

Aim

By the early 1980's Coventry was one of the areas most badly affected by the recession in Britain. One local area that reflected many of these problems and the problems of the inner city was Eagle Street off the Foleshill road in Coventry, roughly one mile north of the city centre.

My aim is to outline the problems Eagle Street was having in 1984 and discover what the standard of living was and how it has changed from then up to the present day. I aim to discover what improvements have been made (if any) to Eagle street and the standard of living for its residents from 1984 to now.

I also aim to compare Eagle street and the standard of living in eagle street to my own street and to highlight the differences and to say which one has the higher standard of living and why.

History

Coventry's industrial revolution was sparked by its transport links; the canals and railways brought coal and raw materials for its factories. The advent of its motor car industry in 1900 meant that new factories began to spring up among its other industries, (the bicycle industry that had been there previously with assorted others) and this brought new wealth to the town and of course required workers.

The housing in Eagle Street was built prior to 1914 due to the growing industry in Coventry. Factories were growing up all around Coventry and there was an influx of labour from the surrounding countryside. People came to the area in the hope and expectation of a good wage from the surrounding factories, but of course they needed somewhere to live. Factory owners recognised that this was crucial in persuading people from the countryside to migrate to the city to work. The factory owners erected rows of terraced housing around their factories so that workers would not have far to travel to work. The houses were cheaply built and high of high density to cram as many people into one space and lower the cost. People still came to the city though because these houses were considered perfectly adequate at the time and people wanted the steady factory wage. This of course swelled the population of the city and expanded its boundaries.

This is a graph to show the growth of Coventry throughout the years of the industrial revolution up to 1971. It has figures from 1749 to 1971.

Conditions found in Eagle Street by the 1984 Survey

In the 1984 survey it was predicted that the minimum life of the houses in Eagle Street was 10 years. The houses had been built prior to 1914 and many of them that were lived in needed urgent maintenance to them. They had no running hot water, baths or inside toilets. Many of the houses were also derelict.

From 1938 the number of houses in the street has been reduced from about 160 to 80 in 1984. Many of the remaining houses were derelict and unlive in.

Compared with Coventry much more of the houses were not owned by the people who occupied and rather rented them. Indicating that the residents could not afford to buy

Car owner ship was also low compared to the rest of Coventry. Indicating that the residents could not afford the luxury of a car. Couple this with the fact that there was no garages or drives to place the car on or in you can see why car ownership in eagle street was less than the average of Coventry.

Recreation and school

The 1984 survey found that there was little or no recreational facilities for children . This meant that there was no where for children to play safely and will make the area unpleasant for families to live in because there is no near by parks or facilities to care for young children.

This can also cause a problem with older children as they are left on the streets and have to play there causing a nuisance becoming a danger to themselves and other people.

The school has now been rebuilt but still lacks pupils from the local area. If it were to be shut down the area would lose even more of its already lacking social amenities and this would be bad for the community. The school also lacks a playing field and this needs to be remedied in some way.

The electoral roll shows that the Asian community was grouped in neighbouring houses. Preferring to stay close together to retain their customs and to keep up a community spirit in the area.

When they came to Britain the Asian people knew that the Foleshill road was occupied primarily with people from their country and culture so they decided to move into this area. They do it because they want Asian shops and they want to speak to people in their own languages. They also do it because they feel less isolated and safer in their community.

This type of community has different priorities; they prefer to own their own houses (or rent privately) they put car ownership low down on their priorities and they tend to centre their lives round the Asian community mosques and other institutions favoured by their religion, and as only 40 percent of heads of household speak English they often rely on younger members of their family for communication.

In 1984 their community was well established, they had their own shops and places of worship and the Asian community made up a good proportion of Eagle street as the survey and analysis of the electoral register show.

Industry

In 1984 along the Foleshill road the industry was described by the survey as 'cramped' and 'does not fit together with the surrounding land uses.' Industry in 1984 was small and in decline as many firms moved out of this area to find more spacious premises. This in a way has led to the decline of the houses as they no longer house the workers from the factory and so the factory owners are not so concerned about them any longer.

The industry in 1984 was mainly small and local relying on local people and local trade. They are important employers as jobs in 1984 were scarce due to the recession.

Environment

In 1984 Eagle Street was dirty and polluted and there was little green space and trees. Everybody agreed some thing needed to be done about this. . Also Eagle Street was being used as a 'rat run' because it connected two major roads. This meant heavy traffic on the already narrow roads and increased pollution.

Shops

In 1984 the survey noted particularly the convenience shops (corner shops) which opened long hours and specialist Asian shops to cater for the needs of the high Asian population