

NC 0021125 7



Bound by
THE BINDING CENTRE
7 Upr. Camden St. Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 4784728.

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FACULTY OF DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES

"TASTE ON TRUST"
HABITAT IN THE 1960s AND THE 1990s

BY
SHEENA MCKEON

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN
AND COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF DESIGN
IN EMBROIDERED TEXTILES

1997

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES
FACULTY OF DESIGN

HABIT/1 IN THE 1960s AND THE 1990s
"TASTE ON TRUST"

BY
SHEEN/MCKEON

IN EMBROIDERED TEXTILES
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF DESIGN
AND COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN

1997

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Hilary O'Kelly, my tutor and the staff in the NCAD library for all their help.

I would also like to thank the staff at V & A Archive of Art and Design and the V & A Library in London who aided in my investigations.

I would like to thank Hilary O'Kelly, my tutor and the staff in the NCA library.

all their help.

I would also like to thank the staff at V & A, archive of Art and Design and the

V & A library in London who aided in my investigations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pg. No.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
LIST OF PLATES	3
INTRODUCTION	4
Section One: Significance of Interiors in Society.	
Section Two: Taste - Terence Conran's Boiler House Project.	
CHAPTER ONE: EMERGENCE OF <u>HABITAT</u>	10
Section One: 1960s - cultural background in relation to taste and interiors.	
Section Two: <u>Habitat's</u> role in this context.	
CHAPTER TWO: <u>HABITAT'S</u> ANSWER TO '90s DEMANDS	26
Section One: 1990s - cultural background, contrasts and comparisons to 1960s.	
Section Two: <u>Habitat's</u> role in today's society.	
Section Three: Advertising developments in <u>Habitat</u> since the 1960's.	
CHAPTER THREE: CURRENT PLANS FOR THE FUTURE	46
Section One: <u>Habitat</u> in Ireland.	
Section Two: <u>Habitat</u> Under New Management.	
CONCLUSION	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY	57
ARTICLES	
OTHER SOURCES	

LIST OF PLATES

Figure One:	<u>Scoop</u> range, 1971	Pg.11
Figure Two:	Sag-Bags C. 1960	Pg.13
Figure Three:	Directors Chair 1970	Pg.13
Figure Four:	Span Flats, 1986	Pg.13
Figure Five:	Galt Toys, 1986	Pg.16
Figure Six:	Store Interior, 1964	Pg.16
Figure Seven:	<u>Habitat</u> Store Layout, 1997	Pg.18
Figure Eight:	<u>Habitat</u> Staff, 1964	Pg.18
Figure Nine:	<u>Habitat</u> Stock , 1984	Pg.20
Figure Ten:	Curvy Comfort, 1996	Pg.25
Figure Eleven:	Ethnic Rugs, 1997	Pg.30
Figure Twelve:	<u>Habitat's</u> New Stock, 1997	Pg.32
Figure Thirteen:	<u>Habitat's</u> First Broadsheet, 1961	Pg.37
Figure Fourteen:	Second Catalogue, 1964	Pg.39
Figure Fifteen:	Third Catalogue, 1971	Pg.41
Figure Sixteen:	Recent Catalogue, 1996	Pg.42
Figure Seventeen:	<u>Foko</u> 1997	Pg.45
Figure Eighteen:	<u>Stock</u> Exterior, 1997	Pg.45
Figure Nineteen:	Interior of <u>Stock</u> and <u>Habitat</u> , 1997	Pg.47
Figure Twenty:	Interior of <u>Habitat</u> , Dublin 1997	Pg.49

INTRODUCTION

SECTION ONE Significance of Interiors in Society

The aim of this thesis is to look at interior design (the furnishing rather than the actual building structure) in the 1960s and the 1990s. I aim to look at this through Habitat, as it was established in 1964, by Terence Conran and still exists as a strong influence today. I am going to look at what type of products were sold, how they were sold and to whom. One of the motivations behind this thesis was to put the recently established Habitat Ireland into context with its British stores, this however proved to be very difficult as no matter how much I persisted, the Dublin branch were not forthcoming with the information I needed. I got in contact with the Press Office in London and they gave me most of the information I have used.

The rest of the information for the thesis came from reading around the subject, specific books on Habitat to general books on Taste and Advertising but also from primary sources. My primary sources came from going to London and collecting information in the V & A 20th century furniture department and the Textile department, and from reading Ben Weaver's thesis on Habitat in the V & A Library. I also got information from writing to Habitat stores and an interview with Fiona Somerville, Press Officer for Habitat. The main body for my research came from my research in the V & A Archive of Art and Design where the Habitat UK LTD Archive (1960s-1990s) is stored, which contains Habitat's annual reports, advertising, presscuttings, a full set of catalogues (1964-1995) among other effects. It was here that I got the opportunity to take photographs of the 1960s products, interiors and range of catalogues.

The aim of this thesis is to look at interior design (the furnishing rather than the actual building structure) in the 1960s and the 1990s. I aim to look at this through the lens of Habitat 67, as it was established in 1964, by Terence Conran and still exists as a storehouse of influence today. I am going to look at what type of products were sold, how they were sold and to whom. One of the motivations behind this thesis was to provide a recently established Habitat Ireland into context with its British stores, this however proved to be very difficult as no matter how much I persisted, the Dublin branch were not forthcoming with the information I needed. I got in contact with the Habitat Office in London and they gave me most of the information I have used.

The rest of the information for the thesis came from reading various books on the subject, specific books on Habitat to general books on Taste and Advertising for the 1960s and 1990s. My primary sources came from going to London and collecting information in the V & A 20th century furniture department and the Textile department, and from reading Ben Weaver's thesis on Habitat in the V & A library. I also got information from writing to Habitat stores and an interview with Fiona Somerville, Press Officer for Habitat. The main body for my research came from my research in the V & A Archive of Art and Design where the Habitat 67 1960s-1990s archive (1960s-1990s) is stored, which contains Habitat's annual reports, advertising presentations, a full set of catalogues (1964-1992) among other things. It was here that I got the opportunity to take photographs of the 1960s products, interiors and range of catalogues.

As I was collecting information for this thesis, I realised that Habitat in all its stores is written with a small "h", but in text written about the stores Habitat is written in a capital "H", for example in Terence Conran's autobiography. For this text I have decided to use the latter option. Habitat's use of the lower type set adds to the uniqueness of the store. Habitat's individuality is one of the elements that has endeared so many to the store.

Before looking at specific interiors and styles it is important to look at the significance of interiors in our lives and how the kind of objects we buy for our homes reflect our taste. As in the clothes we wear, the interiors we choose for our homes represent our personality, our economic social and sexual status and what we claim to aspire to. Personal taste becomes most apparent in our clothes and in our interiors as these are the things we as individuals have most control over.

Programmes like Through the Hall Door shown on television last year and in magazine form following the series, have captivated people's imagination and curiosity. It is as if by looking into someone's home you are glimpsing at their private lives. By looking at the clues in a person's home it is easy to get an impression of their budget, whether they follow trends, their hobbies and interests, whether they have children, whether they travel, whether they are conservative or experimental. Clearly, however, some people buy objects to give an impression of themselves to which they aspire rather than reflecting their true self. Personal taste is a very hard thing to describe, as Nicholas Barker discusses in his book Sign of The Times. Even if one can describe their personal taste in interiors a verbal description does not necessarily convey the same messages as are conveyed by the look or quality of objects in an actual interior. Nicholas Barker, for example in his book gives a description of what he thinks his taste is as he feels it only fair as

...the fact that the objects are not only seen but also felt. The example in Tarsus's *Anthropology* (1910) is the one that has been decided to use the latter option. Habitat's use of the lower type set adds to the uniqueness of the store. Habitat's individuality is one of the elements which is embedded so deeply in the store.

Instead of looking at specific interiors and styles it is important to look at the significance of interiors in our lives and how the kind of objects we buy and use in our homes reflect our taste. As in the clothes we wear, the interiors we choose to live in represent our personality, our economic social and sexual status and what we claim to aspire to. Personal taste becomes most apparent in our clothes and in our interiors as these are the things we as individuals have most control over.

Programme-like *Through the Hall Door* shown on television in 1964, a year and an magazine form following the series, have captured the imagination and curiosity. It is as if by looking into someone's home one is glimpsing at their private lives. By looking at the clues in a person's home one is able to get an impression of their budget, whether they follow trends, their beliefs, interests, whether they have children, whether they travel, whether they are concerned or experimental. Clearly, however, some people buy objects to give an impression of themselves in which they aspire rather than reflecting their true self. Personal taste is a very hard thing to describe as Nicholas Barker discusses in his book *Sign of the Times*. Even if one can describe their personal taste in interior design, verbal description does not necessarily convey the same message as one can by the look or quality of objects in an actual interior. Nicholas Barker for example in his book gives a description of what he thinks his taste is in the look of his home.

he examines other peoples in his television documentary and subsequent book. He says that he prizes "qualities such as craftsmanship, authenticity, and rarity" and he feels that he has "rather superior taste" (Barker, 1992, p.1) We don't know if what he claims is his taste is reflected in his home because we see no examples of objects which he values, no photographs of his interior. If he was to give us a fair insight into his taste he would show us pictures as well as the descriptive text as this is exactly what he has done to the public in his book.

Taste is a very important element in our lives and cannot be dismissed by ourselves, by advertisers or designers who try and predict and sometimes influence what we perceive our taste to be.

...the main point is that it is a difficult thing to do, and that it is not

...that he has "rather superior taste" (Barker, 1995, p. 1). He doesn't know what

he claims is his taste is reflected in his home because we see no examples of objects

which he values, no photographs of his interior. If he was to give us a tour in his

into his taste he would show us pictures as well as the descriptive text as the

exactly what he has done to the public in his book.

Taste is a very important element in our lives and cannot be dismissed by ourselves

by advertisers or designers who try and predict and sometimes influence what we

perceive our taste to be.

SECTION TWO: Taste - Terence Conran's Boilerhouse Project

Terence Conran had a great understanding of peoples aspirations, he knew his market well and how he could influence it. Conran felt it important to try and enlighten the public and open their minds on design. Conran used some of his power and wealth to inform the general public about design, which is something they, as consumers should have great control over but instead are sometimes dictated to on the subject. To do this he appointed Stephen Bayley to organise a series of exhibitions on Design. The Boiler House Yard in the V & A was chosen as a suitable venue and the first exhibition opened in 1981. The type of objects chosen for examination were all mass-produced, a subject which had been ignored up until then, by design critics, in favour of craft-based designs. The first series of exhibitions were related to history, theory, processes and practice of design but the most controversial of all the exhibitions in 1983 was the one called Taste. It "caused critics to scoff" (Philips, 1984, P.104). Many critics believed it didn't work entirely but the objects interested the design students who were seen sketching throughout the duration of the exhibition. As far as Conran was concerned it would have therefore been a success as he wished the project to be inspirational also to up and coming designers. Despite all the criticism it received the exhibition was also described as "far and away the most successful exhibition in London and the most widely reported design event since "The Festival of Britain" (Philips, 1984, P.104). Conran intended no exhibition to be in itself whole but instead the programme is meant to "have a cumulative effect so during the Foundations five-year tenure of its museum space, the public was given a wide view of the different components in the culture of the everyday" (Philips, 1984, P.105). In 1986 it moved to its own

permanent premises at Butlers Wharf in London's docklands and is now known as The Design Museum, Conran's main objective was

"to make the visitors read objects like they read books so that as consumers they can be more discerning when this happens retailers and manufacturers will be forced into higher standards". (Philips, 1984, Pg. 105).

Stephen Bayley wrote a very informative catalogue to accompany the 1983 exhibition on Taste. In it he describes how over the years we collect information which helps us make decisions about what is a good design and not. The "Taste" exhibition brings together objects which have inspired people in the past in the hope that they may inspire the good design of the future. In this catalogue Stephen Bayley highlights the different arguments about taste throughout the ages from as early as the end of the seventeenth century, when the concept of taste arrived in England.

Bayley recognised the importance Habitat had to play in offering the British consumer what was believed to be "good taste" and also instilling new values. He said; -

"Habitat was a portfolio of all that had been influential in forming English Taste The success of Habitat depended in one sense on its offering a sort of "taste on trust", the merchandise on sale had already been sieved by a very discerning and informed eye". (Bayley, 1983, p.29)

This gave the consumer a great sense of safety in knowing that what they were buying was in good taste and so didn't go out of fashion very quickly. Bayley continues his argument by saying that those objects which stay in fashion for the longest period of time are those with quality of materials and craftsmanship and coherence between form and function. This gives us a clue as to why a lot of

"to make the exhibitors read objects like they read books so that as consumers they can be more discerning.... when this happens retailers and manufacturers will be forced into higher standards." (Phillips, 1984, p. 12)

Stephen Bayley wrote a very informative catalogue to accompany the 1984 exhibition on Taste. In it he describes how over the years we collect information which helps us make decisions about what is a good design and not. The exhibition brings together objects which have inspired people in the past in the way that they may inspire the good design of the future. In this catalogue Stephen Bayley highlights the different arguments about taste throughout the ages to the early end of the seventeenth century, when the concept of taste was first defined in England.

Bayley recognised the importance Habbitt had to play in offering British consumer what was believed to be "good taste" and also instilling new tastes. He said -

Habbitt was a portfolio of all that had been influential in forming English Taste.... The success of Habbitt depended in one sense on its offering a sort of "taste on trust", the merchandise on sale had already been selected by a very discerning and informed eye." (Bayley, 1983, p. 129)

This gave the consumer a great sense of safety in knowing that what they were buying was in good taste and so didn't go out of fashion very quickly. Habbitt communicates his argument by saying that those objects which say in fashion have the longest period of time and those with quality of materials and craftsmanship will last. This gives us a clue as to why a distinction between form and function. This gives us a clue as to why a distinction between form and function.

Habitat's original stock is still popular today and why recently designed items will be popular well into the future.

It is important to note that around the time this project was organised Habitat was going through a slump period. The reason for this slump was because of the amount of projects Conran was funding at the time and not alot of the profits made were being fed back in to the original company. Projects such as the Boilerhouse project however were very important ventures for Conran to achieve and for the public to witness.

That Terence Conran should want to organise such an exhibition shows his concern for design and his belief in the need for wider awareness. The fact that the exhibition was a success shows his knowledge of the subject. It was Conran's awareness of his market and their major concerns in relation to taste that has made Habitat so popular. The fact that the products adapted to the market's ever changing needs has insured Habitat's growth and development. In this thesis my intention is to highlight some of these developments and attempt to place them in their cultural setting.

It is important to note that around the time this project was organised Habitat was going through a slump period. The reason for this slump was because of the amount of projects Cornan was funding at the time and not a lot of the profits made were being fed back in to the original company. Projects such as the Hoffmann house however were very important ventures for Cornan to achieve and for the public witness.

That Terence Cornan should want to organise such an exhibition shows his concern for design and his belief in the need for wider awareness. The fact that the exhibition was a success shows his knowledge of the subject. It was Cornan's awareness of his market and their major concerns in relation to taste that has made Habitat so popular. The fact that the products adapted to the market's changing needs has insured Habitat's growth and development. In this sense the intention is to highlight some of these developments and attempt to place them in their cultural setting.

CHAPTER ONE: THE EMERGENCE OF HABITAT

SECTION ONE: 1960s - Cultural Background in relation to Taste and Interiors.

The sixties were a time where there was a “divide between the relatively stable cultural environment of the previous decade and what is now regarded as the golden age of pop music and youth culture”, (Thorgerson, 1989, cover page). A time where total-look-boutiques, Twiggy, heroin addiction, flower power, The Beatles, Vietnam, to name but a few, were all issues which helped shape the minds of the young and “groovy”. An age with an obsession with outer space and an interest in Eastern religions, both of which proved to have their effect on design. The sixties were alive with excitement.

If 1950s post war society was about mending peoples values, building confidence in governments and in the power of the family unit then the 1960s was about breaking these down. The youth of the ‘60s were looking forward, they no longer wanted to be replicas of their parents. The message of the ‘50s was conformity and nostalgia. The new image was un-nostalgic, disposable, modern, futuristic, stark and unsentimental. Nostalgia is usually associated with conservatism and this went against what was believed to be new and modern (Harris, 1986, P.80). As Nigel Whiteley states, “Movement and action signified youthful freedom from, and independence of, parental locations and constraints”, (Harris, 1986, P.27). The financial boom in post war society brought with it this freedom.

Advertisers saw this increase in disposable income especially in the youth and set out marketing strategies to capitalise on it. They put shape on the myth of the “Swinging Sixties”, they saw the move of the youth away from the traditional values of their parents and so they exploited that and created a world of

The sixties were a time when there was a "divide between the relationship between the cultural environment of the previous decade and what is now regarded as the 'new' age of pop music and youth culture" (Thorpe, 1989, cover page). The sixties were a time when total-body-boudoir, Twiggy, heroin addiction, flower power, The Beatles, Vietnam, to name but a few, were all issues which helped shape the mind-set of the young and "groovy". An age with an obsession with outer space and an interest in Eastern religions, both of which proved to have their effect on design. The sixties were alive with excitement.

If 1950s post-war society was about meeting people's values, then the 1960s was about breaking these down. The youth of the 60s were looking forward, not longer wanting to be replicas of their parents. The message of the 60s was conformity and nostalgia. The new image was un-nostalgic, disposable, modern, futuristic, stark and unemotional. Nostalgia is usually associated with conservatism and this went against what was believed to be new and modern (Harris, 1986, p. 23). As Nigel Whitley states, "Adventurous and action signified youthful freedom and independence of parental locations and constraints" (Harris, 1986, p. 23). The financial boom in post-war society brought with it this freedom.

Advertisers saw this increase in disposable income especially in the youth and set out marketing strategies to capitalise on it. They put shape on the myth of the "teenage sister", they saw the move of the youth away from traditional values of their parents and so they exploited this and created a new



Scoop range(Philips,1984,p.103)
(Fig.1,pg.11)

new and modern ideals which the youth could buy into. Mary Quant's Bazaar, Madame Cadec's cookware shop in Soho, and Gear in Carnaby Street were all part of this image "bringing brightly coloured Pop merchandise to the young and the groovy". (Baker, 1996, P. 26). With this new type of retailing the customer had a greater freedom to create his/her own style, and the new concept of disposability meant that they could change that style more often. This concept fed its way into interiors in the 1960s as well as fashion. This was encouraged by the vast number of modern lightweight and disposable materials developed in the sixties.

The sixties saw great advances in the electronic, pharmaceutical and plastic industries, these were seen to be the industries of the future. Laminated paper board, MDF, rubber, paper and PVC were some of the materials that were exploited during this period. Molecular research was responsible for the organic shapes that evolved around this time especially in interiors where lines softened and corners of worktops became rounded.

As we see in illustration (Fig.1, pg.11) Habitat realised this new trend and developed a range of sofas and chairs with organic looking shapes. This range was called the Scoop range and was very popular at the time. The fact that the sofa could be broken down in to single units meant that it was adaptable and could be made fit in to the smallest bedsits or grouped in a larger room. The tube-like padding was very simple and very space-age. The fact that it was very low off the ground meant that you had to sink in to the base of the sofa to sit on it which made it very casual and in keeping with the easy-living ethic of the youth of the time.

This photograph represents what Habitat at the time was offering as a complete home range. The look is European (Scandinavian), relaxed, clean, uncluttered,

at this image "bringing brightly coloured Pop merchandise to the 70s and the
groovy". (Baker, 1990, p. 26). With this new type of retaining the customer base
greater freedom to create his/her own style, and the new concept of disposable
meant that they could change their style more often. This concept led to the
interiors in the 1960s as well as fashion. This was encouraged by the vast number
modern lightweight and disposable materials developed in the sixties.

The sixties saw great advances in the electronic pharmaceutical and
plastic industries, these were seen to be the industries of the future. Light
paper board, MDF, rubber, paper and PVC were some of the materials that were
exploited during this period. Molecular research was responsible for the organic
shapes that evolved around this time especially in interiors where lines softened and
corners of worktops became rounded.

As we see in illustration (Fig. 1, pg. 11) Habitat realised this new trend
and developed a range of sofas and chairs with organic looking shapes. This range
was called the Scoop range and was very popular at the time. The fact that the
could be broken down in to single units meant that it was adaptable and could
made fit in to the smallest bedsits or grouped in a larger room. The tubular
padding was very simple and very space-age. The fact that it was very low
ground meant that you had to sink in to the base of the sofa to sit on it which made
it very casual and in keeping with the easy-living ethic of the youth of the time.

This photograph represents what Habitat at the time was offering as a new
home range. The look is European (Scandinavian), relaxed, clean, uncluttered.

2.



3.



4.



Sag-bags (Philips, 1984, p. 70), (Fig. 2, pg. 13)
 Director's Chair (Philips, 1984, p. 103), (Fig. 3, pg. 13)
 Span Flats (Harris, 1986, p. 93), (Fig. 4, pg. 13)

compact and modern. Plastic furniture and accessories are an important element of this range.

Disposability was the key word, where paper and plastic clothes and furniture were widespread. "Home Assembly Kits" were also popular. Everything had to look modern. This notion was further influenced by the "Space Race" which was the ultimate in modern technology and ideals. Images of space related objects appeared everywhere. This interest in space sparked off new television episodes like The Thunder Birds and Star Trek which was first shown in 1966.

Of course all of the technological developments in the 1960s were not beneficial to society. Developments in the pharmaceutical industry led to the availability of new drugs, some of which were harmful. Hallucinogenic drugs were commonly used to give one a sense of tranquillity and peace in an ever developing hectic world. Pop bands at the time, like The Beatles, advertised the use of drugs in some of their songs so too did other bands. With the Hippies coming from America in the late sixties came a whole new drug culture. Eastern religions became popular focuses of worship at that time, not only was the east a source for a lot of the drugs but it also held values of "love and peace" high on their agenda which were very important virtues at the time. Even if you didn't take the drugs you could identify yourself with the east by purchasing the ethnic fabrics, scatter cushions and bean-bags (sack-bags as they were known) sold at Habitat (Fig. 2 Pg. 13) Vietnam and all the controversy that went with it had a great influence on the youth and their beliefs in the 1960s. They wanted to replace war with "Love and Peace", so they looked to the East and to California, the Hippie paradise where influences like Scott McKenzie and the Flower Pot Men sang psychedelic songs like San Francisco.

responsibility was the key word, when paper and plastic bottles

and furniture were widespread. "Home Assembly Kits" were also popular. Furniture

had to look modern. This notion was further influenced by the "Space Race" and

was the ultimate in modern technology and ideals. Images of space related

appeared everywhere. This interest in space sparked off new television episodes

The Thunder Birds and Star Trek which was first shown in 1966.

Of course all of the technological developments in the 1960s were not beneficial

society. Developments in the pharmaceutical industry led to the availability of

drugs, some of which were harmful. Hallucinogenic drugs were commonly used

and gave one a sense of tranquillity and peace in an ever developing hectic world.

At the time, like The Beatles, advertised the use of drugs in some of their

songs so too did other bands. With the hippies coming from America in the

sixties came a whole new drug culture. Eastern religions became popular focus

worship at that time, not only was the east a source for a lot of the drugs but it

held values of "love and peace" high on their agenda which were very important

virtues at the time. Even if you didn't take the drugs you could identify your

with the east by purchasing the ethnic fabrics, scatter cushions and bean-bags

bags as they were known) sold at Habitat (Fig. 2, Page 17) Vietnam and so

controversy that went with it had a great influence on the youth and their behavior

the 1960s. They wanted to replace war with "Love and Peace", so they looked

the East and to a certain extent the hippie paradise where influences like Beatniks

and the Flower Power sang psychedelic songs like San Francisco

Inspired by wholly other values and giving expression to quite other tastes the modern linear minimal influence of Bauhaus also had a great influence in the '60s. Habitat's director's chair shares this influence. It's clean lines and functional form make it very practical and stylish. The fact that it folds away saves space, (Fig.3 , Pg.13). Bauhaus not only influenced the style and type of materials used in the furniture industry but also helped shape and mould the urban environment. Tower blocks of flats and apartments were seen sprouting up all over the urban landscape as they were seen as the way forward and they were quicker and cheaper than previous systems, (Fig.4 Pg. 13). They looked modern and were believed to be suitable for young couples moving out for the first time as they craved their own social status away from their parents.

"Span" Flats as they were called were said to obey the laws of Le Corbusier in their "clean lines, simplicity of construction and light, airy" qualities, (Baker, 1996, P.26) but in reality presented the image of people stacked on top of each other in little boxes, endless and dull.

To sum up, the mood of the sixties was one of "youthfulness, action and movement, modernity and progress" (Harris, 1986, P.25), reaction against the past and all that is stable and authoritarian.

This section has highlighted the type of life-style led by the market group targeted by Conran. In the 1960s the focus was on the 20-30 year age group with disposable income. Conran's challenge was to develop products that took on these ideals and in a way that was approachable and desirable. The next chapter shows how he dealt with these problems.

...the fact that it folds away easily... functional form make it very practical and stylish. The fact that it folds away easily... space. (Fig. 3, p. 32). Hansens not only influenced the style and type of material used in the furniture industry but also helped shape and mould the urban environment. Tower blocks of flats and apartments were seen sprouting up all over the urban landscape as they were seen as the way forward and they were perceived as cheaper than previous systems. (Fig. 4, p. 33). They looked modern and were believed to be suitable for young couples moving out for the first time as they were their own social status away from their parents.

"Space" Flats as they were called were said to obey the laws of Le Corbusier in that they were "clean lines, simplicity of construction and light airy" qualities. (Baker, 1966, p. 10) but in reality presented the image of people stacked on top of each other in boxes, endless and dull.

To sum up, the mood of the sixties was one of "youthfulness, energy and movement, modernity and progress" (Harris, 1986, p. 25) reaction against the past and all that is stable and authoritarian.

This section has highlighted the type of life-style led by the young group targeted by Coman. In the 1960s the focus was on the 20-30 year age group with disposable income. Coman's challenge was to develop products that took these risks and in a way that was approachable and desirable. The next chapter shows how he dealt with these problems.



Galt Toys(Harris,1986,p.58),(fig.5,pg.16)
 Store Interior:Basement kitchen department of Fulham Road
 store,1964.Photograph from the V & A Archive,AAD/1995/13/35
 no.57588,(Fig.6,pg.16)

SECTION TWO: Habitat's role in the 1960s

When Terence Conran opened his first Habitat Store in Fulham Road in 1964, he did so in the hope that he had "taken the foot-slogging out of shopping by assembling a wide selection of unusual and top quality goods under one roof," (Harris, 1986, P.57). His aim was to sell quality goods at affordable prices. Many of the methods that Conran chose to sell his products were already in existence for example in Galt Toys (Fig., 5 Pg.16) but what made Habitat unique was that it aimed its goods at the young and fashion conscious, middle class in their twenties and thirties. Conran recognised the youth revolution that surrounded London in the sixties and bought into it. Conran knew his market well and bought and developed products for his stores that he knew would be in demand. He wished to create a complete home concept which paralleled the fashion industry at the time which wished to create a complete look for youth markets to follow. Examples of "total look boutiques" would be Mary Quant's Bazaar, and Barbara Hulanicki's Biba. Youth culture was a very lucrative market in the 1960s, as I have discussed earlier and it was a very new and profitable link between youth, fashion and interiors that Conran was trying to achieve.

To try and achieve this it was very important that the look of the shop and the staff was in keeping with the prevailing mood. Conran disregarded the way in which furnishings were displayed in the past, even in contemporary shops like Woolands and went for a more modern look. He hated the way interior accessories had in the past been displayed in a very regimental fashion, which was intimidating to the customer and gave a very claustrophobic feeling. Instead Conran opted for the more Corbusian-style interior as he thought it only suitable for displaying modern furniture and accessories (Fig. 6 , Pg. 16). There were no fancy display cases,

...in the hope that he had been the foot-dragging out of the past
assembling a wide selection of unusual and top quality goods under various
(Harris, 1986, p. 57). His aim was to sell quality goods at affordable prices.
of the methods that Coman chose to sell his products were already in existence
example in (Fall 1986, p. 57) but what made Habitat unique was that it was
its goods at the young and fashion conscious middle class in their twenties
thirties. Coman recognised the youth revolution that surrounded 1960s
sixties and brought into it. Coman knew his market well and bought and developed
products for his stores that he knew would be in demand. He wished to create
complete home concept which paralleled the fashion industry at the time when
needed to create a complete look for youth markets to follow. Examples of the
look boundaries" would be Mary Quant's *Bazaar* and Barbara Hulanicki's *Sloppy Joe's*.
Youth culture was a very lucrative market in the 1960s as I have discussed earlier
and it was a very new and profitable link between youth fashion and interior design.
Coman was trying to achieve
To try and achieve this it was very important that the look of the store
and the staff was in keeping with the prevailing mood. Coman disregarded the
in which furnishings were displayed in the past even in contemporary shops.
Hulanicki and even for a more modern look. He broke the way interior decoration
had in the past been displayed in a very regimented fashion which was reminiscent
to the customer and gave a very claustrophobic feeling. Instead Coman opened up
the more Bohemian-style interior as he thought it was suitable for displaying a
furnishings and accessories (Fig. 2, p. 58). There were no fancy display cases



Habitat staff(Ind,C.1960,Back cover),(Fig.8,pg.18)



Habitat store Interior,Dublin,1997. (fig.7,pg.18)

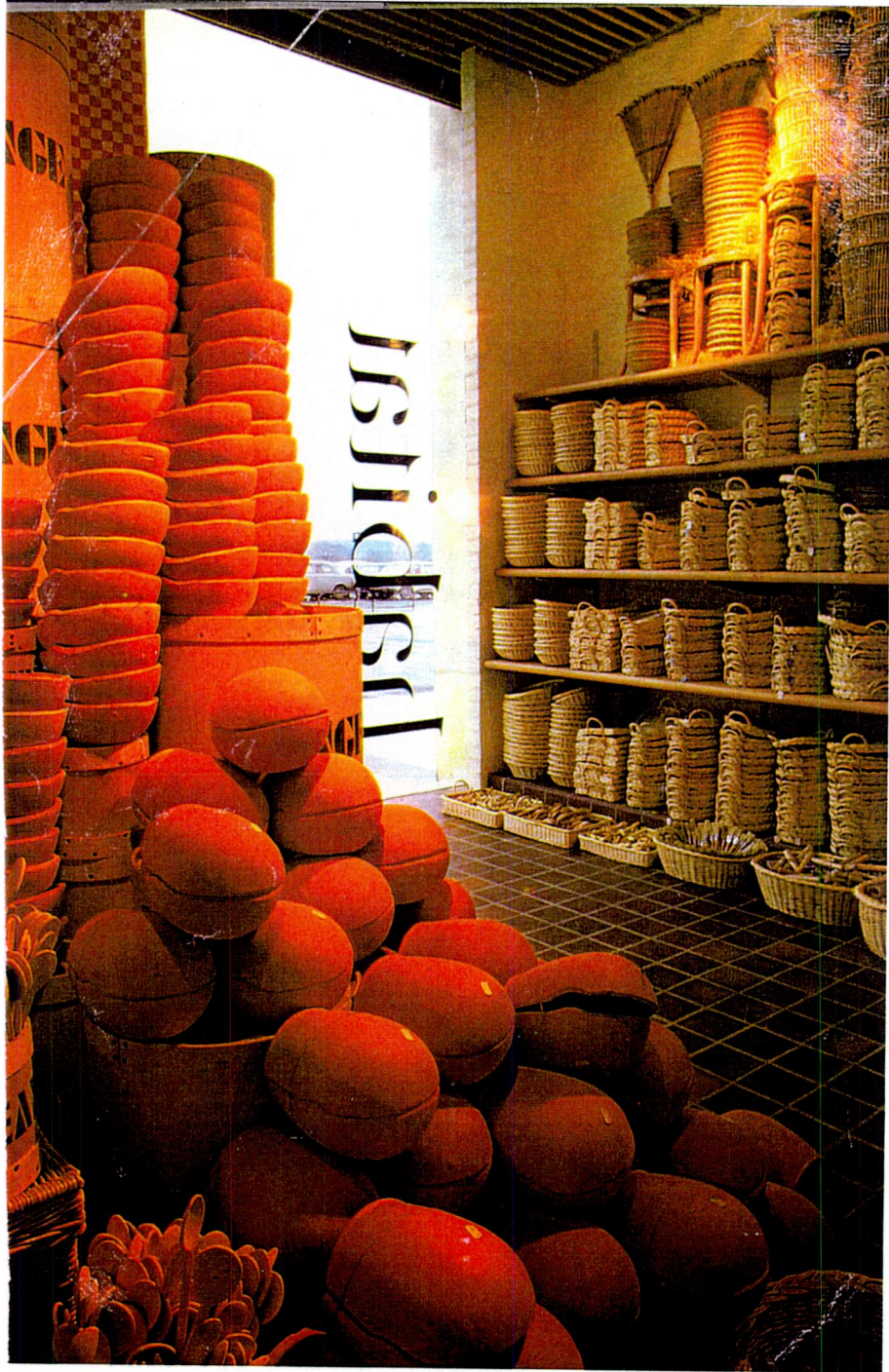
everything was stacked on the ground or on shelves. The walls of the stores were painted white, brown quarry tiles covered the floor and spot lights lit up the store.

As most of the stock was stacked on the shelves it cut out the need for stock rooms, this idea is continued today as you can see in (Fig. 7, Pg.18) the Dublin Store tables for sale are stacked waiting to be sold. An example of the table is on display beside them. The stock would not usually be wrapped like this but as there is a sale on they would probably have a lot of stock waiting for delivery to the customer. Scattered around the store there were collections of produce assembled into actual home settings which helped the customer see what the objects would look like in their home. All of these features helped the store appear accessible, friendly, relaxed and inviting. According to Barty Philips, (Philips, 1984, P. 28) Conran had been known to drag his staff around to his house to show them how to use new products with which they would not be familiar, which made informed staff which in turn improved sales. Not only did he make sure he had well informed staff, he also gave them Vidal Sassoon haircuts and Mary Quant outfits in a deliberate attempt to suggest that they were part of the "swinging sixties", (Harris, 1986, Pg. 58). See (Fig. 8 Pg.18)

Conran believed in equating furniture with fashion and prompted the concept that you are buying into an image of taste if you buy a Habitat paper lamp the same way as if you buy a dress from Bazaar. A lot of Habitat furniture was used in Vogue shoots which also linked the concept of Habitat with fashion in people's minds. There were clever cross-overs in details within the shop for example, that Mary Quant's flamboyant flower motif was to be seen on a tea-cosy in Habitat designed by Juliet Glynn Smith who also worked for the popular Nova Magazine. The aim of Habitat was to sell part of the image that was established in

most of the stock was stacked on the shelves and out the front for customers to see. This idea is contained today as you can see in (Fig. 1, Pg. 15) the Dublin Store today. The stock are stacked waiting to be sold. An example of the table is on display for them. The stock would not usually be wrapped like this but as there is a sale on, they would probably have a lot of stock waiting for delivery to the customer. Around the store there were collections of produce assembled into actual displays which helped the customer see what the objects would look like in their home. All of these features helped the store appear accessible, friendly, relaxed and inviting. According to Barry Phillips (Phillips, 1984, p. 28) "Graham had been told to drag his staff around to his house to show them how to use new products which they would not be familiar with, which made informed staff which in turn improved sales. Not only did he make sure he had well informed staff, he also had them visit season houses and Mary Quant outfits in a deliberate attempt to suggest that they were part of the swinging sixties." (Harris, 1986, Pg. 28). (Fig. 8, Pg. 16)

Graham believed in equating furniture with fashion and promoted the concept that you are buying into an image of taste if you buy a Habitat piece. It was the same way as if you buy a dress from Bazarg. A lot of Habitat furniture was based in Vogue shoes which also linked the concept of Habitat with fashion in people's minds. There were clever cross-overs in details within the shop for example, that Mary Quant's flower motif was to be seen on a tea-cosy. Habitat designed by John (John Smith) who also worked for the popular Japanese. The aim of Habitat was to sell part of the image that was associated



Habitat stock (Philips, 1984, p. 70), (Fig. 9, pg. 20)

the London fashion and music scene in the '60s; an image of glamour, good taste and fun, which was missing in interiors and display in post war London.

Habitat provided a whole new shopping experience, it was the place to be seen in the '60s. Mary Quant was their best customer and The Beatles were seen there on occasion. Customers could stroll around the airy, warehouse-like interior listening to music by Astrud Gilberto. Self-selection shopping was one of the most important concepts Conran introduced with his stores, it left the customer more in control of the objects they wanted to buy. It also made for a very relaxed atmosphere.

The stock of 2000 practical furnishing items that the first Habitat offered in 1964 was very varied. Two-thirds of the stock originated from the Conran Furniture LTD. Design Group but they also imported crockery from France, Bauhaus furniture from Germany, crafts from Scandinavia and Italy and lamps (paper) from Japan. They sold rocking chairs from Denmark, minute oil lamps from Thailand and the cotton from India called Rajah. Habitat sold kitchen goods, fabrics, carpets, china, glass and furniture all under the one roof, (Fig. Pg. 20). What all of these unique products had in common according to Barty Philips in his book, Conran and the Habitat Story was Conran's signature of good practical design and as already mentioned "taste on trust". Most importantly they all related to some aspect of fashionable interests and ideals, for example, the peasant cookware, chunky wine glasses which were not expensive were sold. Glasses for wine that was drunk with every dinner rather than special occasion ones in cut glass used by the 1950s generation.

Conran was very aware of the youth market and of its needs. He created a range of disposable furniture and brought the term "do-it-yourself" to a

Habitat provided a whole new shopping experience, it was the first time that a store was designed to be seen in the store. The Habitat 67 was their best customer and the Habitat 67 was seen there on occasion. Customers could stroll around the site, watch the interior listening to music by Astrud Gilberto. Self-selection shopping was the most important concept Gouan introduced with his store. It left the customer more in control of the objects they wanted to buy. It also made for a very relaxed atmosphere.

The stock of 2000 practical furnishing items that the first Habitat offered in 1964 was very varied. Two-thirds of the stock originated from Gouan Furniture Ltd. Design Group but they also imported crockery, lamps, carved Japanese furniture from Germany, crafts from Scandinavia and Japanese (paper) from Japan. They sold rocking chairs from Denmark, minor lamps from Thailand and the cones from India called Bigha. Habitat sold for goods fabrics, carpets, glass and furniture all under the one roof. In 1964, what all of these unique products had in common according to Gouan was that they were practical design and as already mentioned "last on first". Most importantly they all related to some aspect of fashionable interests and ideals. For example, the glasses for wine that was drunk with every dinner rather than special occasion ones in the glass used by the 1950s generation.

Gouan was very aware of the youth market and of its needs. He created a range of affordable furniture and brought the term "designer" into the

new height with his range of "Knock-Down" furniture called the "Summa" range. This range was in existence before Conran opened his first store and was available to buy in furniture shops all over London. Woolands was the most receptive shop at the time to this new type of selling but they didn't think that the customer would want to have to make the products themselves and insisted that the products be sold whole, which defeated the purpose. This range really took off in Conran's own store where he was in control of the display and advertisements himself.

This type of furniture was suitable for bedsits or flats, where a lot of the "hip, young, chicks" were living. Conran's multi-storage unit was the best seller of his K-D furniture at the time. Not only was this sort of furniture suitable for the proposed market but it also cut down on the need for storage space in the store and so more stock could be stored to meet the demand. Habitat's scatter cushions and bean bag range were also very suitable for this space saving market but it also suited the wave of eastern influences and relaxed living talked about previously. The idea of sitting on the floor was very appealing at the time. The Afghan rugs and the Wicker range also went along with this theme. Another element which made Habitat take off in the way it did in the '60s was its French provincial peasant-type influence which was evident in the french earthenware pots it sold. These pots incorporated ideas of the continent, living in the sunshine and relaxed, unlike the formal, busy urban environment. They conjured up ideas of earthy, self efficient people living off the land, eco-friendly. This image totally contrasts the office orientated '50s type person in their suits who would have been used to "pyrex" and "tuberware". The wicker work and scandavian crafts sold in Habitat in the '60s fed in to this theme and also employed an appreciation of good basic design, rather than design based on status or historical imitation. The way in which these objects were displayed was

any in furniture shops all over London. Woodstock was the most typical.

the time to this new type of selling but they didn't think that the customers want to have to make the products themselves and insisted that the products be whole, which defeated the purpose. This range really took off in London stores were he was control of the display and arrangements himself.

This type of furniture was suitable for beds or flats, where a

the "hip young chicks" were living. Colman's multi-storage unit was the best of his (K-1) furniture at the time. Not only was this sort of furniture suitable for proposed market but it also cut down on the need for storage space in the stores so more stock could be stored to meet the demand. Habitat's scatter cushion bean bag range were also very suitable for this space saving market but it also the wave of eastern influences and relaxed living talked about previously. The of sitting on the floor was very appealing at the time. The Afghan rug and Hicker range also went along with this theme. Another element which made Habitat take off in the way it did in the 70s was its French provincial peasant-type influence which was evident in the French earthenware pots it sold. These pots incorporated ideas of the oriental living in the sunshine and relaxed, unlike the formal urban environment. They conjured up ideas of earthy, self-sufficient people living the hard eco-theme. This image totally contrasts the office orientated 50s person in their suits who would have been used to "pavé" and "rue de la" worker work and Scandinavian crafts sold in Habitat in the 70s led in to the and also emphasized an appreciation of good basic design rather than design for status or historical imitation. The way in which these objects were displayed

also very continental as we can see in (fig. 8 pg. 20) were the chicken bricks in the forefront are stacked very casually on the tiled floor. The layout was inspired by french supermarkets, (similar in style to the Hyper-Marche today)

Conran is very interested in continental cooking, in particular, french provincial and this was expressed by the type of kitchen ware that was sold. Elizabeth David's book on French Provincial Cooking was very influential at the time in the same way that the River Cafe Cook Book is today and so Conran's kitchen ware range sold very well. The whole relaxed, easy -living package Conran was selling to the youth of the '60s fitted into their ideas with what was seen to be modern and tasteful. Conran was sensitive to the arts and crafts revival in the '60s. This revival was a reaction to all the modern material that was being mass produced. Habitat however was not without its fair share of plastic, pop art prints, fluid organic shapes and other high-tech developments that existed in the '60s.

In an article called "Re-habitation" by Elspeth Thompson in 1994, she recalls her memories of Habitat in the 1960s. She remembers

"the flower-power" curtains, the bentwood cafe chairs in primary colours and the red and purple lamps that you would pull down over your dinner table when a few groovy friends came round for a fondue."

Habitat's wide mixture of styles from rustic to urban, traditional to modern, crafts to high design with a mixture of brightly coloured "pop" merchandise left the customer with a wide palette of styles from which to choose. The period between the '60s and the '90s is a great span of time and as such there are a lot of changes both in society and in Habitat itself, some of which I will cover in a later chapter. I have chosen to look at '90s culture and Habitat of the '90s next as there

French supermarkets (similar in style to the Hyper-Marché today)

Coman is very interested in continental cooking, in particular provincial and this was expressed by the type of kitchen ware that was sold. Elizabeth David's book on French Provincial Cooking was very influential at the time in the same way that the River Cafe Cook Book is today and so Coman's kitchen ware range sold very well. The whole relaxed, easy-living package (now selling to the youth of the 1960s) fitted into their ideas with what was seen as modern and tasteful. Coman was sensitive to the arts and crafts revival in the 1950s. This revival was a reaction to all the modern material that was being mass produced. Habitat, however, was not without its fair share of plastic, pop art prints and organic shapes and other high-tech developments that existed in the 1960s.

In an article called "Re-habitation" by Elisabeth Thompson in 1962 she recalls her memories of Habitat in the 1960s. She remembers

"the flower-power, curtains the bentwood cafe chairs in primary colours and the red and purple lamps that you would pull down over your dinner table when a few groovy friends came round for a fondue."

Habitat's wide mixture of styles from rustic to urban, traditional to modern, crafts to high design with a mixture of brightly coloured "pop" materials left the customer with a wide palette of styles from which to choose. The period between the 1960s and the 1990s is a great span of time and as such there are a lot of changes both in society and in Habitat itself, some of which I will cover in a later chapter. I have chosen to look at 1990s culture and Habitat of the 1990s next so that

is a great link between it and that of the '60s. Links in attitudes towards interior design and even in cultural attitudes reflected in similar attitudes to Habitat.

and every one of them is a member of the same class.



CURVY COMFORT in fantastic plastics – this is the gear to hang out in. Far-out amorphic Pierre Paulin chair, £495, from Twentieth Century Design, (0171) 916 3189. Danino 1968 French bowl chair, £1,750, from TomTom, (0171) 240 7909. **The Purdy factor:** Verner Panton wire lamp, £450, from Twentieth Century Design, as before. **Space oddity:** 60s Robot radio, £125, from Rayner & Chamberlain, (0181) 940 8652. **Get hung up** on this 1967 John Lennon poster by Richard Avedon, £185, from Rayner & Chamberlain, as before. **Lift off** with this 60s spaceship Weltron music-centre, £950, vintage Smiley glasses, around £27 per set of four,

both from Rayner & Chamberlain, as before. **Hanging around:** Calderesque mobile, £23, from Flensted Mobiles, (0181) 691 2660. **Scatter authentic artifacts for a 60s feel:** Nova magazines, from £12 each; original records, from £5 each; all from a selection from Planet Bazaar at Alfies Antique Market, (0171) 224 0833. **Easy lay:** funky yellow lino is cheap and practical. **Just roll it up** when it's time to go. Lino, £6.58 per sq metre, from H Braggins, (0171) 228 3613. **Stockists marked** offer mail order. For addresses, see page 137

Curvy Comfort(Elle Decoration, April '96, p.71), (Fig.10, pg.25)

CHAPTER TWO:HOW HABITAT ANSWERS SOCIETIES
DEMANDS IN THE '90sSECTION ONE:1990s - Cultural background in relation to taste and
interiors

"In the mid-1960's, hip young home-makers could pick and choose for the first time from a riot of space-age lamps and scatter cushions. Thirty years on, things have come full circle and, like pop music and fashion, interior design is drawing on 1960's inspiration." (Baker, 1996, P.26)

As Lindsay Baker says in her article "Space Odyssey" there seems to be a nostalgic look back to the 1960s for inspiration. This is evident in the fashion and interiors magazines available this year, for example the summer '96 issues of Elle Decoration are crammed with 1960s references (Fig.10Pg. 25). "Popcolour Mayem and Space-age kitch" (Baker, 1996, P.29) of the mid-1960s interiors are just the type of look sought after in the mid-1990s. The brightly coloured fabrics and the bold frosted glassware, clean lines and organic shapes are part of the look for the '90s. According to Baker, after the "feverishly acquisitive 1980s" the '90s saw a move to the more "austere approach" to interiors. Natural fabrics were favoured, for example calico for its "zen-like, eco friendly simplicity". The other recent look has been a "Traditional, vaguely distressed look". Baker believes that this restrained sensibility was beginning to wear itself out and the consumer yearned for bold statements especially the youth market who are attracted by novelty, bold colours and fun objects. As Susan Lambert of the V & A stated, "people love things that aren't quite what they seem at the moment" (Baker, 1996, P.29). The new 1960s furnishings offer that irony as they encapsulate 1960s ideals but in a 1990s setting and in '90s materials.

SECTION ONE: 1990s - Cultural background in relation to taste and interiors

"In the mid-1960's, hip young home-makers could pick and choose for their first time from a riot of space-age lamps and scatter cushions. Thirty years on, things have come full circle and like pop music and fashion, interior design is drawing on 1960's inspiration." (Baker, 1996, p. 26)

As Lindsay Baker says in her article "Space Odyssey", there seems to be a nostalgic look back to the 1960s for inspiration. This is evident in the fashion and interior magazines available this year, for example the summer '96 issues of *Elle Decoration* and *Country Living* are crisscrossed with 1960s references (Fig 01p. 12). "Pop colour, Matisse and a pop age kitchen" (Baker, 1996, p. 29) of the mid-1960s interiors are just the type of look sought after in the mid-1990s. The brightly coloured fabrics and the bold frothy glassware, clean lines and organic shapes are part of the look for the 1990s. According to Baker, after the "eclectic acquisitive 1980s" the '90s saw a move to the more "austere approach" to interiors. Natural fabrics were favoured, for example cotton for its "zen-like, eco friendly simplicity". The other recent look has been a "traditional, vaguely distressed look". Baker believes that this resurgence in simplicity was beginning to wear itself out and the consumer yearned for the statement, especially the youth market who are attracted by novelty, bold colours and fun objects. Susan Lambert of the *V&A* stated "people love things that aren't quite what they seem at the moment" (Baker, 1996, p. 29). The new 1990s furnishings offer that irony as they encapsulate 1960s ideals but in a 1990s setting.

and in your material

These are not the only styles in interiors at the moment and that is not the message being proposed. Interior design, now more than ever is very diverse. This fact has been encouraged greatly by the media which has helped inform and influence societies taste over the past three decades. The vast availability of specialised interior magazines such as Elle Decoration, Inspirations and House and Gardens etc. have helped shape the taste of 1990s society. These magazines have helped inform '90s consumers about the type of objects available and the quality so that they can make more knowledgeable decisions about the products they buy. The adverse effect of these magazines is that they can funnel peoples ideas and taste so that everybody will have the same sort ideas and buy the same sort of products.

Youth culture today, as in the '60s is a very important influence in advertising. The youth market is a very lucrative market in the '90s. As in the past, the older the market gets the more settled they get in their own style but the youth market, in general will be buying new homes and trying to find their identity so they are more easily influenced by advertisements. There are a lot of similarities between the youth culture of the '60s and '90s, for example the heavy influence of music. Some bands in the '90s maybe realising the connection, model themselves on '60s bands like Oasis modelling themselves on The Beatles. Another similarity is the drugs epidemic which has in the '60s and now in the '90s been for the most part associated with certain types of music; Psychedelic in the '60s and Rave in the '90s are renowned for their "feel good" qualities.

There was in the '60s a certain type of dress code that accompanied the youth culture which was to be found in particular along Carnaby Street. Today again there is a certain look which is linked with this sort of popular music and culture. Some of the '60s stores like Biba have been re-invented in the '90s with a

been encouraged greatly by the media which has helped inform and shape the tastes of the past three decades. The vast availability of specialized magazines such as *Life*, *Decorative Inspirations* and *House and Garden* etc. have helped shape the taste of 1950s society. These magazines have helped inform the consumers about the type of objects available and the quality so that they can make more knowledgeable decisions about the products they buy. The adverse effect of these magazines is that they can funnel peoples ideas and taste so that everybody have the same sort ideas and buy the same sort of products.

Youth culture today, as in the 1950s is a very important influence in advertising. The youth market is a very lucrative market in the 1950s. As in the older the market gets the more settled they get in their own style but the youth market in general will be buying new homes and trying to find their identity and are more easily influenced by advertisement. There are a lot of similarities between the youth culture of the 1950s and 1960s for example the heavy influence of music. Some bands in the 1950s market realised the connection model themselves on the bands like *Rock* modelling themselves on *The Beatles*. Another similarity is the drugs epidemic which has in the 1950s and now in the 1990s been for the most part associated with certain types of music. *Psychedelic* in the 1960s and *Rave* in the 1990s are referred for their "feel good" qualities.

There was in the 1950s a certain type of dress code that accompanied the youth culture which was to be found in particular along *Canary Street*. Today again there is a certain look which is linked with this sort of popular music culture. Some of the 1950s stores like *Libby* have been re-invented in the 1990s.

new modern look but with a nostalgic feel for the '60s attitudes. The "Dance" culture of the '90s has also had an influence on graphic design as psychedelia had in the '60s, this is particularly evident in posters, flyers and CD covers.

The differences between '90s and '60s interiors are quite substantial however. It is true that some of the images, colours and shapes of the '60s have reappeared but they have been adapted to suit the expectations of '90s consumers. The 1990s consumer has moved away from '60s concept of disposability, they want good quality, stylish but long lasting furnishings. The concept of linking fashion with interiors has run its course, somewhat. The '90s consumer are looking for more timeless pieces. Eventhough the '60s shapes are back the materials used to produce their objects have been refined over the years with the development of new technology, so that more sophisticated products can be produced. Plastic, for example, which was introduced to interiors in the sixties now reappears in the '90s but in a more elaborate form. People are now more precious about it. There is the technology today to create more varieties of finishes, densities and colours than ever before, from matt finishes and delicate opaque colours to some which have a translucent, almost glass-like appearance. People pay more now for good quality products in the hope that they will last longer. Consumers today are more aware of the pitfalls of advertising than in the '60s and are generally more inclined to make up their own minds about particular styles that are being forecast by the media. Consumers of the '90s are beginning to take more control of their ideas and are listening to their own thoughts on taste, which makes for more individual interiors.

the '60s, this is particularly evident in posters, flyers and CD covers.

The differences between '90s and '60s interiors are quite substantial.

However, it is true that some of the images, colours and shapes of the '60s have

reappeared but they have been adapted to suit the expectations of '90s consumers.

The 1990s consumer has moved away from '60s concept of disposability, they want

good quality, stylish but long lasting furnishings. The concept of linking fashion

with interiors has run its course, somewhat. The '90s consumer are looking for

more timeless pieces. Even though the '60s shapes are back the materials used are

products that objects have been refined over the years with the development of new

technology, so that more sophisticated products can be produced. Plastics, for

example, which was introduced to interiors in the sixties now reappears in the '90s

but in a more elaborate form. People are now more precious about it. There is a

technology today to create more varieties of finishes, densities and colours than

before, from matt finishes and delicate opaque colours to some which have a

translucent, almost glass-like appearance. People pay more now for good quality

products in the hope that they will last longer. Consumers today are more aware of

the pitfalls of advertising than in the '60s and are generally more inclined to make

their own minds about particular styles that are being forecast by the media.

Consumers of the '90s are beginning to take more control of their ideas and are

listening to their own thoughts on taste, which makes for more individual interiors.

SECTION TWO: Habitat's role in todays society

"Habitats autumn/winter collection promise 'new simplicity', cleanliness without clinicalism some plastics but also natural materials handcrafted in a modern way.....long lasting stylishness". (Baker, 1996,P.29)

Habitat in the '90s, as in the '60s seems to know exactly what the market is looking for. Due to the slump in the '80s Habitat came under new management in the '90s, which is a topic I will discuss in greater detail in chapter three but the new owners have a great knowledge of what made Habitat special and have recaptured some of the spirit that was present in the Habitat of the sixties for their '90s stores. The clean, fresh, clear, colourful qualities of their furniture has remained. Now disposability has been overthrown by longer lasting furniture, Conran's concept of "fashion furniture" in the '60s has become more stable. Conran used fashion concepts to sell his produce in the '60s as we now know but now that Habitat is well known and trusted he no longer needs to use these type marketing tactics. The Habitat name stands on its own without having to link it to something more popular to gain credit. Traces of the influence the fashion industry held in the '60s is still evident however, for example in a style of glass ware called "Biba wine glass". This is more of a nostalgic reference to the '60s rather than strategic selling tool. Stephen Yates, store manager for Habitat Dublin says that the look now is "Soft but Clean". The "ethnic look of the late sixties is out", this is illustrated in Habitat by the fact that the bean-bags have disappeared and the fact that the scattered cushions are no longer advertised for floor use, instead they adorn smart sofas. The ethnic rug still exists but we now have a "refined '60s look", (power, 1996, pg. 58) where we have less of the ethnic look and more of a continental look with colours and

"Habitat's autumn/winter collection promises 'new simplicity', cleanliness without clinicalism, some plastics but also natural materials handcrafted in modern ways...long lasting style-ness." (Baker, 1996, p. 29)

Habitat in the '90s, as in the '60s seems to know exactly what the market is looking for. Due to the slump in the '80s Habitat came under new management in the '80s which is a topic I will discuss in greater detail in chapter three but the new owners have a great knowledge of what made Habitat special and have recaptured some of the spirit that was present in the Habitat of the sixties for their '90s stores. The clean, fresh, clear, colourful qualities of their furniture has remained. The disposability has been overthrown by longer lasting furniture. Conran's concept of "fashion furniture" in the '60s has become more stable. Conran used to produce concepts to sell his produce in the '60s as we now know but now that Habitat is well known and trusted he no longer needs to use these type marketing tactics. Habitat name stands on its own without having to link it to something more popular to gain credit. Traces of the influence the fashion industry held in the '60s is evident however for example in a style of glassware called "Riba wine glass". It is more of a nostalgic reference to the '60s rather than strategic selling. Stephen Yates, store manager for Habitat Dublin says that the look now is "Soft but clean". The "ethnic look of the late sixties is out", this is illustrated in Habitat by the fact that the bean-bags have disappeared and the fact that the scattered cushions are no longer advertised for floor use, instead they adorn smart sofas. The ethnic rug still exists but we now have a "refined '60s look". (pover, 1996, pg. 28) Habitat we have less of the ethnic look and more of a continental look with clean lines.



Ethnic Rugs, taken at Habitat Dublin, Jan. 1997, (Fig. 11, pg. 30)

patterns more subtle and the rope-like texture of the original ethnic rug is softened. Now instead of being called "ethnic" this look is regarded as being an embodiment of "green" and "environmental" concerns, (Fig.11 Pg.30)

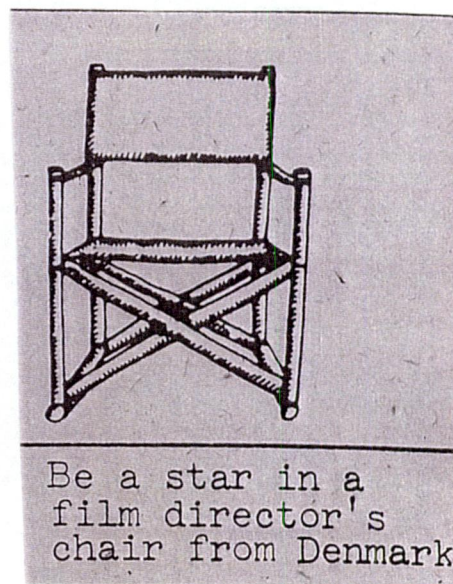
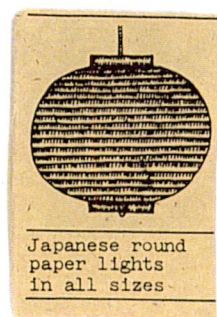
1990's Habitat still retains the original qualities Conran held dear which were quality products sold at affordable prices in ambient shop interiors. The prices however have increased as the standards have become higher, an durability is more important now. According to a fact sheet I received from Habitat's Press Office, they try "to reflect current trends in fashion and interiors, they try to introduce new ideas from up and coming designers in order to lead the market. Habitat are one of the sponsors at the New Designer's Exhibition in Islington, there they offer new talent work experience in their design studio. They claim that "95% of all Habitat's products are exclusive to Habitat" and that they uphold "ethical and environmental philosophies". The best sellers in the '60s were, the Japanese paper lights, the sag bags, the flop chair in orange corduroy, the apicella round dining table and the Fondue set. In the '90s the products are more refined the best sellers are, the cream embroidered Claudia bed linen, Corfurattan chairs, the Galurio table and chair and the Scraffito crockery range.

What makes these new lines different to what Habitat sold in the past is their attention to fine details and to surface decoration which was on the most part excluded from previous designs. The main focus up until now was form and function, now we have added features. These ranges now have automatic "added value", by the addition of embroidery and hand painted designs. These details make the objects more exclusive and therefore more expensive. This sort of attention to detail attracts today's market who are still looking for the original Habitat signature of

of "green" and "environmental" concerns (Fig. 19.1g, h).

1990's Habitat still retains the original qualities (Conan had designed which were quality products sold at affordable prices in ambient shop interiors. The prices however have increased as the standards have become higher, an due to the most important now. According to a fact sheet I received from Habitat's office they try to reflect current trends in fashion and interior design, introduce new ideas from up and coming designers in order to lead the new Habitat are one of the sponsors at the New Designers Exhibition in Islington. They offer new talent work experience in their design studio. They claim that all of Habitat's products are exclusive to Habitat, and that they uphold values of "environmental philosophy". The best sellers in the 1980s were: the Japanese lamp, the egg bag, the pop chair in orange corduroy, the spicella round lamp, and the beanbag set. In the 1990s the products are more refined: the best sellers the cream embroidered Claudia bed linen, Confusion chair, the fabric table chair and the Scatino crockery range.

What makes these new items different to what Habitat sold in the 1980s is their attention to fine details and to surface decoration which was on the most basic level in previous designs. The main focus up until now was form and function, now we have added beauty. These ranges now have automatic "value" by the addition of embroidery and hand painted designs. These details the objects more exclusive and therefore more expensive. This sort of attention detail aims to today's market who are still looking for the original Habitat signature.



Habitat's New Stock, taken at Habitat Dublin 1997,
(Fig.12,pg.32).

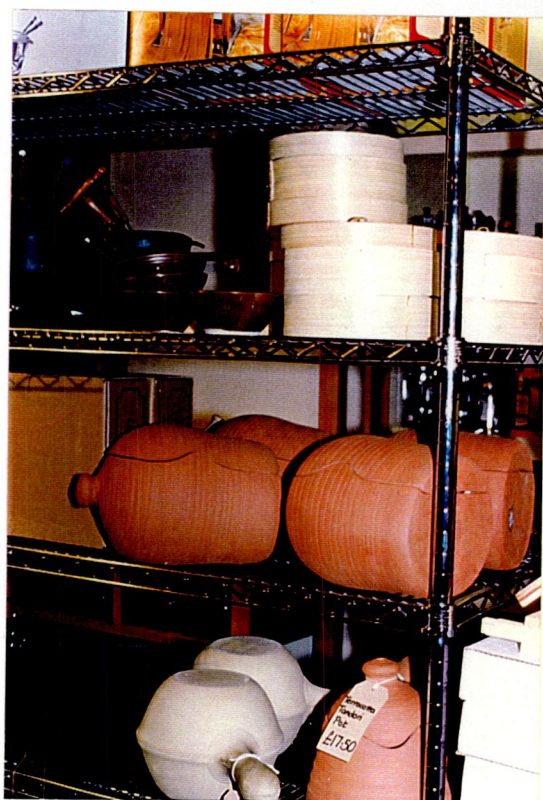
Examples of Directors Chairs and Japanese paper lamps from
the 1960s and the 1990s.

tasteful products but with that little bit more refinement. Vittorio Radice's influence is very much evident especially in the "Scraffito crockery" range where the colours and styles are very continental. The smaller cappuccino cups cater for the Italian influence that is also popular at the moment.

Some of the products are still on the range since the '60s, for example, the directors chair and the Japanese paper lamps. One of the reasons why these objects are still being sold is that the free and simplistic space saving style that was evident in the '60s is still popular today. These objects epitomise continental thinking with their simple, minimal, refine finishes. Unlike the "Scraffito crockery" these have no added decoration but their simplicity is what is kept them fashionable. There is no decoration to date the pieces so they are timeless which makes them adaptable to modern living. The fact that the fabrics on the directors chair is removable means that you can replace the fabrics according to shifts in the colour palette of your room. The directors chair can be used in doors or out and can fold away when not in use which is ideal for a modern town house or flat where space is limited.

The paper lamps on the other hand are very adaptable yet their simplicity and delicacy are elements which made them popular. Paper, which is classed as a fairly "avande garde" fabric for furnishing accessories especially in the '60s but even still in the '90s, makes it desirable. The fact that the paper is hand made makes the lamp quite expensive and luxurious. They are also made from recycled paper which feeds in to todays expectations of eco friendly materials. The modern shapes and lack of any unnecessary decoration makes it, like the directors chair, timeless, (Fig. 12, Pg. 32)

The Scraffito crockery range.



The new Tandori pots.

Habitat's New stock, taken at Habitat, Dublin 1997,
(Fig.12, pg.34)

As I have illustrated earlier (fig.8 pg. 20) chicken bricks were part of the original stock of Habitat in the '60s. The symbolised the interest the market had in french provincial cooking as boiled or casseroled chicken was part of that theme. Today the inspiration of cooking has with the aid of more frequent travel shifted to a broader spectrum. Influences from all over the world are now in fashion and different types of food and different methods of cooking are used. New ranges in kitchen ware and utensils have been introduced into Habitat in the past thirty years to fit in to the ever changing taste of the customer. In the '80s eastern influences swept over the U.K. so Japanese tempura sets were introduce and today we have ranges from all over. As we can see in (Fig. 12 pg. 34) the chicken brick has been replaced by terracotta tandori pots and vegetables steamers. The fondue set, however is still sold, see top left hand corner of the photograph, which is yet another one of Conran's original designs that has stood the test of time.

The place you can really tell the changes in Habitat between the '60s and '90s is in their catalogue development. As it is here that they portray and sell their ideas . This is what I am going to look at in section three.

provincial cooking as boiled or casseroled chicken was part of the theme. The inspiration of cooking has with the aid of more frequent travel shifted to a broader spectrum. Influences from all over the world are now in fashion and different types of food and different methods of cooking are used. New ranges, kitchen ware and utensils have been introduced into Habitat in the past thirty years to fit in to the ever changing taste of the customer. In the '80s eastern influences swept over the E.K. so Japanese tempura sets were introduced and today we have ranges from all over. As we can see in (Fig. 1.1 pg. 8) the chicken brick has been replaced by terracotta random pots and vegetables steamers. The fondue set however is still sold, see top left hand corner of the photograph, which is yet another one of Contan's original designs that has stood the test of time.

The place you can really tell the changes in Habitat between the '70s and '80s is in their catalogue development. As it is here that they portray and their ideas. This is what I am going to look at in section three.

SECTION THREE: Advertising Developments in Habitat since the 1960s

The catalogues are a clean source for examining the way in which Conran targeted his market, understood their interests and concerns and went about engaging their custom. He sources and designs objects that embody the aspiration and ideals of the youth market he is addressing and through the catalogues style, graphics and wit he addresses his market directly. In this section I am going to examine these catalogues to see what they can tell us about Conran's marketing techniques. I have chosen four catalogues, one from each main stage in the companies life to illustrate the changes.

There were a number of companies using catalogues and other mail order systems before Terence Conran introduced his. For example Heals had theirs in operation as early as 1906, examples of these still exist in the V & A in the twentieth century furniture department. In Heal's first catalogues called Casement Curtains you had the full range of colours, prices, washing instructions and other important details about the merchandise displayed beside the pictures. The next set of catalogues in 1907 were in postcard form, there were twelve in the collection and they were used as acknowledgement cards. These were very innovative as they showed the full range of the company's products as well as having another practical use as a postcard. Biba in its early days also worked through catalogues which were the foundation for their mail order business. Conran saw the importance of catalogues if he was going to expand his business.

Another area in which Heals appear to have had an influence on Habitat was in the fact that Habitat's shopping bags had a list and pictures of the stock it was carrying at the time; this is very reminiscent of the twelve postcards

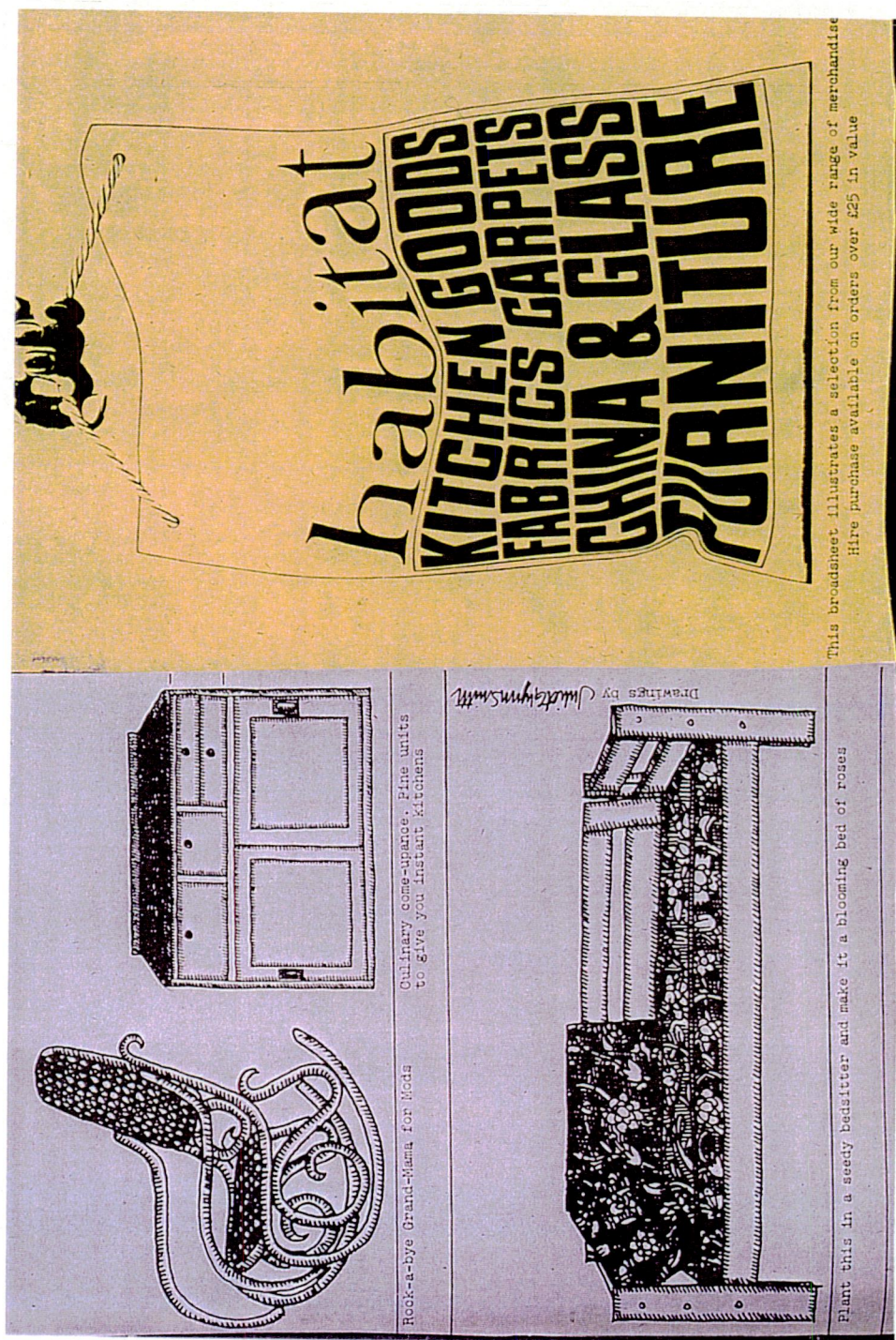
The following is a list of the companies which

Coman targeted his market, understood their interests and concerns and went about engaging their custom. He sources and designs objects that embody the aspirations and ideals of the youth market he is addressing and through the catalogue style graphics and wit he addresses his market directly. In this section I am going to examine these catalogues to see what they can tell us about Coman's marketing techniques. I have chosen four catalogues, one from each main stage in the companies life to illustrate the changes.

There were a number of companies using catalogues and other order systems before Terence Coman introduced his. For example Heals had been in operation as early as 1906, examples of these still exist in the V & A in the twentieth century furniture department. In Heals's first catalogue called *Catalogue* (which you had the full range of colours, prices, washing instructions and other important details about the merchandise displayed beside the pictures. The next of catalogues in 1907 were in postcard form, there were twelve in the collection, they were used as acknowledgement cards. These were very innovative as they showed the full range of the company's products as well as having another practical use as a postcard. This in its early days also worked through catalogues which were the foundation for their mail order business. Coman saw the importance of catalogues if he was going to expand his business.

Another area in which Heals appear to have had an influence

was in the fact that Habitat's shopping bags had a list and pictures of the stock it was carrying at the time, this is very reminiscent of the twelve postcards



Habitat's First Broadsheet, 1961, photographed at the V&A
archive AAD/1995/12/5/1 (Fig.13, pg.37)

Heals introduced in 1907. Habitats recognition that children were a profitable market in its introduction of Etcetera was also preceded by Heals catalogues of nursery interiors, with "The Nursery Book" by Beryl Reid in 1913. Wherever the inspiration came from, Habitat catalogues are unique in their presentation and impact. Barty Philips, who wrote Conran and the Habitat Story insisted that one Habitat catalogue went into the V & A Archive each year.

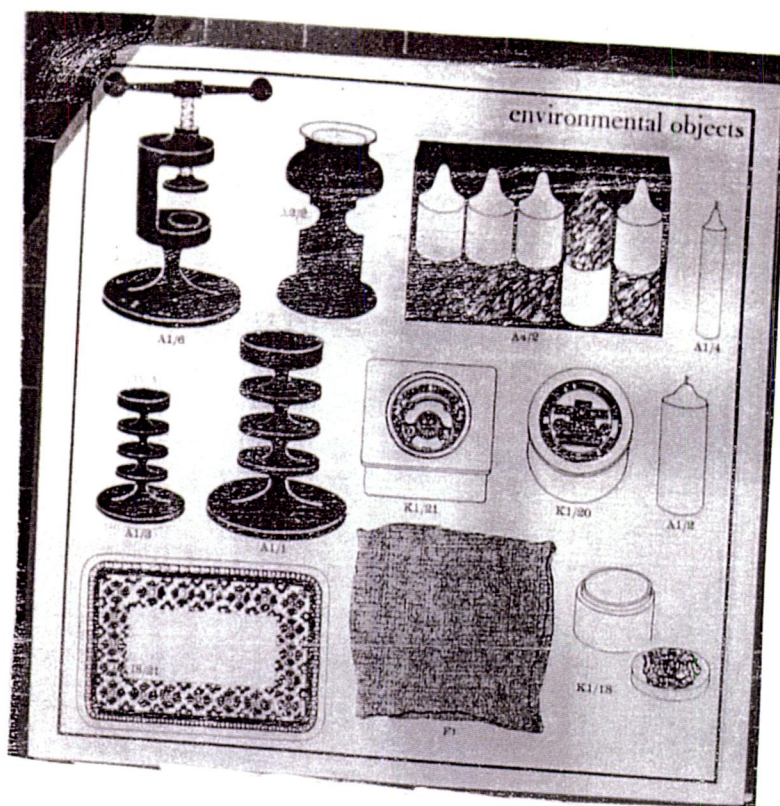
The first catalogue, produced in 1961 was in the form of a broadsheet. This pre-dated the setting up of Habitat, the store. It was very simple and very economical. One sheet of paper which was 2 ft x 3 ft. The front cover has a black and white image of a carrier bag and a list of different types of objects that the store sold. Then inside the objects are arranged very geometrically with their details outlined underneath. Nothing is left to the imagination of the customer. All the objects are drawn flat and with the same techniques, so there is no variation for a particular object's appearance or function. The size of the object isn't illustrated either. This type of catalogue would have been very easy and fairly inexpensive to reproduce as it is monochrome, black ink painted onto a mustard good quality paper. The construction consisted only of folding and it is light weight unlike the glossy book catalogues of later years. This simple and light weight construction cuts down on transport costs. Hire purchase was offered in this catalogue on objects over £25.

Drawings were done by Juliet Glynn Smith and the text was written by Caroline Shaw (later to be Caroline Conran) and David Philips. Very descriptive and suggestive wording was used, for example "Rock-a-bye Grand-Mama for Mods," "Sofa to give you all the airs of a millionaire" and "Plant this in a seedy bedsetter and make it a bleeding bed of roses", (Fig.13 pg.37) The first catalogue

inspiration came from Habitat catalogues are unique in their presentation and impact. Barry Phillips, who wrote Conran and the Habitat Story, insisted that the first catalogue went into the V & A Archive each year.

The first catalogue, produced in 1961 was in the form of a broadsheet. This pre-dated the setting up of Habitat the store. It was very simple and very economical. One sheet of paper which was 2 ft x 3 ft. The front cover has a black and white image of a carrier bag and a list of different types of objects that the store sold. Then inside the objects are arranged very geometrically, their details outlined underneath. Nothing is left to the imagination of the customer. All the objects are drawn flat and with the same technique, so there is no variation for a particular object's appearance or function. The size of the objects is illustrated either. This type of catalogue would have been very easy and inexpensive to reproduce as it is monochrome, black ink painted onto a simple good quality paper. The construction consisted only of folding and it is light weight unlike the glossy book catalogues of later years. This simple and light weight construction cut down on transport costs. The purchase was offered in the catalogue on objects over £25.

Drawings were done by Juliet Glyn Smith and the text was written by Caroline Shaw (later to be Caroline Conran) and David Phillips. Very descriptive and suggestive wording was used, for example "Rock-a-bye Grand-Mama" and "Hobbs", "Set to give you all the air of a millionaire" and "Plant this in a sunny bedditer and make it a bleeding bed of roses". (Fig. 1, pg. 3). The first catalogue



Habitat's second Catalogue, 1964, photographed at the V&A archive AAD/1994/12/5/3, (Fig.14, pg.39)

Arch. no. AAC199412573, (Fig. 14, pg. 39)
The figure is a second Catalogue, 1964, photographed at the V&A

had this simple format as there wasn't a lot of extra money available for fancy catalogues. It was simple and to the point and gave the consumer all the information that they expected to find. They used the text as the selling tool rather than glossy photographs.

The second catalogue (1964) was slightly more advanced in so far as it took the form of a book. Pages of the book were held together with a clip in the left hand corner. The pages were different colours in order to differentiate the categories of the goods. They were grouped together in categories like "Kitchen Goods" or "China". The illustrations were drawn like the earlier renderings, also monochrome which gives a sense of continuance and reliability (Fig. 14 Pg. 39), which is important in a new business to help establish a clientele. Again this catalogue would be relatively cheap to reproduce as it was constructed simply, the drawings were monochrome and they weren't bulky so transport was not costly. The only improvement is that it illustrated a more comprehensive range of products which shows the increased wealth of the store. On the back of each illustrated page you have a list which contains the price, and a full description of the item on show and of course the serial number so that you could order through the post. The catalogues were important as they made the stock accessible to everyone and helped prepare people before a Habitat store would come to their locality. In 1969 Habitat merged with the Ryman company and from then on new and improved catalogues were introduced, as the funding for their manufacture had increased. From that point on photography replaced the hand drawings which left the Habitat design team with more scope to explore new advertising campaigns.

more scope to explore new advertising campaigns.

photographs replaced the hand drawings which left the Habitat design team with

introduced, as the funding for their manufacture had increased. From that point

with the Ryman company and from then on new and improved catalogues were

people before a Habitat store would come to their locality. In 1969 Habitat members

were important as they made the stock accessible to everyone and helped people

course the serial number so that you could order through the post. The catalogues

have a list which contains the price, and a full description of the item on show and

shows the increased wealth of the store. On the back of each illustrated page

improvement is that it illustrated a more comprehensive range of products and

were monochrome and they weren't bulky so transport was not costly. The catalogues

would be relatively cheap to reproduce as it was constructed simply, the drawings

is important in a new business to help establish a clientele. Again this catalogue

monochrome which gives a sense of continuance and reliability (Fig. 1.9). It was

Goods" or "China". The illustrations were drawn like the earlier renderings, but

categories of the goods. They were grouped together in categories like "Kitchen

left hand corner. The pages were different colours in order to distinguish

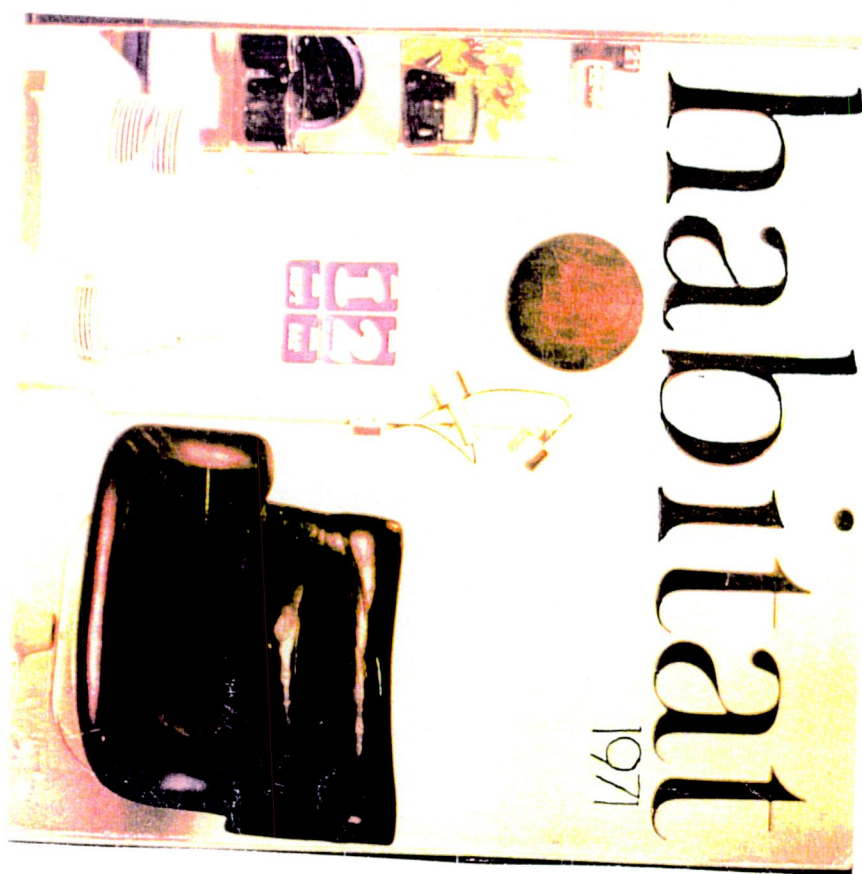
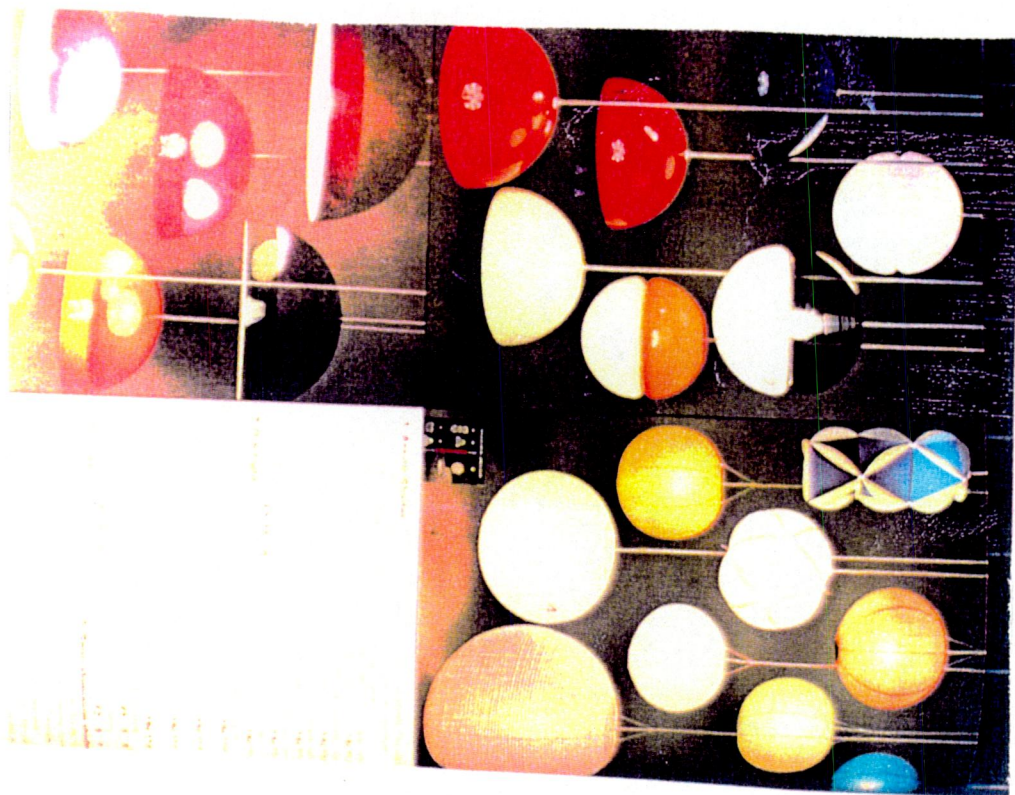
it took the form of a book. Pages of the book were held together with a clip and

The second catalogue (1964) was slightly more advanced in so far as

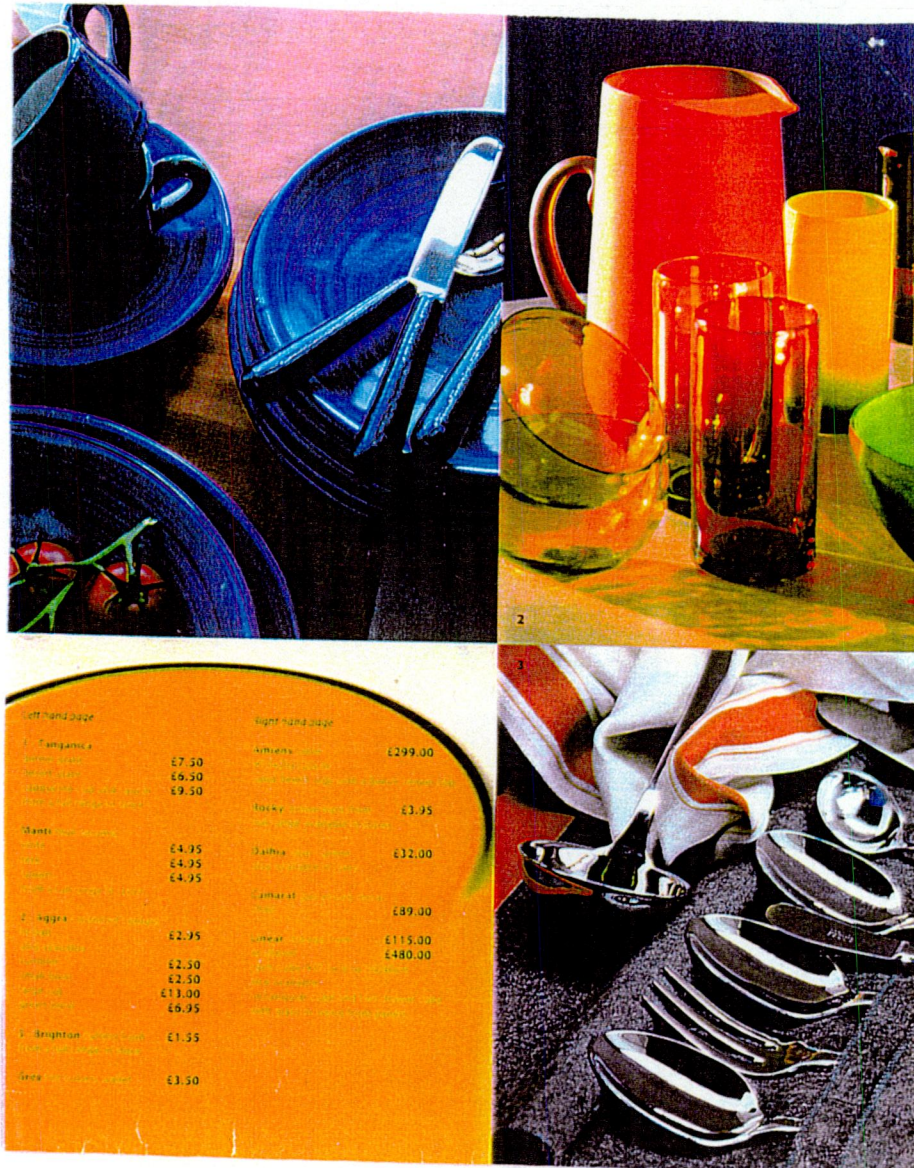
photographs.

than they expected to find. They used the text as the selling tool rather than the

and the design of the catalogue was not as good as the design of the first one.



Habitat's third catalogue, 1971, photographed at the V&A archive, AAD/1994/12/5/10, (Fig. 15, pg. 41)



Recent catalogue, Habitats Autumn -Winter catalogue, 1996
(Fig.16, pg.42)

Roger Gain was Habitat's photographer at the time. He gave priority to the products and let them set the scene for the photoshoots. He used the studio and real locations to give the catalogues a reality and a freshness.

The next catalogue that appears in the V & A Archive of Art and Design was from 1971 (Fig. 15 Pg. 41). Its layout and presentation was like what one would see now in The World of Interiors magazine. The cover was glossy and the pages were white and made of good quality paper. The layout of the catalogue was fairly complex also. The products were arranged in pleasing compositions and in actual existing surroundings. Some collections showed the complete range available which included colours, styles and measurements. At the front of the catalogue there were pictures of some of the Habitat stores, which were very similar to the ones today.

Photography as opposed to hand drawings in the new Habitat catalogues means that the advertisers can illustrate more clearly what the objects would look like in an interior. They are now selling the products with photographic images rather than with the accompanying text. Expectations have heightened by the consumer is so far as the quality of the catalogues. They want to have a glossy magazine to look through. The merger with Ryman, although was not totally successful, provided the extra funding needed to update the catalogues and helped create "Habitat Creative Living by Post", their new mail order catalogue.

Today Habitat catalogues are very much "coffee table" magazines (Fig. 16 Pg 42) James Merrell is the present photographer he also photographs for House and Garden and Elle Decoration so we see similarities. Habitat catalogues are aesthetically pleasing; the colours are very fresh and alive, the locations for settings sometimes seem exotic creating a very contemporary look. The objects in

to give the catalogue a reality and a freshness.

The new catalogue that appears in the *V & A* *Alphie* of 1971 (Fig. 1, Pg. 11). Its layout and presentation was like what one would see now in *The World of Interiors* magazine. The cover was glossy, the pages were white and made of good quality paper. The layout of the catalogue was fairly complex also. The products were arranged in pleasing compositions in actual existing surroundings. Some collections showed the complete range available which included colours, styles and measurements. At the front of the catalogue there were pictures of some of the Habitat stores, which were very different to the ones today.

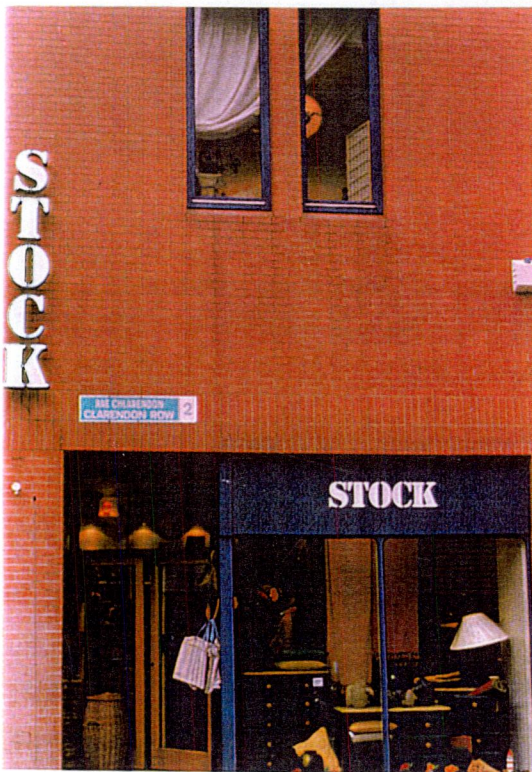
Photography as opposed to hand drawings in the new Habitat catalogues means that the advertisers can illustrate more clearly what the objects would look like in an interior. They are now selling the products with photographs rather than with the accompanying text. Expectations have heightened by the consumer is so far as the quality of the catalogues. They want to have a glossy magazine to look through. The merger with Kytman, although was not too successful, provided the extra funding needed to update the catalogues and help Habitat achieve its aim of being by Post, their new mail order catalogue.

Today Habitat catalogues are very much "coffee table" magazines. (Fig. 15 Pg. 12) James Aitch is the present photographer he also photographs for *House and Garden* and *Elle Decoration* so we see similarities. Habitat catalogues are aesthetically pleasing, the colours are very fresh and alive, the locations settings sometimes seem exotic creating a very contemporary look. The objects

their settings are the main feature and details such as price and size are secondary, unlike the priorities in the first catalogues where text had more importance. In the past the catalogues came out once a year, each August and they took four months to compile, now one can get them each season, plus a monthly art broadsheet. There is a need for more catalogues now, as under the new management which I will discuss in chapter three, they have a product renewal system three times a year, in March for Spring/Summer, in August for Autumn/Winter and in October for Christmas. There are numerous promotions each year, which means a lot of promotional leaflets are produced and dispersed. Habitat relies a lot on catalogue launches which also bring a lot of publicity. Communication with its customers, is something that makes Habitat different from other stores and may be one of the reasons why it has survived for so long.

...the ...
past the catalogues came out once a year, each August and they took four or five
complicated, now one can get them each season, plus a monthly art broadcast. There
a need for more catalogues now, as under the new management which I will discuss
in chapter three, they have a product renewal system three times a year, in March
for Spring/Summer, in August for Autumn/Winter and in October for Christmas.
There are numerous promotions each year, which means a lot of promotional
leaflets are produced and dispersed. Habitat relies a lot on catalogue launches which
also bring a lot of publicity. Communication with its customers, is something it
makes Habitat different from other stores and may be one of the reasons why it has
survived for so long.

Foko exterior, 1997,
(Fig.17,pg.45)



Stock exterior, 1997,
(Fig.18,pg.45)

CHAPTER THREE: CURRENT PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

SECTION ONE: Habitat in Ireland

From talking with Fiona Summerville, Press Officer in London's Habitat, it can be deduced that Habitat Dublin is based totally on its UK Branches. The stock and catalogues have not been altered to fit in with the Irish market as one would have thought. There is no stock bought from Irish manufacturers, all the stock is sourced produced and packaged in the UK and shipped to Dublin on demand. When asked what type of market Habitat were trying to attract in Dublin Ms Summerville replied that it was the same market that was being focused on in London and that it depended on the objects themselves what kind of marketing strategies were being used.

It was stated that the Dublin branch is one of the most successful Habitats in existence anywhere at the moment. This may be due to the fact that at the moment there is no real competition for Habitat in Dublin. Most of the interior stores don't have the vast variety of goods Habitat sells under one roof and most are just departments in larger department stores. Stock and Foko are examples of interior stores but they don't have Habitat's variety or quality at such a reasonable price. Foko (Fig.17 pg.45) sell modern furniture and quirky accessories aimed at a young market but unlike Habitat, their products have a novelty characteristic which makes them very original and therefore expensive. The look of the store is not unlike Habitat's. On the outside you have a similar "typed-look" lettering which also appears in Stock and the full length windows which tempts the passer by to come in. It also has the uncluttered look that Habitat is renowned for were objects

THE HABITAT 67 STORE IN DUBLIN

From talking with Fiona Summerhill, Press Officer in London's Habitat 67, I deduced that Habitat Dublin is based totally on its UK Branch. The stock and catalogues have not been altered to fit in with the Irish market as one would expect. There is no stock bought from Irish manufacturers, all the stock is imported and packaged in the UK and shipped to Dublin on demand. When asked what type of market Habitat were trying to attract in Dublin Mrs Summerhill replied that it was the same market that was being focused on in London and that depended on the objects themselves what kind of marketing strategies were being used.

It was stated that the Dublin branch is one of the most successful Habitat in existence anywhere at the moment. This may be due to the fact that the moment there is no real competition for Habitat in Dublin. Most of the big stores don't have the vast variety of goods Habitat sells under one roof and most just department in larger department stores. Stock and F&S are examples of interior stores but they don't have Habitat's variety or quality at such a reasonable price. F&S (Fig 17 pg 53) sell modern furniture and quirky accessories aimed at the young market but unlike Habitat, their products have a novelty characteristic which makes them very original and therefore expensive. The look of the store is very unlike Habitat's. On the outside you have a similar "typed-look" jutting which also appears in Stock and the full length windows which tempt the passer by to come in. It also has the uncluttered look that Habitat is renowned for where the



Interior of Stock and Habitat, 1997, (Fig.19, pg.47)

are lined up on shelves or stacked on the floor. The white walls and use of spot lights also adds to the look. Multi-storage units are also used to display smaller objects, a unit which was introduced by Habitat in the '60s as part of their K-D furniture range.

Stock, which appeared in Dublin twenty years ago was clearly originally inspired by Habitat, (Fig. 18 pg. 45) with no unnecessary decoration, is very similar. Inside the products are displayed very simply with most of the stock stacked on shelves in regular patterns or in piles on the floor to give that supermarket type effect. If you look at (fig. 19 pg. 47) we see an example of similar stock displayed in both Stock and Habitat, the similarities are evident. Stock shop use brick, probably red brick painted white and glass for their shelving, this style was evident in the '60s in Habitat and still exists in some parts of the stores but the glass has been replaced by wood. The more usual shelving is seen in (fig. 19 pg. 47) where we see the Habitat shelving is more light weight and adaptable, suitable for the ever changing store. The big difference between the shops is the quality and the fact that the wide variety of the products available in Habitat is lacking in Stock. The scale of the shops is also very different. Stock sells glass ware, cockery, novelties, fabrics, cutlery and soft furnishing accessories. They don't do much furniture unlike Habitat. The produce sold in Stock is slightly less expensive and more conservative than Habitat which may imply an older market.

A more established shop would be Brown Thomas furniture department, which sells a wide range of labels, i.e. Designers Guild, Liberties, Malabar but none of them full ranges, and the prices are expensive. Habitat fills the missing niche in the Dublin market. It offers a wide variety of products from all over the world, very tasteful but at a reasonable price. It is easy to create total-looks

the fact that the products are displayed in a very similar manner.

objects a unit which was introduced by Habitat in the early part of the 1970s.

furniture range.

Stock which appeared in Dublin twenty years ago was very similar.

originally inspired by Habitat (fig. 1, pg. 47) with no unnecessary decoration.

very similar. Inside the products are displayed very simply with most of the

stacked on shelves in regular patterns or in piles on the floor to give that superior

type effect. If you look at (fig. 1, pg. 47) we see an example of similar

displayed in both Stock and Habitat, the similarities are evident. Stock also

brick, probably red brick painted white and glass for their shelving, this style

evident in the 1960s in Habitat and still exists in some parts of the stores but the

has been replaced by wood. The more usual shelving is seen in (fig. 1, pg. 47)

where we see the Habitat shelving is more light weight and adaptable, suitable

the ever changing store. The big difference between the shops is the quality of

fact that the wide variety of the products available in Habitat is lacking in Stock.

The scale of the shops is also very different. Stock sells glassware, cutlery

novelty, fabric, cutlery and soft furnishing accessories. They don't do

furniture unlike Habitat. The product sold in Stock is slightly less expensive

more conservative than Habitat which may imply an older market.

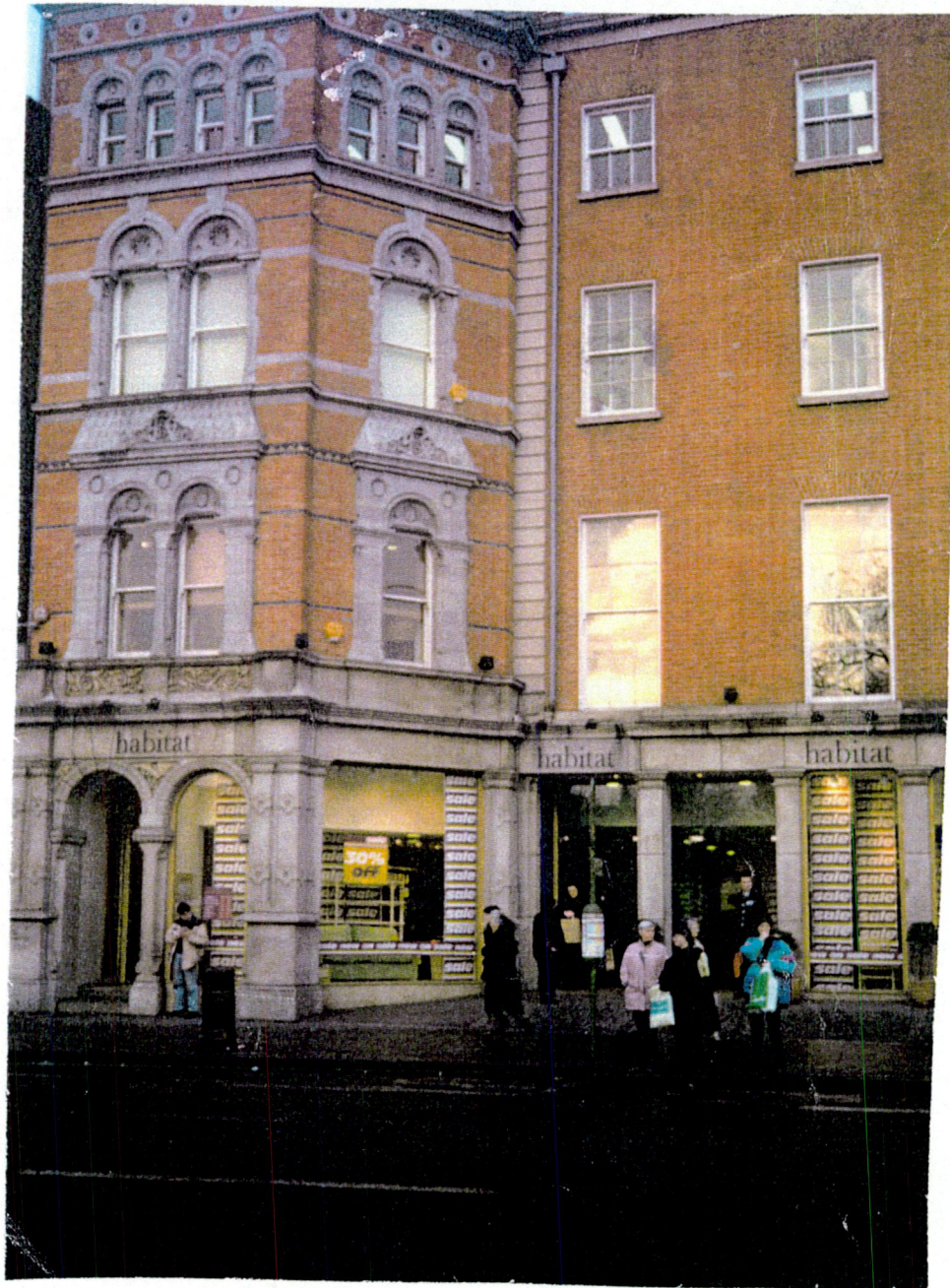
A more established shop would be Brown Thomas Ltd.

department which sells a wide range of labels for Designers Guild Ltd.

Alabaster but none of them full ranges and the prices are expensive. Habitat

the missing niche in the Dublin market. It offers a wide variety of products from

over the world, very tasteful but at a reasonable price. It is easy to create total



Exterior of Habitat Dublin, 1997, (Fig. 20, pg. 49)

for your home as Habitat sell everything that you would want, so you need not shop any further. Fiona Summerville said that if Habitat researchers were to find another suitable site that they would introduce another store in Ireland besides the existing ones in Belfast and Dublin.

What attracted Habitat to Dublin in the first place was that they felt that the Irish market was suitable and that alterations weren't needed to sell their original ideas so when a site became available they took it. The situation was very central and Grafton Street and St. Stephen's Green attracted the right type of market who would pay "that little bit more" for good quality furnishings and interior accessories. The price of goods in all Habitat stores is kept relatively the same but as is quoted in the catalogue they may "need to review certain prices due to currency fluctuations". The store itself is in keeping with the Habitat look (Fig.20 Pg.50). It is unclaustrophobic, unintimidating, bright and stylish. The structure of the interior is fairly open plan which is one of the aspects Radice, the new director is trying to introduce, but the stock is still clustered and stacked which is in keeping with Conrans original ideas in his first stores. The walls are still white and the floor tiled. The glass in the stores front windows still reaches from the top to the pavement and stretches the full length of the shop front this lets the passer by see into the shop and they know what to expect when they go in, it takes away the mystery and unfriendliness. All of the Habitat stores have come under a lot of changes since the new management have taken over. In the next section of this chapter I am going to look at why and what kind of changes have happened in the absence of Terence Conran. These changes will and have also effected Habitat Dublin and therefore are relevant to this chapter.

another similar one that would introduce another view of Dublin.

existing once in Dublin and Dublin.

What attracted Habint to Dublin in the first place was that it was

that the Irish market was suitable and that alterations weren't needed to make it

original ideas so when a site became available they took it. The situation was

central and Grafton Street and St Stephen's Green attracted the right type of people

who would pay "that little bit more" for good quality furnishings and accessories.

The price of goods in all Habitat stores is kept relatively the same

is quoted in the catalogue they may need to review certain prices due to changes in

fluctuations. The store itself is in keeping with the Habitat look (Habitat, pg 12).

is uncluttered, minimalist, bright and stylish. The structure of the interior

is fairly open plan which is one of the aspects Habitat, the new director is trying to

introduce, but the stock is still clustered and stacked which is in keeping with

contains original ideas in his first stores. The walls are still white and the floor is

The glass in the stores front windows still reaches from the top to the pavement level

stretch the full length of the shop front this lets the passer by see into the shop and

they know what to expect when they go in. It takes away the mystery of the

unfamiliarity. All of the Habitat stores have come under a lot of changes since

new management have taken over. In the next section of this chapter I am going to

look at why and what kind of changes have happened in the absence of a

Conclusion. These changes will and have also affected Habitat Dublin and therefore

relevant to this chapter.

SECTION TWO: Habitat under new Management

“To bring the best of modern design to the masses at affordable prices - was replaced by misguided over expansion”.

This description of Habitat in the 1980's by Elspeth Thompson (Thompson, 1994) was bleak but true. According to the same article, Habitat was known as Shabitat and Habi-tat in the '80s. The recession in the '70s led to a slump in the market. Habitat however were still doing well. Their great mistake in the late seventies and early eighties was that instead of investing their profits into improving their existing stores, they expanded. New stores opened in the UK, USA, France, Belgium and Japan. According to Habitat's Press Office, the first American Habitat named Conran was said to be “designed like a supermarket with wide aisles and a row of check-out tills, Conran's brought take-away and flatpack furniture into an arena that preferred home delivery over high levels of customer service.” This supermarket type layout and attitude appeared in Habitats all over and the good level of customer service and good quality merchandise which existed in the '60s was no more. The company wasn't doing well in the '80s for a number of reasons which included the fact that they had lost touch with their customers and their needs, a key element in Habitat's success in the past. In 1981 Habitat was floated on the stock exchange and it merged with Mothercare to form Mothercare/Habitat Group PLC. The group then gained Heals and Richards in 1983 and then in 1986 Storehouse was formed when Habitat/Mothercare group merged with BHS. It was through Storehouse that Dublin saw its first glimpses of Habitat on O'Connell Street C.1988. In 1990 The Conran Shop was sold and Habitat underwent serious changes which resulted in the ending of the mail order business and the beginning of the seasonal catalogue. The

...being the first to claim to be a supermarket, it was not the first to be called one.

This description of Habitat in the 1980's by Elizabeth Thompson (Thompson, 1997) was clear but true. According to the same article, Habitat was known as a 'cheap and cheerful' and Habitat in the 1980's. The recession in the 1970's led to a slump in the retail sector and Habitat stores were still doing well. Their great mistake in the late 1970's and early 1980's was that instead of investing their profits into improving their stores, they expanded. New stores opened in the UK, USA, France, Belgium, Japan. According to Habitat's Press Office, the first American Habitat store (Miami) was said to be designed like a supermarket with wide aisles and a 'check-out till'. Miami's brought take-away and Japanese furniture into an area previously reserved for home delivery over high levels of customer service. This supermarket type lay out and attitude appeared in Habitat all over and the good level of customer service and good quality and standards which existed in the 1960's was no more. The company wasn't doing well in the 1980's for a number of reasons which included the fact that they had lost touch with their customers and their needs, a key element of Habitat's success in the past. In 1981 Habitat was floated on the stock exchange and it merged with Mothercare to form Mothercare Habitat Group PLC. The company then gained Fife's and Richards in 1983 and then in 1986 Storehouse was bought when Habitat Mothercare group merged with BHS. It was through Storehouse that Dublin saw its first glimpse of Habitat on O'Connell Street (1988). In 1990, Habitat's Shop was sold and Habitat underwent serious changes which resulted in the ending of the main order business and the beginning of the retail company.

same year Terence Conran left Storehouse. In May 1992 Vittorio Radice was made managing director of Habitat and with him came "Lifestyle" catalogue. The biggest change of all occurred in October 1992 when Storehouse sold Habitat UK and Habitat France to the Swedish home furnishing company, Ikea.

"Although Terence is no longer associated with the company, Radice says "our refocusing in the last three years has returned Habitat to its core values," (1) which were to sell good quality produce at an equally affordable price. To achieve this goal Radice has had to make a few changes. According to Carl Gardner, (2) some of the product range has changed to adapt the modern demands and there has been an improvement in time management. According to the same article "In two years the company has originated and introduced almost 6000 new lines. (Including seasonal ranges, another innovation with a 25-30% product renewal rate every year)" A new food range was introduced this November in Dublin. Promotional parties and discounts are offered to advertise new ranges, which brings publicity and therefore increased sales and encourages good customer relations. The in-store look has also changed according to Carl Gardner, the "supermarket style elements, checkouts, regimented rows of high racks are on their way out," instead a more "low rise" store layout with "wide sight lines" are being introduced, which is evident in the Dublin store.

- (1) John Davidson, The Scotsman, April 1994, V & A Archive, AAD/1995/12/15/1.
- (2) Carl Gardiner, Design planner no. 14J-60, Jan 1993, V & A Archive, AAD/1995/12/15/115

In the same article it is stated that "there'll no longer be those cutesy, unconvincing room sets, complete with fake windows" that were around in the '80s instead Radice is replacing this with a more sophisticated look. His mediterranean influence is very evident especially in the new food range. The new look for Habitat is simple, very clean, very contemporary, very natural, so says Stephen Yates, Store Manager, at Habitat Dublin (Image, October, 1996, P.58). Radice has replaced Conran's brown French earthenware pots with handpainted Italian plates, this gives an example of the kind of taste changes Habitat is undergoing and shows Radice's Mediterranean influence.

Radice's Mediterranean style is possibly why he got the job as this trend is very much in fashion at the moment. This is evident in the bright sun shine colours in furnishings that are available and in the contrasting white on white look which is brought alive with accents of bright colours in throws and cushions at the moment. The mediterranean influence in Habitat is also recognised in some of the names given to new ranges e.g. "Cannelloni wall light", "Seville table", "Corfu chair", and the "Roma lamp".

is replacing this with a more sophisticated look. The Mediterranean influence is evident especially in the new food range. The new look for Habitat is simple, very clean, very contemporary, very natural, so says Stephen Yates, Store Manager, Habitat (Habitat Image, October, 1990, p. 58). Radice has replaced Conran's previous French earthenware pots with handpainted Italian plates, this gives an example of the kind of taste changes Habitat is undergoing and shows Radice's Mediterranean influence.

Radice's Mediterranean style is possibly why he got the job as this style is very much in fashion at the moment. This is evident in the bright sun shades in furnishings that are available and in the contrasting white on white look which brought alive with accents of bright colours in throws and cushions at the moment. The Mediterranean influence in Habitat is also recognised in some of the new given to new ranges e.g. "Cannelloni wall light", "Seville table", "Corti chair" and the "Roma lamp".

CONCLUSION

Conran has, since his first store opened in 1964 always been in touch with his market, except for the slump in the '80s. His designs, exhibitions and of course the catalogues have been an important tool in illustrating the changes that have come about in interiors over the past thirty years. Steven Bayley was correct when he said that Habitat , "was a portfolio of all that had been influential in forming English taste", as I mentioned in my introduction. Through exhibitions like the Boiler house , through Habitat's own in house art exhibitions, through the good quality products chosen to sell in the stores and through the numerous catalogues Habitat has used over the years, Conran has managed to influence and encapsulate people's tastes.

Habitat has overall sold contemporary, good quality goods so it is ideal store to look at for the furnishing demands of the young customers over the past thirty years. The Dublin market is very limited in its interior stores as I have said so there isn't much competition for Habitat . The store may very well, therefore, take off as much as it did in London. Habitat had not got much of an impact when it came to Ireland in the '80s as it was part of Storehouse and was housed in the basement of BHS which had a down market image, which undermined the tasteful image of Habitat. Now it has it's own identity, it's own premises, in an area that suits the market it is aiming for and armed with a securely established brand name to back it up.

Habitat has been described as "offering taste on trust", this trust still prevails even though the taste has changed and been modified over the past few decades. The quality and style of the products are still well researched and well made. Although the keen eye of Conran has been replaced, Radice seems to believe

...the fact that it was the first time that a design exhibition had been held in the market except for the slump in the '80s. The design exhibitions and catalogues have been an important tool in illustrating the changes that have taken place about in interiors over the past thirty years. Steven Harty was correct when he said that Habitat 'was a portfolio of all that had been influential in forming a new taste', as I mentioned in my introduction. Through exhibitions like the Habitat ones, through Habitat's own in-house art exhibitions, through the good quality products chosen to sell in the store and through the numerous catalogues Habitat has produced over the years Cornan has managed to influence and encapsulate people's taste. Habitat has overall sold contemporary, good quality goods so it is not surprising to look at for the furnishing demands of the young customers over the past 15 years. The Habitat market is very limited in its interior stores as I have said, but it has a much stronger position for Habitat. The store may very well therefore, take much as it did in London. Habitat had not got much of an impact when it was founded in the '80s as it was part of Storehouse and was housed in the basement of BHS which had a down market image, which undermined the tasteful image of Habitat. Now it has its own identity, it's own premises in an area that suits the market it is aiming for and carried with a securely established brand name to back up.

Habitat has been described as 'offering taste on trust', this trust has been built up even though the taste has changed and been modified over the past 15 years. The quality and style of the products are still well researched and made. Although the keen eye of Cornan has been replaced, Habitat seems to have

in the same qualities. The new management have helped return Habitat to its former glory but in a '90s context. The new "mid-market" Habitat falls between the up-market Conran shop, which sells a more eclectic range and the lower middle-market Ikea with its budget, minimal, mass produce Scandinavian style. Habitat fills that very important gap in the U.K. and has filled an even bigger one in the Irish market. Conran still runs the Conran shop and his numerous restaurants and continues to make important impact on design. For all his lives work and influence in forming British tastes in interiors the Queen of England has acknowledged his achievements and he is now, Sir Terence Conran.

the up-market Conran shop, which sells a more eclectic range and the lower mid U.K. market Ikea with its budget minimal mass produce Scandinavian style. (Ipswich 2000) that very important gap in the U.K. and has filled an even bigger one in the market. Conran still runs the Conran shop and his numerous restaurants and continues to make important impact on design. For all his busy work and involvement in forming British tastes in interiors the Queen of England has acknowledged his achievements and he is now Sir Terence Conran.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Banham, Mary and Hillier Bevis
A Tonic of the Nation, the festival of Britain 1951
 Thames and Hudson
 London, 1976

Barker, Nicholas
Sign of the Times
 BBC Series, A Portrait of the Nation's taste
 Corner House, Publications, 1992

Conway, Hazel
Design History, a students handbook
 Routledge, 1987

Conran, Terence
The Bed and Bath Book
 Mitchell Beazly Publications
 London, 1978

Connolly, Sybil
In an Irish House
 George Weidenfeld and Nicolson LTD
 1984

Gooden Susanna
Heal and Son
A History of Heals: at the sign of the fourposter
 Heal and son, 1984

Harris, Jennifer and Hyde, Sarah and Smith, Grey
1966 and all that, Design and the consumer in Britain 1960-1969
 Tefoil Books LTD
 London 1986

IND, Nicholas
Terence Conran The Authorised Biography
 Macmillan General Books
 London, 1995

Longman Group UK LTD
Chronicle of the 20th Century
 Jaques Legrand S.A. International Publishing
 Paris, 1988

Jacques Legrand & A. International Publishing
Paris 1988
Chronicle of the 20th Century
Longman Group UK Ltd

London 1993
/acmillan General Books
George Courton The Autobiography
END Nichols

London 1980
Lefebvre Books Ltd

1966 and all that Design and the consumer in Britain 1960-1969
Harris, Jennifer and Hilda Sarah and Smith, Gary

Heal and son 1984
A History of Heals at the sign of the fourposter
Heal and son
Gooden Susanna

1984
George Weidenfeld and Nicolson LTD
In an Irish House
Connolly Cyril

London 1978
Mitchell Beazley Publications
The Bed and Bath Book
Courton, Terence

Roundedge 1987
Design History, a student's handbook
Gwynn Hazel

Cornier House Publications 1992
The Series: A Portrait of the Nation's taste
Sign of the Times
Baker, Nicholas

London 1976
Thomas and Hudson
A Taste of the Nation the Design of Britain 1951
Planting, Lucy and Hilary Bess

Mellor, David
The Sixties, Art Scene in London
Phaid on Press LTD
London, 1993

McCarthy, Eileen
Frankly Feminine
Lowe and Brydone LTD
London, 1965

Philips, Barty
Conran and the Habitat Story
George Weiden and Nicolson LTD, 1984

Thorgerson, Storm
Classic Album Covers of the sixties
The Works
Devon, 1989

Willats, Stephen
The House that Habitat Built
Cornerhouse Publications, Manchester 1989
Art and Design Archive (V & A) serial No: AAD/1995/12/23/27

Williamson, Judith
Decoding Advertisements, ideology and meaning in Advertising
Marion Boyars, London, 1978

ARTICLES

Baker, Lindsey, "Space Odyssey", OBSERVER LIFE,
5 May 1995, PP. 26-28.

Davidson, John, "30yrs Birthday", THE SCOTSMAN
April 1994, V & A Archive Presscutting No. AAD/1995/12/15/1.

Gardner, Carl, "Goodbye to all That," DESIGN. Planner No:
14J-60, Jan 1993, V & A Archive Presscutting No. AAD/1995/12/15/1.

Power, Frances, "Retailers Forecast Stephen Yates," IMAGE MAGAZINE
October 1996, Pg. 58.

Thompson, Elspeth, "Re-Habitation", TIMES, 2 April 1994
V & A Archive Presscutting Section No. AAD/1995/12/15/1.

1987

McCann, Eileen
Frankly Speaking
Love and Dislike I II
London 1985

Philip, Barry
Gordon and the British Style
George Weiden and Nicolson, II, 1984

Thompson, Simon
Classic Album: Great of the 1960s
The Works
Dorset 1989

Wilton, Stephen
The House that Britain Built
Comet House Publications, Manchester 1989
Art and Design: Archive (V & A) serial No. AAD 1995 12 23 27

Williamson, Judith
Decoding Advertising: Ideology and meaning in Advertising
London: Routledge, 1978

ARTICLES

Baker, Linda: "Space Observer", OBSERVER 11.1,
2 July 1995, pp. 26-28

Davidson, John: "Scotts' Birthday", THE SCOTSMAN,
April 1994, V & A Archive Pressing No. AAD 1995 12 15 1

Garner, Gail: "A Response to All That DESIGN", Planner 20,
February 1993, V & A Archive Pressing No. AAD 1995 12 15 1

Howe, Frances: "Retailer's Choice: Stephen Jones", DAILY MAIL,
October 1990, pg. 28

Thompson, Simon: "Re-Labelled", TIMES, 2 April 1994,
V & A Archive Pressing Section No. AAD 1995 12 15 1

CATALOGUES

Baley, Stephen, "Taste: an exhibition about values in design",
The Conran Foundation, 1983.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

OTHER SOURCES

The Victoria and Albert Museum
South Kensington
London SW7 2KL
Twentieth Century Furniture and the Textile Department.

The Victoria and Albert Library
South Kensington
London SW7 2RL
Thesis: Ben Weaver
"1963-1973 Lifestyle Retailing and the Media"

V & A Archive of Art and Design
Special Collections - HABITAT
23 Blythe Road
London W14 0QF

The Conran Shop
Michelin House
81 Fulham Road
London SW3 6RD

Habitat
The Heals Building
196 Tottenham Court Road
London W1P 9LD

Habitat
St. Stephen's Green
Dublin

Interview with The Habitat Press Officer
Fiona Somerville
Heal's Building
196 Tottenham Court Road
London W1P 9LD, December 1996

London W1P 9LD, December 1990

190 Tottenham Court Road

Heat's Building

Emma Somerville

Interview with The Habitat Project Officer

Dublin

St. Stephen's Green

Habitat

London W1P 9LD

190 Tottenham Court Road

The Heat's Building

Habitat

London SW3 6RD

81 Fulham Road

Richard House

The Contact Shop

London W14 0QE

73 Blythe Road

Special Collection - HABITAT

7 & 7A, Archives of Art and Design

1963-1973 Design Retailing and the Media

Press: Ben W. Carter

London SW7 2LH

South Kensington

The Victoria and Albert Library

Twentieth Century Furniture and the Textile Department

London SW7 2LH

South Kensington

The Victoria and Albert Library