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The Official Architect; missing chapters in the history of the profession

Roger Booth, Lancashire County Architect, 1962-83

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Morecambe Library, 1967
Sketches for the Riverside Theatre by Roger Booth and photograph of construction.
Source: Author’s photograph of archive material held by Mrs. Dorothy Booth.
Organisational structure of Lancashire County Architects' Department
Source: Extract from County Architect's Report 1963-64. Copy held at Lancashire County Record Office
Designs for school furniture.
Source: Extracts from *County Architect's Report April 1963 – March 1964*. Copy held at Lancashire County Record Office.
Chorley Police Station and Magistrate’s Court, 1968. 
Source: Author’s photograph, May 2011.

Bury Police Station, 1969. 
Source: Author’s photograph, November 2010.

Rochdale Police Station & Magistrates' Court, 1964.
Development and testing of concrete finishes.
Model of scheme as proposed in Blackpool.
Source: Author's photograph, extract from County Architect's Report, 1971-73.
Prototype concrete panel assembly on school playing field, Accrington. Source: Author’s photograph, January 2012.
Blackpool Divisional Police HQ and Magistrates' Court. Source: Author’s photograph, June 2011.
Morcambe Police Station, 1971.

Wigan Police Station, 1972.

Preston Police Station, 1971.
‘The Solid character of this headquarters fits well into the development of Long Millgate’

Wigan Police Station, 1972.
3D CAD representation of full plastic primary school.
Source: Extract from County Architect’s Report, 1974-75. Copy held at Lancashire County Record Office
The Fulwood ‘Bubble’ at Kennington Road Primary School.
Source: Author’s photograph, April 2012.
Interior of classroom
Source: Extract from County Architect’s Report, 1974-75. Copy held at Lancashire County Record Office
6 new metropolitan county councils with populations of 1.5 – 2.5 million.

36 new metropolitan district councils with populations from 180,000 – 1 million +.

304 new district councils

Revised map of English counties.  
Source: Surveyor, 19 February 1971
Lancashire Police Stations

Source: Extract from *County Architect’s Report, April 1971 – March 1973*. Copy held at Lancashire County Record Office.
‘Pace of change and the scale of technological control over that change is such that men and women in local government can influence the environment’

‘One must hope that architects will be regarded as experts in the field of local authority building…’

‘The built environment professions could lose out unless they are willing to embrace new disciplines, such as cost benefit and management accountancy, and adopt more flexible attitudes in their areas of interest.’

‘Most elected members and new chief officers will overnight become responsible for services on a scale much larger than they have known before.’
‘Lancashire County Council is involved with five new counties and ten metropolitan districts [and] will be transferring staff in a number of different directions’

‘A district council, even in a large town, where housing was virtually the only area of any significant development would almost certainly find great difficulty in recruiting architectural staff of design ability and managerial capacity.’

‘…if you are a dedicated professional you will be given less opportunity for senior office than one who will subordinate his professional interests to management priorities.’
‘…the reaction to the mention of quality in a period when the emphasis is on growth, productivity and effectiveness is that it is visionary, idealistic or a prelude to asking for money to spend.’

‘…it’s almost impossible to find any one officer or member, who has a good word to say about the changes, ie in comparison with what could have happened’
Sources: Author's photographs; Pevsner.
'Hardly anyone can by now be aware of the slump in the Building Industry and, inter-alia, those of the several Professions connected with it – notably Architects. The actual facts of it are not so well known but, indeed, are stark enough – almost one-quarter of the Construction Industry now unemployed and, according to a recent official statement from the RIBA, a proportion of over one in every three Architects, if not actually unemployed, then not employed in Architecture.

It is too early to say whether the nadir has yet been reached, although it is not too early to say that the public sector portion of National construction (about one-half of it) has taken the biggest blow and, with it of course, all Public Architect’s Departments – County, City or District.'

Skelmersdale Library, North Elevation.
Source: Author's photo from drawing held on site at Skelmersdale Library
Skelmersdale Town Centre, 1969. Drawing from the office of Skelmersdale Development Corporation. Source: Author’s photo from drawing held on site at Skelmersdale Library
Roger Booth was given the title, 'North-West Pacemaker', and, as reported in 1970, his work was 'little known outside the north-west, but the quality of building achieved deserves recognition'.

Widnes Police Station and Magistrates’ Court, 1967.

Fleetwood Radar Station, 1961-62. Grade II

Leyland Magistrates’ Court, 1970.

County College, Lancaster University, 1969.