaked up from within. Since there is now a clearly understood if unwritten policy in favour of allowing in new small firms, firms with growth in mind accept the inevitability of moving on when appropriate.

By the end of the study, all firms which left had done so voluntarily, but one had been asked to leave in the near future after the expiry of its lease and this was, in any case, its intention.

The future challenge for management will be to keep the concept and practice of Sharespace alive and well as changes occur. Within the next three years, more small spaces will be available in Nottingham, a number of the Sharespace core firms will move out to larger premises, city centre space will become dearer due to rents/rates increasing. No element in the provision of shared workspace remains static at any time, which is why local authorities can find involvement in the management role of shared workspace projects such a headache. Management has to know what it is doing and has to enjoy doing it!

Excerpt Sharespace Newsletter: October 1982



WHAT'S IN A SERVICE CHARGE?

The availability of services loomed large as an attraction for firms moving in. Provision of heat, light, cleaning, toilets, washing facilities, waste disposal, maintenance, insurance, fire precautions, office services etc, in return for a reasonable service charge, looks like extremely good value when considering most alternatives. The time, energy and hassle of having to attend to heating systems, maintenance, plumbing which goes wrong can, in addition to the pressures of running your own business, be daunting and in terms of time = money very costly, unproductive and tension-making.

The attraction of an all-in service charge for a high standard of working environment seems very real whilst searching for suitable accommodation and seeing what else is on the market.

Yet, within a matter of only months of moving in, between 15-40% of firms will – at any one time – be voicing their belief that service charges are too dear. Quite quickly the main cost factors within the service charge tend to get forgotten, ie taken for granted (institutionalised). Whilst those services most obviously of use to a firm in its day to day affairs (eg photocopying, reception, Conference Room etc) tended to be mentioned by firms when asked in the Questionnaires to state the services they used, **none** mentioned heat and light and only one mentioned toilets! Two only mentioned cleaning.

I asked one firm complaining about the service charges about the convenience of the heating and cleaning systems, and received a look of condescension for having mentioned anything quite so menial! But boilers can be very temperamental, lift maintenance has to be regular, the alley has to be kept clean, gutters can leak, light bulbs have to be replaced and towels for the toilets don't get there by accident. And having spent a considerable amount of my time in recent years on the premises of small firms up and down the country, I know that those in Sharespace get a well above average standard of working environment without, in any sense, being plush.

What's in a service charge?

But, whilst voiced dissatisfaction about service charges was fairly regular, it bore no correlation with firms' intentions to stay or move out except insofar as a few growing firms were concerned. In fact, it became very clear that discussion of service charges was the method of voicing opinions about the way in which services were provided, and this was a method of discussing Sharespace management. The whole question of services was the dynamic interface between management and member firms. Whilst this may seem obvious with hindsight, it certainly was not obvious at the beginning, nor is it obvious to many contemplating setting up, or working in, a shared workspace scheme.

When firms move in, especially new ones, they are absorbed totally in the business of running their own affairs and anything which stands, or appears to stand, in their way is regarded as an irritant. If, for example, an electric repair has to be undertaken on a staircase adjacent to a firm, those working in it will utter curses at the temporary inconvenience of the noise of a drill. It upsets their rhythms of work. What they do not usually take into account is the fact that if someone else did not have the responsibility of undertaking repairs, they themselves would be wasting perhaps a great deal of valuable time organising and supervising the repair (as well as listening to it!).

Complaining about services has, on many occasions, been a safety valve for tension, and it therefore becomes a matter of skilled interpretation as to which grumbles are legitimate and which are ritual. If services are bad or non-existent, which I have witnessed elsewhere, occupiers either grin and bear the situation (if costs are low) or they get out. The ritual of complaining from the safe position of comfort can, however, be extremely negative because it throws upon management the onus of interpretation and, particularly in the early days, created tensions which were unnecessary, sapping energy which might have been used in more positive directions.

It took a long time to work out the complexity of attitudes to service and service charges. For example, soon after the opening of Phase 3, quite often in discussion of services one would hear that "craft firms would be squeezed out" because of the high charges.

Superficially, this might seem plausible and this view could have become a self-fulfilling prophecy, with small craft firms not regarding Sharespace as a suitable location because of costs.

The causes of this “craft firms will be squeezed out” attitude were several:-

- 1) Before management voiced a stronger line on keeping spare space within Sharespace for incoming small firms rather than allowing existing growth firms to soak it up (also see p.89), a number of these firms expressed belief that small firms, particularly craft firms, would go because that is what they would have liked! As they grew, they knew that Sharespace, for them, would become proportionately less cost effective. For example, when work developed to the stage of needing a full-time secretary, there was less advantage in paying, within the service charge, an element which covered the administrative expense of Sharespace Ltd running office services. Obviously, if fewer and larger firms occupied Sharespace, then Sharespace Ltd would lessen the service available through lack of demand.
- 2) This undercurrent in the early days of trying to rationalise an attempt to push craft firms out was not fully understood by the smaller professional firms which enjoyed proximity to the craft enterprises and feared they might go. So these smaller professional firms, too, echoed fears about “small craft firms being squeezed”. One of them, Julian Marsh, said: “it is important to keep the mix very varied as this increases cross fertilisation and, therefore, creative potential. Professionalism itself is stultifying and this would be reduced by craft firms etc staying.” And, at one stage, Andrew James himself thought this feared decrease in craft firms would be a trend within the study period. Luckily, his response was a reinforced effort to place incoming small firms into spare spaces.
- 3) When craft users left, it was wrongly assumed that the cost of being at Sharespace had been a main cause. The reason for the assumption was the widely held belief in professional firms that craft ones do not know how to manage their businesses. Because of the polarisation of professional and craft firms (see p.80) early on, professional firms saw departures in terms of their preconceptions. We have seen (eg p.57) why these early craft firms left. We have also seen how, as the polarisation broke down on better acquaintance, professional firms tended to call successful craft firms ‘professional’ ones!
- 4) When people in craft firms had problems they tended to verbalise in the language which commanded instant understanding, ie service charges were too high or services were not working. Much of this was

What's in a service charge?

ritualistic, though looked at objectively it is a pity because, far from reducing distance between management and users, it created some difficulties which were not founded on fact. However, there have been many firms which have not taken this line and which have 'spoken as they found'.

Getting practical problems dealt with quickly has been one of the features of services most appreciated by small firms to whom loss of time is a serious issue.

And it became very clear that the provision of a comprehensive range of services, now including a levy for public relations and publicity, is to the advantage of the small firms which cannot possibly provide such a range efficiently at a comparable cost. It can truly be said that realistic service charges for well-serviced space, far from squeezing out the small and particularly the craft users, act in their favour. The space requirements of new firms moving in toward the end of the study period (p.66) prove the point.

The continuing entry of small, new and craft firms also knocks on the head another preconception by a few of the growth firms ie that craft firms should be encouraged with subsidy because of costs. Such views are stated with great authority – but on no evidence! They represent some of the plethora of generally held views about small firms which currently circulate in our society. It is facts which should influence! Certainly where Sharespace is concerned, there is no shortage of takers for any available space at the full economic rent/service cost – and the takers continue to be small, new and with a healthy mix of craft firms.

Below is a list of service charges at August 1983. There are very few differentials. For example, the one firm which throughout its stay has taken no administrative services, nor involved itself in the affairs of Sharespace, is the only one in category (3), see below. This firm is leaving soon and I found its presence caused some criticism from other firms who thought its space could be better utilised by firms wishing and needing to avail themselves of more of the services. All firms now moving into Sharespace accept the package of services offered.

Category (4) only applies to one firm: Staropolska. For obvious reasons, because it is a restaurant, its electrical costs are separately metered. The remainder of the firms come within categories (1) and (2), the only difference being whether they undertake their own cleaning or not.

Breakdown of service charge for 1983/84

1) *Full services at £3.75: per ft²*

Heating/Electricity	1.01		27%	
Insurance	0.19		5%	
Cleaning	0.56	) 1.24	15%	) 33%
Maintenance	0.68		18%	
Administration	1.31		35%	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	£3.75		100%	

2) *No cleaning at £3.45: (only window cleaning/common areas) Less 8%*

Heating/Electricity	1.01		29%	
Insurance	0.19		5%	
Cleaning	0.26	) 0.94	8%	) 28%
Maintenance	0.68		20%	
Administration	1.31		38%	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	£3.45		100%	

3) *No administration at £2.66: Less 30%*

Heating/Electricity	1.01		38%	
Insurance	0.19		7%	
Cleaning	0.56	) 1.24	21%	) 47%
Maintenance	0.68		26%	
Publicity	0.22		8%	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	£2.66		100%	

4) *No cleaning & electricity at £2.80: Less 25% Electricity for common areas only*

Heating/Electricity	0.36		13%	
Insurance	0.19		7%	
Cleaning	0.26	) 0.94	9%	) 33%
Maintenance	0.68		24%	
Administration	1.31		47%	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	£2.80		100%	

What's in a service charge?

One of the early problems within the area of services was management's tendency to undercost, thus necessitating subsequent action to recoup the deficit. However, to some extent, this was due to larger than expected increases in fuel costs and, whilst in cash flow terms logically businesses might have welcomed the delay in outgoings, in practice when they received the letter (opposite) there were some ruffled feathers. But, generally speaking, there have been no serious problems because, ultimately, firms are relieved not to have the bother of worrying about services and do have faith in Sharespace Ltd which not only saves firms all the practicalities involved but also all the paperwork. As one firm said: "think of all the bills we'd have to meet if we didn't meet all costs in a service charge."

One of the reasons why Sharespace succeeds is that it has a reception office, where Virginia Stunt works, where callers (both physical and on the phone) can get a response, even if the self-employed person working on his own is out. Nothing is more frustrating for a would-be customer, or a supplier, to arrive at a lock-up workshop and find the door locked with nowhere to leave messages etc. Firms can either use the switchboard and have calls put through and messages taken, or have their own line.

Few firms suggested any services they would like which are not available. Two suggested extending reception facilities including a coffee machine in the reception office for visitors. One would like the availability of a handyman, and one would welcome the availability of a filing clerk.

Some of the services least known about are those matters which crop up and need attention in the interests of everyone. For example:-

- 1) When the building had been empty for some years, motorbike users had become accustomed to parking their bikes all day in the entrance of the alley: not a habit which endeared itself to small firms moving into Sharespace. The problem had to be overcome. It was. The bikes went away.
- 2) City centre locations are liable to strange uses when the pubs turn out and the alley in Sharespace was no exception. Someone had to deal with the consequences in the mornings, though this has been less of a problem since Staropolska became a late evening restaurant.

SHARESPACE LIMITED
13-15 Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham NG1 2GR
Telephone Nottingham (0602) 583851



AJ/VLS

1st June, 1981

SERVICE CHARGE

The total cost of providing services in running ShareSpace for the year ended April 1981, was £23,267.12 and members' payments through the service charge for the same period amounted to £21,799.52 – an excess of expenditure over income of £1,467.60 or 6.73% on the turnover. A more detailed breakdown of expenditure and ShareSpace Ltd.'s purchase invoices are available for inspection in Virginia's office.

In the light of these figures, and to budget for the coming year's inflation, we regret that the service charge has to be raised to meet anticipated expenditure. The rate for members who are using all services will be £2.85 per ft² per annum, but this will in future exclude rates and water rates (if any services are not used then this charge will be adjusted accordingly).

The reason for the change in charges for rates is that the Rating Office has assessed each unit of accommodation separately and it is therefore more straightforward to re-charge this assessment (on a monthly/quarterly) basis, rather than to include it as part of the service rate arrived at on a floor area basis and since this assessment varies depending on the type and position of accommodation within the building, what members have been charged since they took occupation may be higher or lower than the actual assessment. In your case you have paid in total to us for rates, whereas on the actual assessment the sum due is . Therefore a debit/credit of is due and we propose to charge this on a monthly/quarterly basis over the next twelve months. This will therefore feature on your next account.

The increase in service costs means that the licence agreement with you needs revision and I enclose a copy of the licence schedule that we would like to offer you from July 1st. We are well aware that any increase is unwelcome, particularly to craftsmen and designers on slender margins, but the cost of servicing ShareSpace is regrettably not immune from inflation.

Yours sincerely

Andrew James

Enc.

Directors: Andrew James Tim McArtney
Registered in England No. 1394769
Registered Office: 13-15 Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham NG1 2GR.

What's in a service charge?

3) When children out of school started vandalising Sharespace's entrance exhibition hall, and playing in the lift, again action had to be taken.

The least successful service was the purchase of a moped for a pay-as-you-use delivery service. This never took off.

Sharespace Directors' Meeting Minutes for 2.6.81 stated: "*Delivery Service: this is to be postponed but in the meantime offer the bike to tenants with current driving licences, or provisional, for 10p per mile.*" This was never taken up either. The bike was sold.

Sometimes Sharespace Ltd would not take (in its own interests) the easiest course of action in providing services because – true to its concept – it took a community as well as a business view of what needed doing. But efficiency was always expected. For example maintenance work in and around the building presented a steady stream of work and for two years a young man J. became a familiar face around the place: he was illiterate and virtually unemployable. Two years later, he became employed in a company where he could utilise skills learned at Sharespace. It was not altogether an easy progression. On one occasion I was there he cut through an electric cable: there was a fair share of mishaps! Sharespace Ltd encouraged him to stick at things, was tough on him when he behaved outlandishly, helped to finance him for some months of skill training and continued to pay his wages for some months whilst he was on trial for a permanent job with another company. He was taken on. During his spell with Sharespace, he did everything from purchasing the buns for morning coffee to some quite advanced decorating. Notes in Directors Meeting Minutes remind one of some of the occasions when rudeness etc looked like ditching his chances.

There were easier ways of getting maintenance work done! It says something for the nature of Sharespace's concept that – in spite of all the early problems – this young man succeeded without any patronising but through dogged practical involvement of Sharespace Ltd management in his training. Firms did not question the choice of Sharespace handyman, knowing that jobs would be overseen so that standards were maintained.

In the early days of Sharespace, services like photocopying were provided through the James McArtney Partnership on a pay-as-you-go basis (see also p.9). As the building phases were completed and more firms moved

in, Sharespace Ltd opened its own office (1980) and services were provided through it.

With hindsight, some of the problems concerning the identity of the project could have been avoided if the project and management company had had different names. Sharespace – the project – was visible right from the start. Sharespace Ltd – the management company – opened its own office within Sharespace some months later. There are times, less frequent than formerly, when Sharespace is purported to be something or to have done something, and it is ambiguous, unless further clarification is sought, whether the speaker is alluding to the project overall or to management. In certain contexts, it can make a big difference!

Some services are becoming organisationally more separate from Sharespace Ltd. For example, Printspace is now Sharespace's copier, print, binding and trimming service. Whilst this development is sensible and efficient, it is still financially part of Sharespace Ltd, but user firms might be forgiven for forgetting this and believing the enterprise was totally independent, especially as its services are now available to outside firms as well. Printspace supports a full-time Sharespace Ltd employee, Carolyn Bullman (see p.45) and it aims to be self-supporting and eventually profitable. Sharespace Ltd has invested in good equipment.

Toward the end of the study period, the Conference Room and the printing room had changed spaces, giving the new Printspace the larger floor area. Before reaching this sophisticated stage, the provision of photocopying and dyeline printing services went through various stages. At one stage Virginia Stunt was having to cope with a machine which constantly went wrong, which demanded getting in maintenance men etc.

Sharespace firms log their use of Printspace equipment and are invoiced regularly. There is need for honesty by users in entering usage out of regular working hours.

Two other services which have been 'networked' are:-

- 1) **Cleaning.** The difficulties of organising efficient cleaning occupy a significant niche in Directors' Meetings minutes, until the situation was reached when the cleaning contract was let out to an industrial cleaning firm which some while before had moved into Sharespace (see p.60).

When Sharespace started, the cleaning was done under contract but

What's in a service charge?

unsatisfactorily, so Sharespace Ltd purchased its own equipment and took on the task of supervising the cleaners who came in the evenings. Four depleted to two but standards improved and this created a better atmosphere in relation to services. In fact, getting a good and consistent standard of cleaning can be difficult and yet it is essential to the smooth running of any project or firm which aims to maintain a good standard of presenting itself.

2) Typing. Initially done by Sharespace's secretary, Virginia Stunt, from April 1982 it has been done on an hourly rate by Action Resource Centre's secretary/PA, Anne Pollard, for those firms requiring their letters etc to be done on an out-work basis. Almost invariably, letters are done on the same day.

A major feature of service lies hidden in the thought and flexibility which make Sharespace work well (see also p.73). Because it works well, the factors which go to create the smooth working may be totally unrecognised. Of course it costs money to create this type of flexible environment but, unless the value of such an environment is seen not only in emotional terms but in hard cash terms, then firms will underestimate the 'hidden' factor in the service administration charge. Or, in other words, they might assume they were not getting value for money because what they were getting was not physically visible.

It is just because so much current analysis about the needs of small firms is based on the 'snapshot' evidence of their needs presented by small firms, rather than on proper time-based research, that I believe local authorities, organisations and even Government are making equations which are not accurate. We have seen from this study how firms, in relation to services, mention those which are most visible to their immediate needs, but not necessarily those most fundamental to their success. We have seen, too, in the previous chapter how traditional (ritualistic) stances about, say landlords, can affect attitudes and responses.

Because those running small, and especially new, firms are caught up totally in their work, they will talk enthusiastically to anyone likely to be able to help them in a practical way. But they will tend to offload the easiest, quickest answer on any outsider who asks what they deem to be non-relevant questions. This is why, for example, when an unknown outside economic researcher spends one day 'fact finding' (or maybe even doing it by phone) he will tend to evoke traditional (ritualistic) responses,

which then get dressed up into an analysis which represents a fantasy about small firms rather than a factual account.

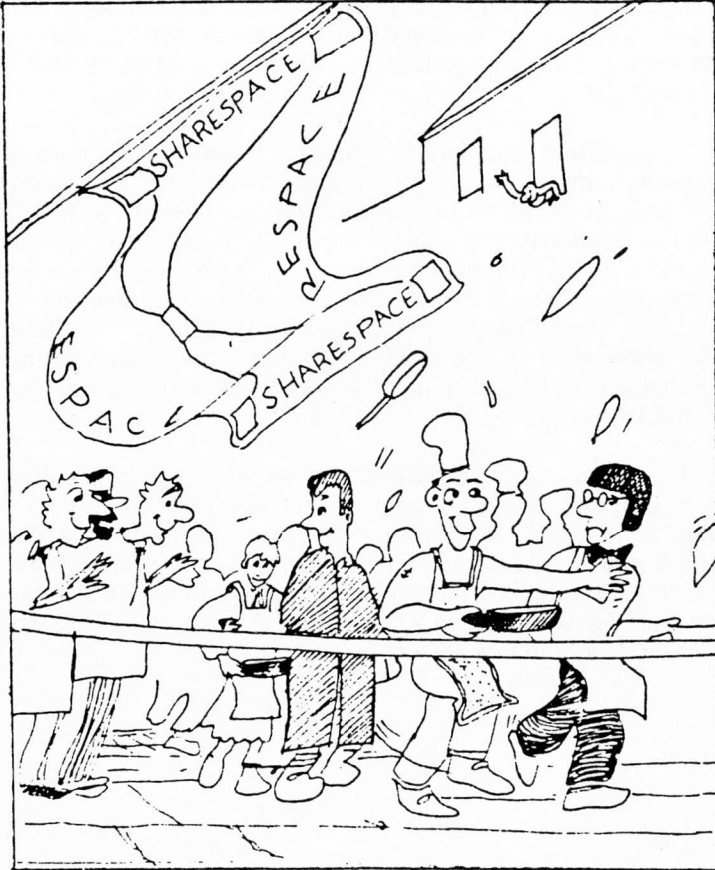
Let me end this chapter by demonstrating the difference between perceptions and facts. A questionnaire listing services available and requesting a tick for those used would, as stated before (see p.50 and 53), evoke a quite different response to my approach of requesting firms to state which services they used.

It never occurred to any firm to mention access at all times to their workspaces as being a service. This service is taken totally for granted and I doubt if anyone in a firm has taken much account of the forethought, planning and monitoring which has been and is necessary to make this access work in a natural but also secure way. Open access is not available in all workspace schemes. For example, I recently heard heartfelt worries by some users of a scheme in which the local authority landlord limits access to workspaces to the times when the local authority employed caretaker is on site. This precludes weekend working and working evenings and bank holidays.

I stress this because it is important – if we are to discover how to be positive about new forms of work – that we find out not only what aggravates people (like not having free access to their workspace) but what makes successful projects tick. To do that requires more than asking people for their immediate responses: it requires staying in a situation for long enough to perceive its inner workings. I hope this study will serve some useful purpose in this respect.

THE GREAT POLISH PANCAKE RACE

OR
"OUT OF THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FOYER!"



IF, because of some total malfunction or failure of all senses or faculties, anyone remains in ignorance, a Sharespace Pancake Race, of infinite charm and wit, has been organised for Shrove Tuesday (15th February) to take place on Bridlesmith Gate. All competitors, celebrities, and officials must present themselves (and you all know who you are and into which category you fit!) for a 3 p.m. deadline at the end of the alleyway for the preliminaries and Radio Trent "build-up" before the first heat at 3.30 p.m.

This event has been excellently organised by Sheila (of Staropolska fame), is being broadcast "live" by Radio Trent, and sponsored by Jif Lemon and all our friends. All proceeds will be donated to the Special Care Baby Unit at the City Hospital.

Excerpt Sharespace Newsletter: February 1983.

CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

There remain some important loose ends to tie up in this Chapter. I found it important to keep in touch with Nottingham City Council's initiatives and attitudes toward job stimulation and to keep in touch (as I had for some years previously) with policy and practice within major finance institutions with regard to their investment role in local small scale business innovation. And I have continued to learn more about shared workspace schemes which have been emerging in other areas.

I have already explained that this study is confined to Sharespace rather than incorporating any 'comparisons' and I realise that some readers will find this a fault. But I am quite unrepentant! Since it became known that this study was in progress I have received pressure from individuals and groups preparing reports, quite often for local authorities, to 'come up' with a list of do's and don'ts, believing that there is some kind of formula for success – or, more cynically, for preparing reports which appear convincing to the uninitiated.

Value of local business leadership

Whilst obviously there are many factors within Sharespace which are found in other workshop schemes, and vice versa, the factors which are of over-riding importance are, invariably, unique to a particular scheme. The blend of local expertise and commitment needed is, in my experience, usually found in 'one offs' which – or rather who – are not comparable! There is an art in recognising true local business entrepreneurship: an art which finance institutions sorely lack. Andrew James, for example, is not likely to impress some institutions. He is quite shy, a trifle obstinate, admits what he does not know, and has absolutely no patience with wasting time on unnecessary 'social niceties'.

But he knows the local scene, has a shrewd ability to make connections between needs and to propose solutions which are effective in business as well as human terms, does not suffer avoidable incompetence gladly, and has an amazing store of determination to beaver away at an objective until it works.

Much has depended in Sharespace on Tim and Andrew's knowledge of the local business scene – knowledge gained not only through conventional business channels but through their own informal networks and researches. And a contributing factor to their success is their unhesitating willingness to identify with the changing inner city environment.

Are the instigators of the scheme likely to stay around long enough to see it thoroughly launched, or are they going to stay around just long enough to get their 'brownie' points, seek promotion elsewhere and leave others to pick up the unfinished threads? This was a question I asked myself before investing a chunk of my own time in this study. One can learn a lot about the potential for a project from taking an objective view of the instigators' roots in a location.

Thorough local knowledge is absolutely key for management of schemes involving small scale enterprises, working communities, first time entrepreneurs, community development (which has as much to do with the way people are employed as anything else), local networking, etc.

Or, in other words, at the ground level where real (and not cosmetic) regeneration begins, it is **local** leadership which is critical to the outcome. Which is not to say that you have to be born and bred in a place to be local! Neither Tim nor Andrew was born and bred in the area, but as their c.v.'s briefly outline (p.25) they are thoroughly 'rooted'.

Role of finance institutions

There are two significant factors which are preventing sound local ventures being taken seriously by the major institutions, whose public

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utterances about regeneration do not match their record of involvement in those areas desperately needing a boost to local economic action.

1) An almost complete failure to recognise that there are local business leaders committed to small scale business development within their communities, for whom success does not inevitably signal an ambition 'to get big'. To them, the possible is not automatically the desirable. Instead of viewing steadfast local commitment as a potential plus factor, institutions tend to equate it unfairly with being unbusinesslike. The Grand Metropolitan Pension Fund took a welcome step in backing Sharespace, and 'the calibre of the instigators' was a major reason for taking the plunge.

Yet, in spite of this Pension Fund's satisfaction with Sharespace (see p.20), this type of venture for them proved a one-off. I was told that one of the problems of becoming involved with the Sharespace type of scheme was the small amount of money involved. It is much easier to borrow larger amounts.

A leading surveyor on behalf of one of the biggest UK Pension Funds asked (1978) to see the proposed Sharespace building. He liked the concept, thought it worthy of investment but regretted the size of investment was too small for a fund which 'of necessity was compelled' only to think big because of the amount of funds being handled. He was under pressure to find £5m worth of property in which to invest within 7-14 days.

Looking at Sharespace with cold logic, it seems sheer blockheadedness which prevents more 'commercial' money being made available (even 0.5% of any major financial institutions' funds would make a significant impact) for such schemes which need no subsidy and which create a pool of new enterprises. Out of the twenty-six new firms in Sharespace over the study period, only one closed (with no loss of jobs, see p.56), and one which left was not traced. Ninety people currently work in the complex, which has absorbed unemployed people and which creates jobs for outworkers, other firms etc.

Robert Lucas, Property Manager of the Grand Metropolitan Pension Fund, told me that Andrew James "had proved himself". If he could mastermind a consortium of such schemes in various parts of the country which needed a large sum of money, he would probably get it.

But what evidence is there that such a consortium would create sound schemes or that Andrew James could succeed at this job (which he does not want!)? Costs per scheme would rise in the event of a consortium as management overheads increased. In recent years, umbrella organisations have devoured inordinate amounts of cash (often as subsidy) without the proportionate benefit being felt at local level in terms of job generation.

The large institutions might be wise to learn the lesson, which Share-space clearly demonstrates, that their own commercial interests can be met at the small scale level essential for stimulation of employment in areas of high unemployment. Undoubtedly, it means a change of approach to part of their business.

2) Institutions fail to apprehend the need to review and amend some of their current practices, in order to enable a healthy and not state controlled transition into a society with potential to benefit from the newer technologies, new patterns of and attitudes to work, and the creation of a broad base of real wealth (which may not equate with maximising profit in any particular situation). Sharespace offers some very helpful clues to some future possibilities.

Not only did several finance institutions use the perennial argument that they could not risk their shareholders' or members' money when they turned down an opportunity to finance the building in which Sharespace operates, but they also hid behind **potential** tenants! Let us deal firstly with shareholders and members. One of the most recent refusals (to fund the building for Sharespace II) came from the Pension Fund of a national company with a Public Affairs Department expressly concerned with helping to increase employment. Why, one may ask, does a company put its charitable funds into supporting (mostly voluntary organisation sponsored) job initiatives, but its Pension Fund trustees fail to place a very tiny part of its Pension Fund investment into a non-subsidized and commercially viable project which has good potential for permanent work creation? Members' interests of course! Are they ever asked? Do they understand the real (long-term) issues and alternatives? It could be argued that the Pension Funds should be doing all in their power, from enlightened self-interest, to fund those projects likely to increase the base of employment (ie in future more people paying into funds). Shareholders and members are supposed to want their ultimate pound of flesh, yet these very same people are supposed to resent subsidized job creation programmes. Perhaps the example of Sharespace suggests a strategy

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which works for all parties and is one with long-term relevance?

Secondly, let us examine why potential tenants of Sharespace might object if the financial institutions backed the scheme! A proposal by Sharespace Ltd was considered by a leading banking institution. Its feasibility study concluded: *“The money could be better spent on an undeveloped site (obtained at no cost from a Local Authority) to provide modern, well-serviced ‘nursery’ industrial units for between 500 sq.ft. and 1500 sq.ft. These units would allay tenants’ apprehensions of working in old multistorey accommodation”*.

Whilst, of course, there is need for units as described above, this feasibility study, like others, misses many salient points, including:-

- (a) there is need for very small units. Most institutions which talk about small firms are not actually talking about small firms at all, and have little or no experience about how small firms actually start up. They only become involved in the subsequent stages of those firms which want to grow.
- (b) central locations are preferred by many small, especially new, firms.
- (c) a scheme like Sharespace offers a high degree of flexibility of space and services, which ‘nursery’ units often do not.
- (d) a working community of firms within a common theme (as in Sharespace’s design orientation) creates inter-trading opportunities within the complex.
- (e) the invisible asset of working in a community – that of moral support (ie not always talking to oneself) – which is particularly necessary for some people in their first experience of working for themselves.

Property “was not performing well at present” was another reason why institutions did not want to get involved. Or as one told me: “we would turn down any request like this by simply stating that it was not policy.” Pension funds adhered to their narrow legal duty to get the best return. “A trustee looks at it in very narrow financial terms,” said one senior man. “Until forced by legislation or strong custom and practice, trustees will be reluctant to commit themselves.”

At the opening of Sharespace in 1980, Griff Shepherd, then Group Pension Manager of Grand Metropolitan, said Pension Funds should become less frightened of getting involved in such sound schemes: but alas things change slowly!

Institutions feel safer 'hunting in packs' which – like not getting involved with 'small' sums of finance – saves them from the necessity of getting to grips with the nitty-gritty world of starter enterprises. There is an increasing body of opinion, however, which believes – as do the Sharespace instigators – that this is unrealistic and short-sighted.

When I have raised these issues, some institutions point with a little embarrassment in the direction of their – often relatively new – departments which deal specifically with matters of social responsibility. Such departments usually limit involvement in employment-related community development to schemes undertaken by voluntary bodies and help is usually in the form of grants and, sometimes, seconded personnel. Some large firms have involved themselves in Enterprise Agencies but, with a few exceptions, these limit their activities to advice for small firms, and sometimes training courses. The glossy PR coverage by some companies of their 'socially responsible help for small businesses' is a pitiful reminder of their lack of being in touch, and the ease with which they can impress others of their kind.

In relation to his city, the Bishop of Liverpool, David Sheppard, asked in the Financial Times (Dec. 1983): "*Where are the investors? Where is responsible investment? What are the Pension Funds doing?*"

Creation of wealth v maximising profits

During the course of this study, I promoted a Conference at the London Business School for the Action Resource Centre in order to bring together major companies and those developing initiatives in local communities to improve the employment situation. It became evident that the large corporations found difficulty in grasping the concepts being explored, being unable mentally to budge from the misconception that anything to do with community must be 'airy fairy welfare' and nothing to do with

Conclusion

the world of business (except through charitable donations), or to accept that business could be demonstrated to be successful in any dimension other than through maximizing profit.

Matters came to a head over the question of profits. Pat Cassidy, Manager of the successful Govan Workspace, for example, made it quite clear “that the essential objective of our (community) company is the creation of employment rather than the maximising of profits”.

He was quickly shot down by a senior company delegate who declared: “A redefinition of the objectives there might help that particular enterprise to be more acceptable to businessmen. Business does not really like anything that does not smack of profit.”

Maximising profit as a primary objective is not the name of Sharespace’s game either, but that does not detract from its ability to be businesslike and make necessary profit. Net profit before tax for the past two years has totalled £10,500. Sharespace Ltd has always met its liabilities satisfactorily, and regularly invests in updating equipment, maintaining the building etc. It can cope with the unexpected problem, and it is not likely to suffer serious loss of rent from unlet space because it has the ability to be flexible to meet changes in needs and demand. It stands very firmly on its ‘own feet’.

It could make more profit by adhering less to its agreed concepts and concentrating on pure commercial expediency by becoming glossier and going up market. But an up market scheme would not have attracted a ratio of 26 out of 37 completely new firms, set up mostly by the young and inexperienced in business.

For the future there is great danger that attempts to regenerate local communities insofar as work is concerned will continue to be viewed by the powerful institutions either as a ‘top down’ process (eg Andrew James could get large scale funding if he went national) or, at local level, as a concern primarily for voluntary or other groups who seek grants, charitable donations, Manpower Services Commission funding etc.

Sharespace is one of the slowly growing – but often thwarted – number of local enterprises which are beginning to demonstrate the commercial viability of being a job creating exercise, building permanent work, and involving within the same complex highly qualified people and those who were unemployed and totally without experience of work.

The question of profit has also been raised in another context because business people seem too often to suspect the motives of all but those 'out to maximize profit'. Some institutional fund people have asked me with a kind of unbelieving curiosity: "what do Tim and Andrew get out of it?" There are still people who spurn all the evidence that there are people who prefer to do what they enjoy doing and believe in, even if they could be richer doing something else! In financial terms, there is no doubt that Tim and Andrew could be richer but they have made their choices according to their priorities.

The first financial transaction of any kind by Sharespace Ltd was December 1st 1978. In September 1980, Sharespace Ltd began to pay Tim and Andrew £100 per month as a management fee charged by James McArtney Partnership. This continued unchanged until October 1982 when the sum became £250 per month each. This went up to £320 in May 1983 when the formal separation of James McArtney Architects and Sharespace Ltd took place (see p.28). Andrew then became an employee of Sharespace Ltd and now derives a gross salary which is equivalent to that of a senior manager in an established medium sized company. For two years Andrew is contracted to James McArtney Architects for some of his time. After two years, Sharespace – and its successor Sharespace II and other entrepreneurial ventures – will support the total of Andrew's salary.

Local authority view

There has been regular communication between Sharespace and the Local Authority, through both officers and councillors. The Local Authority has, therefore, been aware of progress throughout.

Jim Taylor, Principal Planner, City of Nottingham Planning Department, told me in August 1983 that the private sector was 'falling down' on the provision of starter units. The Local Authority has tried to step in. Some of its provision was small units in converted properties but management of these created headaches for the Local Authority and the full cost of administration was not borne by the rent and therefore necessitated subsidy.

Conclusion

Sharespace, he said, was filling a gap in the market. Was it successful? “How do you measure success?” he replied. “The place is full and has formed a stepping off point for new businesses. I haven’t seen their books. One hears established estate agents (see also p.78) are critical. They say it’s not an economic venture, not the sort of thing which is a commercial success.”

He concluded: “Sharespace has been able to demonstrate what is now a growing trend in shared services.”

Is Sharespace a success?

So this account must end with a question. Is Sharespace a success? Your answer will depend on your definition of success in the business world. Must there be only one definition of business success? Must the large institutions continue to place an unremitting downward pressure of pessimism on local business initiatives, which are about people’s ability to create their own work within the framework of **sound** and **effective** business principles but not using maximisation of profit as a main goal? If they do, then the real wealth of the nation – its people’s abilities to provide their own living and employment for others – will be stifled and a sea of discontent will eventually silence the mighty institutions. Ultimately they cannot exist in isolation from the needs and aspirations of a majority of people.

The experiment of Sharespace can offer us many clues about unsubsidised employment growth. Let those who are able learn from them.

SUMMARY

1. This study of Sharespace, Nottingham, was undertaken between February 1979, when the first firms moved in, until August 1983. The planning of the venture was monitored prior to 1979.
2. Sharespace has offered a means of creating and maintaining employment through refurbishment of a city centre disused building, offering 12,000 sq.ft. of lettable space in small units, with shared services.
3. The project was undertaken as a commercial venture, without subsidy, and has achieved an almost total success for those who work, or have worked, in firms within it. Success has not been measured by any yardstick of profit ratio: it rests upon an assumption that the study period was a long enough time in which to assess whether an individual (or group) can create and/or maintain employment in a manner which supports and satisfies them, at least to the point at which they are creating enough wealth and job satisfaction to motivate them to continue.
4. Twenty-six of the thirty-seven firms studied are completely new ones, many started by young people totally inexperienced in the field of business. The study traces the twelve firms which left, the fourteen core firms which remained throughout the period and the eleven which moved in. In 1983, some ninety people were working in Sharespace. These ninety were also providing a growing amount of employment for outworkers, other small firms, contractors etc.
5. All firms operate within the broad field of design, including professional firms (some specialising in high technology), craft firms and retailers. Almost all firms have inter-traded within the complex: one firm trading with fourteen others.
6. Over half the firms, and all but one of the core firms, moved or altered their space within the building in order to create the space

Summary

most suited to their operation. These changes demand careful and flexible management.

7. Of the total thirty-seven firms, fourteen are run by self-employed persons or sole proprietors, sixteen started as partnerships, six as limited companies and one is a registered charity, which is the only non profit-making occupier (but with complementary aims). The status of limited company is the one within which least changes have occurred. Partnerships, ranging from the formally contracted to the informal, are more fluid. In three instances, a partner left to start their own venture elsewhere. The title of sole proprietor tends to mean different things to different people: legalistic definitions, in more than half the firms, are of secondary importance to an ability to be flexible and adaptive to change and rate of progress.
8. Those running firms need, and enjoy, very different working environments – including lock-up workshops and open plan – and spaces varying from 75 sq.ft. to 1559 sq.ft. Some build up their businesses whilst still being employed, some immediately after finishing formal education, some upon becoming redundant, some leave employment to do so and some enter into business after ‘time-out’ at home. With the knowledge of hindsight, only one firm says it would not have moved into Sharespace.
9. Sharespace creates a natural and realistic bridge enabling people who have carried out or developed some area of work activity from their home, or as an extension to their employment, to set up their own business. ‘Easy-in easy-out’ licences, small units and flexibility of space, availability of services, central location and efficient management of Sharespace are key factors in making this progression one which leads Sharespace firms to defy the national average failure rate for new firms.
10. Early firms were not usually fully aware of the total concept of Sharespace when they moved in. They had no knowledge or experience of working communities. The vision of mutual support had to be proved in the particular Sharespace context. Recent firms moving in benefit straight away from the established environment of mutual support.
11. Personal goals and ambitions are many, ranging from those who see growth of their firms as necessary and desirable to those determined to stay small. Others see growth as only desirable within very clearly

pre-determined guidelines. Those preferring to stay small tend to develop networks of outworkers and to trade with other small firms. This development creates a pressure – through personal contact – to bring new people in (or back) into the job market. Firms tend to share knowledge of outside contacts and firms for mutual advantage.

12. Apart from accountants and – on occasions (eg when setting up) – solicitors, few firms have used any formal channels of available business advice, preferring informal networks including those which exist within Sharespace itself. Informal advice is not regarded as ‘advice’ though it is often acted upon! Cash flow is the only business problem noted – in some third of the firms. Large firms, community organisations and individuals are all criticised as poor payers.
13. Of the fourteen core firms, twelve completed both Questionnaires (11.11.81 & 16.6.83). One was discounted as it was a registered charity. Full verbal replies were received from one of the firms which did not complete the Questionnaires. Information was therefore available for twelve firms, of which eleven reported an increase in turnover during the period. One had experienced little change. Eight reported an increase in profitability, up to 60%. Nine had taken on more staff directly.
14. What were the business failures? One of the firms which left could not be traced so it is not known if it still exists. A gallery which opened in Sharespace closed but without loss of jobs: it was used for displaying and selling craft work, and manned on a rota by producers. One firm, which was operating at the end of the study period (ie strictly speaking a ‘success’ within the terms of reference of this study), closed shortly afterwards. It is the subject of a case study, Appendix III; it raises interesting questions about the nature of small business ‘failure’. The firm in question offered its proprietor a self-imposed self-financed diverse training, produced excellent work, provided employment for others, and ceased without leaving a trail of debts. Failure?
15. People who create their own work on a scale suited to their skill and ‘gut’ have the adaptability and flexibility to meet changes in conditions and circumstances. Those with the desire – and aptitude – to grow will seek out the necessary means (eg IGL: see p.60).
16. Sharespace owes its existence to Tim McArtney and Andrew James, whose architectural practice opened on September 1st 1975. The

Summary

previous day's Sunday Times had stated: "*it is the worst possible time for architects to be in private practice.*"

17. They subsequently moved their firm into Sharespace which they believed would provide a stimulating and challenging environment for their own firm and for a diverse range of other firms in the design field. Their working relationship and their styles of management altered as a result of the venture, and these changes are recorded in useful detail.
18. Sharespace Ltd became the management company. Early tenants' meetings and management by consent did not work as well as later management strategy of listening to the views of those running firms, taking account of the outside environment, and creating a firm policy for Sharespace (including a service charge levy for promoting Sharespace as an entity, and not allowing growth firms to soak up available spare space but allocating it to incoming small firms).
19. Sharespace Ltd has to be aware not only of the needs of the particular firms within the working community but of planning toward the future, bearing in mind changing local property market conditions, costs, and the types of firms requiring accommodation. A balance has to be struck between managing the 'here and now' situation and evolving into a future one. If recognised, potential conflicting pressures of present and future needs in the working community can be overcome.
20. Because firms have disparate aims and objectives, more creative co-operation is possible when operating in a secure environment (due to sound management) than when – as in the early days – particular firms put pressure on management policy in order to further their own needs without consideration for the working community overall.
21. Whilst there may be several firms in a similar field, eg architects, they will only be accepted as tenants if their work does not duplicate that of existing firms. Therefore, being in the design field does not necessarily mean eligibility for a vacant space. But criteria for Sharespace entry have nothing to do with proven business success or ability. This gives first time firms a good chance.

22. It is difficult for small firms to get to know about Sharespace except by personal contact, press reports or through the Local Authority. Because it is not to their advantage, estate agents tend not to make Sharespace known to enquirers for small units. Spaces in Sharespace are let without advertising. There are more firms wanting space than there is space available.
23. Sharespace II is being planned (see Appendix IV).
24. People in Sharespace firms moved in with their preconceptions about landlord and tenant relationships and about differences between professional and 'arty crafty' people. This led to some early problems which were overcome as practical experience overtook prior conditioning. But stereotypes were sometimes used when it suited particular ends. The study effectively demonstrates the danger of taking superficially plausible statements at face value, eg "the service charges will squeeze out craft firms."
25. Realistic all-in service charges for a comprehensive range of services, including heat, light, maintenance, reception/switchboard, office services etc are, in fact, advantageous to small firms (including craft ones) which are thus enabled to concentrate on their business without spending time and energy on providing, maintaining and paying for all services separately. The provision of comprehensive services ceases to be so cost effective once firms grow to a size when they require, for example, their own full-time receptionist/secretary.
26. Important elements in services are invisible. It is difficult for firms to relate to invisibles in hard cash terms. For example, Sharespace firms have access to their space at all times but do not note this advantage as it is taken for granted, whereas firms in some other schemes note the disadvantage of access within regulated times. Open access, of course, demands skillful planning by management, including aspects of security.
27. Once established, a significant number of firms soon take services for granted. They become institutionalised. The services which remain 'appreciated' are those visibly used in day to day business, eg photo-copying, printing, Conference Room etc. Reception services are appreciated by very small firms because callers are assured of a response and a personal message taking facility.

Summary

28. The role of management in an enterprise like Sharespace is not clearly understood by firms, because the type of project is new. Some confusion was caused through the project – Sharespace – having the same name as the management company – Sharespace Ltd.
29. Small firms are currently the subject of much planning, theory and speculation. This study – over a five year period – provides substantive information about the setting up and running of a working community and the firms within it. The information, and unravelling of facts from myths, offers those interested or involved with the enterprise field much which is practical and useful. There are no slick conclusions.
30. Sharespace was one of the first shared workspace projects outside London and one of the first to obtain funding for its building from the private sector. In its 1982 Annual Report, the Grand Metropolitan Pension Fund stated that its investment in the building at 13-15, Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham, represented: *“an ideal example of a commercial investment in which it has been possible to incorporate a social content, without limiting the viability and essential worth of the property as a pension fund investment.”*
31. But, in spite of its satisfaction with the Sharespace project, this Fund has not supported any similar schemes since. The sums of money are too small. If Andrew James decided to go national and plan a consortium of shared workspace schemes and ask for a very sizeable chunk of funding, he would be likely to get it. But he does not want to do this. Sharespace’s success has largely been due to the local knowledge and commitment of its founders as well as to their skills. Forming an umbrella organisation would inevitably put costs up. There is no evidence to suggest that financing a national consortium could create the same degree of success for local start-up firms.
32. The factors which create a local success like Sharespace are not understood by financial institutions. Whilst sometimes paying attention to ‘social responsibility’ as a separate function, they fail to practise in their business the strategies which could achieve (without loss to their commercial principles) what they are theoretically committed to with their social responsibility voice, ie increasing employment opportunities. This gulf between theory and practice is often ‘blamed’ upon shareholders and members.

33. There are two significant factors preventing sound non-subsidised employment initiatives (like Sharespace) being taken more seriously as business propositions by large institutions:-
- (a) a failure to recognise that local business entrepreneurs may not see growth into the national scene as a desired dimension of success. Whilst Sharespace has to make a profit, maximising profit is not viewed as a prime objective. An overriding objective is creating “an atmosphere in which people thrive and prosper in their work.” As the study highlights, this involves a special type of management, including business skill and efficiency.
 - (b) a failure to perceive that providing backing for carefully selected local ventures (set up as commercial and not subsidised ones), and earmarking a small percentage of available funds to this end, would make a disproportionately large contribution toward creating new patterns of employment, and a broad base of wealth creation. But have the institutions the skills to spot the appropriate schemes? A continuing failure to do so will not only hamper the development of schemes which can offer, like Sharespace, a sound opportunity for creating and maintaining employment in small firms (some of which will grow) but it may, ultimately, cost the institutions dearly.
34. Major institutions fail to heed the need for very small units and the preference for many first-time firms for a central location.
35. Nottingham City Council says the private sector is ‘falling down’ on the provision of starter units. The Council has created some shared workspace schemes but finds management of them a headache and needing subsidy.
36. Sharespace is one of the slowly growing – but often thwarted – number of local enterprises which are beginning to make inroads into a field which is proving that it is possible to create more employment without subsidy. There is a future for commercially sound, small scale and locally appropriate enterprises to provide the environment for successful small and starter firms **providing** thorough, flexible and far-seeing management is at hand.

Summary

37. The study warns against comparability studies in the emerging shared workspace field because schemes have been set up with widely varying objectives. The generic term 'shared workspace' can be misleading.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

THIS LICENCE made

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BETWEEN

- (1) **SHARESPACE LIMITED**, of 13-15 Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham
("the Licensor")
- (2)
("the Licensee")

WHEREBY IT IS AGREED as follows:-

1. **SUBJECT** to the provisions hereinafter specified the licensor hereby grants to the Licensee licence to use the premises specified in Part I of the Schedule ("the premises") for the purpose specified in Part II of the Schedule only between such hours and on such days as the Licensor shall determine, together with the use of such furniture, office equipment and other effects (if any) therein contained ("the contents").
2. **THE** right hereby granted is personal to the Licensee who shall not be entitled to share the premises with any third party or grant any rights in respect thereof to any third party, excepting employees of the Licensee.
3. **DURING** the continuance of this Licence the Licensee shall be entitled to make use or take the benefit of the following services, the cost of which shall be included in the Licence Fee referred to below.
 - (a) Reception facilities
 - (b) Room cleaning service
 - (c) Toilet facilities
 - (d) Incoming telephone reception service
 - (e) Heating and hot water and lighting
 - (f) Room refuse disposal
 - (g) Repair and maintenance of the building
 - (h) Insurance of the building (excluding the Licensee's effects, chattels and fittings)

PROVIDED THAT nothing herein contained shall be deemed to oblige the Licensor to provide all or any of the above services outside the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on week-days (excluding Saturdays and Bank Holidays).

4. **DURING** the continuance of the Licence the Licensee shall also be entitled to avail itself any of the following services which may be supplied by the Licensor:-
 - (a) Use of the Conference Room
 - (b) Photocopying
 - (c) Typing

Any services referred to in (a), (b) and (c) above so used by the Licensee shall be

invoiced by the Licensor monthly at its then prevailing rates of charge and paid for by the Licensee promptly thereafter.

5. **DURING** the continuance of this licence the Licensor shall:
 - (a) promptly pay all general and water rates relating to the premises, invoicing these to the Licensee monthly.
 - (b) take out or maintain at a recognised insurance office of its choice, insurance cover to meet the requirements of the Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969, in respect of those employees of the Licensor engaged in providing the services therein.
6. **DURING** the continuance of this Licence the Licensee shall pay to the Licensor the Licence Fee specified in Part III of the Schedule hereto payable in advance the first such payment to be made on signing of this Licence and subsequent payments to be made monthly thereafter.
7. **ON** the signing of this Licence the Licensee shall pay to the Licensor the Deposit specified in Part IV of the Schedule hereto. Upon determination of this Licence and vacation of the premises by the Licensee the Deposit shall be refunded less any sum due to the Licensor by the Licensee under the provisions hereof or otherwise.
8. **DURING** the continuance of this Licence the Licensee shall:
 - (a) take all necessary care of the premises and of the contents and on demand shall pay the cost of any breakages or damage or other loss in respect thereof caused by negligence or wilful damage on the part of the Licensee.
 - (b) permit the Licensor by itself, its servants or agents to enter the premises and give all reasonable facilities to the Licensor, its servants or agents, to enable inspection, cleaning and repairing of the premises and all other proper purposes.
 - (c) pay on demand to the Licensor the appropriate charge for all outgoing telephone calls made from the premises.
 - (d) observe and perform all such rules and regulations as may from time to time be made by the Licensor for the management of the premises.
9. **DURING** the continuance of this Licence the Licensee shall not:
 - (a) affix any placard, nameplate, or other notice to any part of the premises, unless with the express consent of the Licensor.
 - (b) do or permit to be done in the premises or in the adjoining areas anything which may reasonably cause annoyance to any person.
 - (c) remove or permit to be removed any of the contents of the premises, the property of or provided by the Licensor.
 - (d) install or permit to be installed any additional equipment without the written consent of the Licensor.
10. **THE** Licensee shall fully and completely indemnify and keep indemnified the Licensor in respect of all claims by any person whatsoever for any damage to the property or injury to person caused by or in connection with or arising out of the occupation of the

Appendix I

premises or use of the contents or services and in respect of all costs or charges in connection therewith whether arising under statute common law regulation or bye-law.

11. (a) **THIS** Licence may be determined:
- (i) By either party upon the giving to the other party of one month's notice in writing; or
 - (ii) by the Licensor forthwith if at any time during the continuance hereof the Licensee shall:
 - (A) have refused or neglected to observe and perform any of the agreements on their part herein contained; or
 - (B) have failed or neglected to observe any of the agreements on its part herein contained; and
 - (b) upon such determination all rights of the Licensee hereunder shall cease (but without prejudice to accrued rights) and the Licensee shall forthwith remove all property and vacate the premises leaving the same in a clean and tidy state; and
 - (c) should the Licensee fail to remove its property and vacate the premises the Licensor may cause such property to be removed and stored at the cost and expense of the Licensee without being in any way liable for any loss or damage thereto; and
 - (d) should the Licensee fail to claim any such property within one month the Licensor may proceed to sell the same without further notice to the Licensee.
12. **THE** Licensor shall not be liable:
- (a) for any loss or damage to any goods or chattels of the Licensee or of any other person the Licensee allows or causes to be on the premises.
 - (b) for any loss or inconvenience occasioned by any omission, delay, neglect or inaccuracy on the part of the Licensee, its servants, licensees, invitees, or agents.
13. **IN** so far as any of the services to be supplied hereunder to the Licensee constitute a supply of services within the meaning of the Finance Act 1972, the Licensee shall pay to the Licensor any Value Added Tax in respect of such services at the appropriate rate for the time being at the same time as and in addition to the fees therefor and the Licensor shall issue to the Licensee the appropriate tax invoice or invoices therefor.
14. **IT IS HEREBY DECLARED** that it is not the intention of the Licensor or of the Licensee that a tenancy of the premises should be created by this Licence.

IN WITNESS whereof the parties have signed their names hereto the day and date first hereinafter mentioned.

for and on behalf
of the Licensor

for and on behalf
of the Licensee

SCHEDULE

TENANT:

DATE:

PART I

PREMISES:

13-15, Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham NG1 2GR

PART II

PERMITTED USE:

PART III

LICENCE FEE:

PART IV

DEPOSIT:

PART V

RATES:

(subject to alterations by council and water board)

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

APPENDIX II

List of user firms, February 1979 – August 1983

Key:

- (1) Firms in Sharespace from the time their space was let and throughout the study period. Twelve of these fourteen completed both Questionnaires (11.11.81 & 16.6.83), and thirteen of them co-operated with the purposes of this study, eg interviews. See pages 33–55.
 - (2) Firms which left during the study period. See pages 55–60.
 - (3) Firms which moved in during the study period after 11.11.81 See pages 60–68.
-
- (1) **ACTION RESOURCE CENTRE** (Nottinghamshire Branch).
Small Business Advice Service and Community Development.
Manager: John Pike.
 - (2) **ALL CHANGE**
Knitwear Designer: Liz Thomas.
 - (1) **ARCHILAB**
Architect and Designer.
Principal: David Nicholson-Cole.
Emphasis on houses and extensions and on community building.
Special interest: developing micro computer applications in practice.
 - (2) **ARTISAN** (formerly Printer's Devil then Imprints).
Designers and Fabric Printers.
Proprietor: Deb Arrowsmith.

(2) **DENISE BASS/MARYLIN ROBERTSON**
Batik, silk screen printing, hand-made cards.

(2) **CHARLOTTE BERNAYS**
Ceramics & Design.

(2) **BRAITHWAITE AND DUNN**
Contract Pictures and Prints.

(2) **BRIDLESMITH GALLERY**
Craft Gallery.

(1) **JOHN BURROW AND PARTNERS**
Consulting Engineers.
Associate: Ray Furlonger.

Nottingham Branch of international firm, designing and supervising structural and civil engineering projects in the UK. Staff can be provided specialising in highways, bridges, drainage and airports, but Nottingham staff are primarily concerned with building structures of all kinds.

(1) **PAUL CARRINGTON**
Woodwind Instrument Maker and Repairer.
Work carried out for music shops, local education authorities and individuals.

(2) **CULLEN, CARTER and HILL, ARCHITECTS** (formerly Cullen Associates).
Architects.

(2) **JAMES DAVIES AND PARTNERS**
Environment Conservation Consultants.

(1) **DESIGN AND BUILD SERVICES LTD**
Directors: Nick Borrett, Al Read.
Building design, feasibility studies for projects, general building work, grant aided design and maintenance work for domestic and commercial buildings. Negotiate contracts for domestic and commercial buildings.

(1) **DOMINIC FRAMPTON PARTNERSHIP**

Building Service Consultants.

Partners: Greg Dominic, Doug Frampton.

Associates: Kelvin Beveridge, Mike McGowan.

Designers of heating, air conditioning, electrical and all other services in buildings. Also specialise in energy conservation in buildings.

(1) **FABRIKAT-INTERIOR 1** (formerly Interior One).

Interior Design Consultants, Contract Furnishers and Retailers.

Directors: R.M. Sewell, John Churton.

Interior design studio preparing schemes for domestic and commercial environments. Particular emphasis on modern design but traditional commissions undertaken. Exclusive fabrics, carpets, wall coverings and furniture on display in showroom. Furnishing from Europe, America, and the Far East with an extensive library to support the service available.

(1) **FAITHFUL AND GOULD** (formerly Fleetwood Partnership).

Quantity Surveyors and Building Cost Consultants.

Partner: Peter Bishop.

Associate: Stuart Bailey.

Financial and contractual advice on building and civil engineering works. Preparation of tender documents and control of cost throughout a contract.

All types of construction work both new and works of alteration and refurbishment.

(1) **FOUGERE**

Knitwear and Fashion Design.

Partners: Jane Fearn, Ann Withers.

Range of co-ordinated separates in a wide choice of quality fabrics and yarns. Designs created for the individual plus handbags, jewellery and hats, giving each outfit the total look.

(3) **R. GREEN AND SONS**

Industrial Cleaners.

Partners: R. Green, P. Green.

Specialise in industrial cleaning, decorating and building maintenance.

- (1) **HANKIN AND WOOD**
Pictorial Sign Painters.
Partners: Peter Hankin, Eileen Wood.

- (3) **HARMS GILL**
Computer Aided Design Bureau.
Partners: Adrian Harms, Howard Gill.
Architects offering computer aided design (CAD) services to organisations involved in the design of buildings and others who may have an application for three dimensional computer drafting. Also architectural commissions, CAD consultancy, and educational courses undertaken.

- (3) **INDECON**
Consulting Engineers and Scientists.
Partner: Peter Pentecost.
East Midlands office of consulting partnership specialising in the control of noise, vibration and environmental pollution.

- (3) **INTERACTIVE GRAPHICS LTD**
Computer Aided Design.
Directors: Mike Bayfield, David Brooke.
IGL develops, manufactures and supplies personal drafting systems for designers, evolved over a period of ten years' intensive use by draughtsmen and designers. Authorised consultants under the D O E CAD/CAM consultancy scheme.

- (1) **JAMES McARTNEY ARCHITECTS** (formerly James McCartney Partnership).
Directors: Tim McCartney, Andrew James.
Company of ten with above Directors and staff shareholders. Work includes a large hospital for the elderly, large office conversion project, flats for the disabled and the refitting of bookshops.

- (3) **ALLAN JOYCE**
Architect.
Emphasis on small scale design.

- (2) **KATSU**
Fabric Painter.

Appendix II

- (2) **KENCHINGTON LITTLE AND PARTNERS**
Consulting Engineers.
- (3) **KINDERGARTEN TOY SHOPS LTD**
Directors: Harwood Gordon, Christine Hughes.
Toy retailers and educational suppliers specialising in play equipment and books for children up to age ten. Emphasis on quality and durability. Catering for schools, playgroups and toy library users.
- (2) **BARBARA MANUEL**
Ceramics.
- (1) **JULIAN MARSH**
Architect and Designer.
Principal: Julian Marsh.
Architecture with emphasis on interiors, perspective illustration, exhibition design and teaching.
- (3) **SOLO** (formerly Web-Zeb).
Designer and retailer.
Proprietor: Janet Webber.
Original designs using the latest season's colourways and fabrics, pure silks, wools etc.
- (2) **SOUP KITCHEN II** (formerly Mrs Halford's Pantry).
Restaurant.
- (3) **GARY SOUTHWELL**
Guitar Maker.
Quality guitars hand made to order. Specialises in making classical and early guitars. Repair work and restoration undertaken.
- (3) **SPECIALIST COMMISSIONING SERVICES LTD**
Directors: Les Dennis, Greg Dominic.
Commissioning engineers for all types of building services: air conditioning, pressurisation systems, process control systems etc.
- (3) **STAROPOLSKA RESTAURANT**
Proprietors: Jan and Sheila Laskowski.
Continental restaurant with two venues. Ground floor self-service licensed cafe with outdoor seating in summer, open 11.30 am to 3.30 pm. Basement restaurant opens 7.00 pm to serve Polish a la carte menu. Both venues closed Sunday and Monday.

(1) **PAMELA WOODHEAD ORIGINALS**

Textile and fashion design, wholesale and retail.

Pamela invites commissions for fabrics, garments and accessories, incorporating her original beading techniques. Products range from bridalwear, evening wear, accessories and gifts to interior soft furnishings. Range of samples on display.

(3) **WORD BUSINESS**

Word Processing and Telex Bureau.

Proprietor: Richard Stokes.

Word Business offers a fast, economical word processing, telex and Xerox copy service. Will also assist in the creation of press releases and other promotional literature.

(1) **WORKSHOP DESIGN**

Graphic Design and Advertising.

Director: John Richards.

A small design group handling a wide field of graphics from conception to finished camera ready artwork. Campaigns are prepared locally and internationally.

APPENDIX III

Case study of a first-time craft firm entrepreneur: success or failure? Deb Arrowsmith

This case study is given, not because the firm concerned was a conventional success, but because it demonstrates clearly some possibilities of flexible self-training within the context of running one's own business. At the end of the study period, Deb Arrowsmith's firm Artisan was still in existence, but I knew that it ceased trading soon after. It seemed fair to include this fact, as well as the reasons for it, because it helps to give perspective to the venture.

Deb Arrowsmith and Eileen Harris formed an informal partnership and took 200 sq.ft. in Sharespace Phase 2. They called their firm Printer's Devil. They heard that the space "was the cheapest space in town".

Deb had a degree in fine art and Eileen one in fashion and textile design. They met whilst both working at Jessops (John Lewis Partnership) in Nottingham. Eileen was a graduate trainee and Deb worked in the fabrics department. Both gained from their experiences but neither liked working for a large organisation, so they decided to have a go on their own.

Their starting point was handprinting tee shirts and sweat shirts, specially doing small orders for clubs, schools, bands, scout troops, for publicity campaigns and for individuals. They did all the design work, and were able to produce at very competitive prices. They had little competition in Nottingham.

Then they launched their own designs for fabric kitchenware (matching sets with aprons, pot holders etc). The designs were original and eye catching.

They spent money on essential equipment, eg an overlocker, but worked “in a primitive way” when improvised equipment could do a good job. Thus window squeegees were used for printing. The firm was launched with a very small family loan matched by the bank. Once established, they decided to take out 40% of the profit, 20% each, to live on.

Interesting work came in, including ‘Made in Nottingham’ banners for the County Council. They received publicity in several national newspapers and could have been all set for developing what they were doing. But there was dissatisfaction! They wanted to develop new ideas. Space and storage was becoming a problem and they needed an extra pair of hands.

After the first year, they decided to continue with the partnership, but agreed to split up soon afterwards. Eileen branched out in a business of her own.

Deb continued and started using outworkers as business grew. She constantly experimented with new ideas including some for the gift market. She had bad luck with a fire in her flat around the time she was setting up shop (Phase 4 of Sharespace development) in the pedestrian alley. It opened as Impprints in September 1982. Some while later her workshop moved to the basement underneath, which saved crossing the alley and going upstairs. She hoped this would make it easier to divide her time, spending 1½ days a week printing.

Work included printing panels for the blouses of Imperial Tobacco sales assistants, an order for the night club BLOTS, kitchenware for free gift sets for Scotwood Kitchens and a large flag for the European Water Sports Championships (Robin Hood on Water Skis!). There was also work for Sharespace companies; curtains for Julian Marsh, place mats for Staropolska etc.

The shop started to sell other people’s crafts including patchwork, pottery and knitteds. Deb herself was developing ideas for bed linen, blinds and wallpaper. By December 1982, she was enthusiastic about a job in which she had done a wall for a client to match the roller blinds she had designed – both done with an emulsion spray gun.

Then came a plan to develop the shop within a particular theme, probably handprinted fabrics as there was no handprinted fabric shop in the city.

Appendix III

A certain amount of disillusion was setting in over the Sharespace concept and she felt a distinct apartness between 'them upstairs' and 'us downstairs' (see p.83). She helped to form Us Downstairs – a group of those involved to help public relations and publicity in order to get more people to come into the pedestrian alley.

So a year after the partnership break-up Deb noted: "I do have more ambition than Eileen and possibly will always identify more strongly with the business. Anyway I have found that splitting up a partnership is almost as gruelling as setting one up! I only hope it will neither damage the business nor friendship. Business itself is good – always busy before Christmas and plenty of ideas and possibilities for next year".

A little while later: "Business is surviving but that's about all! Still I'm doing my usual trick of starting something which I have no idea will work or not."

The basement workshop was not working out so well, she reported in 1983. She was passing out half her total workload to other small firms and concentrating on the larger projects. The major problem was cash flow.

She felt Sharespace rent was reasonable but that Sharespace management was leading to a loss of interest in the community spirit within the project. "Sharing is meant to reduce overall cost, and lead to a community and business spirit, which can be its most marketable commodity."

Toward the end of the study period Deb moved from Sharespace to a workshop at 14-18 St Mary's Gate, The Lace Market. With 800 sq.ft. it gave her more space. The shop had been breaking even but not making a profit. "It was an idea I had to do to see whether it was a bad idea".

"I wanted to move away from what we were doing and concentrate on one area." The name changed to Artisan and, temporarily, an American interior designer, Cynthia Gorsh, joined Deb. A new handout stated: "Artisan specialises in the individual designing of blinds, awnings, curtains and upholstery fabrics as well as stencilling and creatively spraying wall surfaces, all of which may be used to create unique environments for hotels, restaurants, offices and domestic areas." So far Artisan's work had included a bridal showroom, a set of blinds for a house and hand-painted curtains for a Leicester hair salon.

Business, Deb said, had suffered following the move from Sharespace. Passing trade had been slow in Sharespace, but now it was non-existent. The City Council was the landlord of the workshops. The costs were cheaper than Sharespace. The only services were the toilets, and someone cleaned the stairs. If nobody was in a workshop, it was locked. The first time I called at Artisan, it was locked and, without a reception service, there is no proper means of leaving messages etc.

This case study may superficially give some small business advisers the material they like if they define business 'failure' in terms of lack of growth, lack of business skills and so forth. We would do well, therefore, to heed some of the unsolicited remarks Deb made during the study period. I have already reported her comment on running a shop, ie "It was an idea I had to do"

She stated very firm views on loans and grants to small firms, believing that "£25,000 doesn't do anyone any good. I've got to learn everything by doing it, so do most people". She added that her argument did not depend on the amount of any grant, whether "too much or not enough" but on the fact that "it is no substitute for experience which you have to gain money or no."

She did not regret the time spent on the Us Downstairs community projects, though, in narrow business terms, she would have been wiser "to spend my time on my own affairs". She felt the Sharespace retailers were right to attract custom by livening the alley up – decorations, events etc – in order to get it known. She also felt that Sharespace Ltd should have translated their part-time efforts into a promotions officer.

She also said "We are all guilty of trying to do too much and occasionally losing sight of the goal, or allowing personalities to distract our attention."

I remained in touch with Deb. At the time of completing this book (January 1984) she commented on her reasons for ceasing to trade. Payment for two big jobs, totalling £5,000, had not been forthcoming because one firm had gone bankrupt and the other still had not completed payment. Additionally, Cynthia had – as planned – returned to the States.

Deb was about to 'come back' to Sharespace to look after Kindergarten for a few months for Harwood and Christine (who were expecting their first baby). She had kept her equipment, paid off debts and was doing

Appendix III

some freelance work from home. She had a £2,500 personal overdraft which she would work off as soon as possible.

She was already looking for involvement in the entrepreneurial sense “in something good again”.

Had Deb stuck to, and developed, what she was good at in the early days, I am sure her firm would have ‘succeeded’. But she was compelled from inside to experiment. Every time I saw her there was ‘a new direction’!

Realistically, she knew that her ‘success’ did not depend on more investment in the firm. As stated above, she was critical of loans and grants offered to many small firms.

Though she certainly did not, at the time, think about it this way, Deb took herself through a tough practical training in entrepreneurship, business management, retailing, product development, promotion and manufacture, at her own expense. On the way she provided a lot of useful, attractive work, and employment for other people. By keeping the scale of operation small, she avoided leaving a long trail of debts causing problems for others.

Ceasing to trade could be viewed as a ‘failure’ or as the end of a training programme. Almost certainly, before long there will be another venture and, almost certainly, it will benefit from the fact that she had the courage to experiment and practise her philosophy of learning by doing.

Deb’s firm could be regarded as just another to add to the national statistics of ‘failures’ – or it could be deemed a success story. It all depends on how we define success.

APPENDIX IV

Sharespace II

Before Sharespace was completed, the notion of a Sharespace II loomed as a possibility in Tim's and Andrew's minds – not as a replica of Sharespace but as a progression – though in what way was as yet undecided.

By the time Sharespace II began to shape up, Tim and Andrew had resolved their new working arrangements (see p.28), and Andrew began to fashion another potentially sound project from his mixture of entrepreneurial flair, basic skills, enthusiasm and painstaking attention to detail plus a measure of cussedness and opportunism.

By opportunism in this context I mean the ability to understand, interpret and respond to genuine local needs which he perceives both in 'broad brush' (ie environmental, need for more jobs etc) and in particular 'opportunistic' detail. Thus Sharespace II has, so far, gone through his mind and architect's pen as a project offering different ("less polished") type of shared workspaces, as an Advanced Business Centre, as (in part) rehearsal spaces and as (in part) a local textile design centre. None of these uses necessarily precludes the others.

Several Lace Market buildings were viewed. The one selected is 49, Stoney Street – a substantial factory and office building – overlooking St Mary's Church in the heart of the Lace Market some 300 yards from Sharespace. What the building had to have was a framework capable of housing any or all of the activities yet considered – or likely to be considered. It, therefore, had to be flexible.

It has six storeys and basement with a total lettable area of 16,500 sq.ft. It is structurally sound, served by two staircases throughout and two lifts. It is rectangular and compact, with excellent daylighting and outlook. The dry semi-basement has some natural light. The fifth floor consists of

penthouses, formerly used as lace design studios, with spectacular all round views over the city.

The building project, enabling a potential yield of 9% was of no interest to the Grand Metropolitan Pension Fund or – so far – to any others. The problem of funding has been solved following a meeting with Bob Marshall who is now a partner with Andrew James in Sharespace II.

After his wife's death, Bob took over the travel business she had been running since he set it up some years before "almost by accident". He was in Cyprus teaching service children and chartered a plane to organise a visit for their parents. An agent told him it was not possible, so he did it himself.

He is now a Minorca villa holiday specialist and, when I spoke to him in August 1983, he had already contracted over £1m worth of air seats for 1984.

The holiday business made a very satisfactory profit but he wanted to be involved with something locally and more 'solid'. "The Lace Market had run down and I let it be known I was in the market for a building. It was a gut reaction. That's how I work. It seemed a sensible and interesting thing to do".

He sought a variety of professional advice, including estate agents, and was told the idea wasn't possible. He spoke to Andrew James, liked his ideas and they were in business. The building belonged to the Tootal Group, which put it on the market at £75,000. Bob bought it for £65,000 "on the strength of my strong stomach and Andrew's attention to detail".

Some months later, Bob and Andrew were still seeking finance for the conversion of the building, the partnership at the time being Bob's money and Andrew's time. With no takers, they set about tackling the building floor by floor and whilst still searching for the conversion cost of around £250,000, Bob was sinking more into it short-term. Andrew had been working on it for 18 months with no income on the assurance that Sharespace Ltd would manage the project.

Bob was confident that a suitable offer would come up for the building as its potential became clear – he would then 'do' another one.



Ruth I. Johns has achieved successful careers in business, in community development and in the media. Her work has involved detailed contact with Government departments, local authorities, large and small companies, statutory and voluntary organisations, individuals and small groups creating their own futures. Since 1980, she has been an independent adviser on business and community development, and a writer, welcoming the practical creative possibilities presented by the significantly changing relationships between economic, social and domestic spheres.

This volume, **The Job Makers** adds much needed well-researched material to the practical debate on the future of work. Ruth Johns' last book **Life Goes On** concentrated on the philosophy and practice of self-help encountered and evolved during the eleven years she was founder/director of a pioneer housing and community organisation. For short-term/commercial reasons, leading publishers wanted her to amend her text in order to present a definitive text book on how to set up and run a self-help organisation. The author believes such blueprints are dangerous. So she did what she has done before, and advises others to do – get to grips with the facts and do the job yourself! She set up a small alternative publishing house and defied the sceptics who said an unknown publisher would get no reviews. **Life Goes On** received many and is recommended to students and 'ordinary' readers alike.

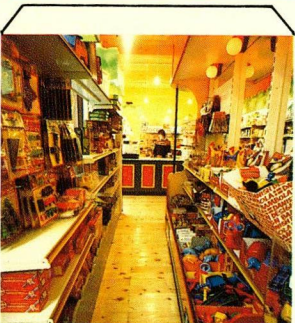
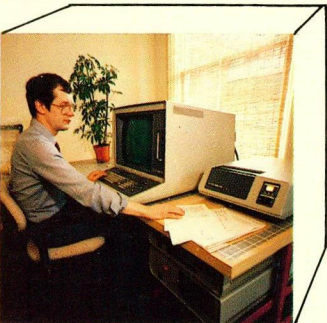
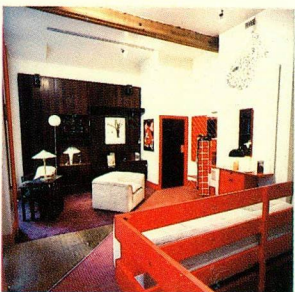
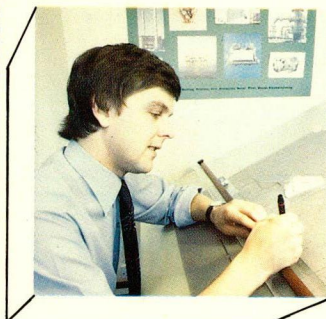
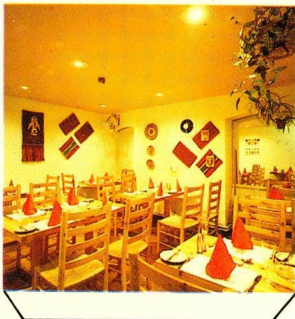
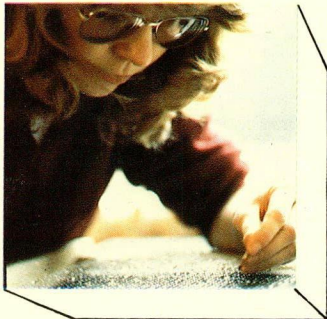
Life Goes On by Ruth I. Johns. £3.75 post free (UK).

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"This is an important book. It helps to restore the importance of the individual, which is too often ignored in social thinking, encourage self-help, and above all correct the fashionable but unproven assumption that human destiny is wholly the result of impersonal social and economic factors beyond the control of the individual." Quarterly Journal of Community Education.

"It is iconoclastic. It is worth reading by anyone in a field of guidance who is tempted to think of themselves as providing a service." Manpower Services Commission.

The Press agreed that you "cannot read it without being challenged," "needs to be read through and not just dipped into," and "is for people of all ages with ideas and a determination to make practical ideas succeed."



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Unknown
Publisher
P.O. Box 66, Warwick CV34 4XE.



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