

**Proceedings of the
1988 Urban Design Group
Annual Conference
A Vision for London?
Issue 31 June 1989 £3.00**

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David Lock gave a much appreciated after dinner
speech at the **Conference Dinner** held at the
Architectural Association on the Monday Evening
but unfortunately this was not recorded.

Terry Farrell's description of the schemes put forward for a
National Centre of Urban Design are included as an insert

Cover

Wren's Plan for the rebuilding of London and perspective of
Lavender Dock East by MacCormac Jamieson Prichard and
Wright

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FOREWORD

by John Billingham

'A Vision for London' was the seventh Annual Conference to be held by the Urban Design Group and has some relationship to issues raised at the first conference held in 1982 on the subject of Thameside.

Bryan Jefferson then immediate past president of the RIBA, in a closing address made the following statement:-

"I'm going to offer two final points on which again I hope you will agree with me: First, disappointment that the Secretary of State apparently can see no value in a strategic analysis and planning procedure for the River Thames as a whole. I find it unacceptable that he says that we have missed the boat - all we can do now is look at independent sites and say 'yes' or 'no' or 'maybe' ... Secondly, what were my satisfactions? Well, that the GLC is really deeply involved in a strategic study of the Thames.

"I want to offer a sort of resolution, in closing, and it is in two parts:

The first: That the Conference wishes all success to the GLC's strategic study and urges full participation by all those with something to contribute.

The second: That this Conference urges the Secretary of State to see Thameside as of unique importance and to devise a planning framework to ensure the highest standards of development."

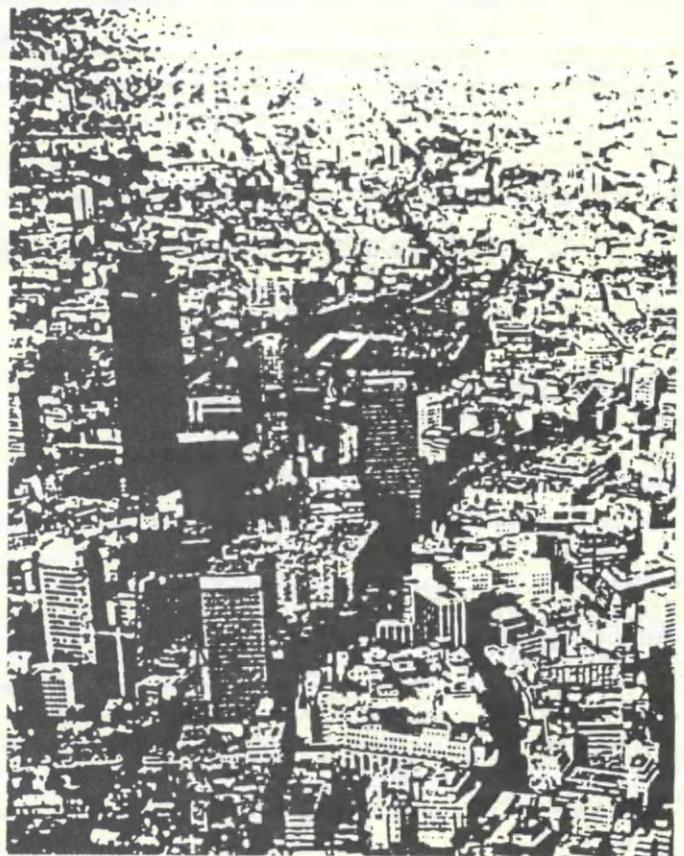
Since then the GLC has been abolished reducing the opportunities to secure a co-ordinated strategy for Thameside and in the interim period the first major development area in Docklands has progressed without a properly considered urban design framework.

It is not surprising that various speakers at the conference concluded that a new and effective metropolitan authority is needed to deal adequately with the problems of our capital city or in its absence that the London Planning Advisory Committee should be given executive powers. A massive investment is required not just for transport, which is urgently required, but for environmental measures to see that necessary changes bring overall benefits to the public realm.

The Conference was held at the Building Centre, London, and included a bus tour that included on its route Lansbury, Docklands, Broadgate and Kings Cross. The Urban Design Group would like to record its thanks to the Building Centre and Sheena Wilson in particular for giving great assistance with arrangements. The organising group for the conference included Arnold Linden, Lawrence Revill, Sebastian Loew, Alan Stones, Clinton Greyn, John Biggs and Adair Roche.

The Group would also like to record its thanks to the London Docklands Development Corporation for acting as host to the lunch on the first day and to acknowledge the sponsorship received from the following organisations:

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INTRODUCTION

by Kathy Stansfield

Christopher Wren had a vision for London. It was rejected! Many years later, the LCC Planners and Architects of the post-war period also had a vision: one of municipal patronage, of quality architecture available to all, of centres of excellence for the masses. The Festival of Britain, Lansbury housing estate, the early New Towns were some of the achievements of the period. But this Utopia seems to have gone wrong. The sixties and seventies lost the vision of the forties and fifties and today many critics look back in anger at the realities of these two decades.

This is a timely conference in view of the raised profile of architecture, urban design and planning - and particularly in view of the major developments taking place in London.

The divergence of "visions of London", not to say "visions of Britain", between developers, professionals, the public and Royalty provides much food for thought.

Are recent visions of London part of a brave new world gone bad? Are royal visions of London merely nostalgic, encouraging 'playgroup' architecture? Or do they articulate a deep felt criticism by the highest - and lowest - in the land that all is not well?

Does the planning system try to protect the environment and conserve the past at the expense of the future? Or have we too many mediocre professionals on both sides of the development coin? And are political visions of London confined merely to those which will catch votes and weaken the opposition - abolition of the GLC, discrediting of municipal patronage and abandoning planning controls in favour of private profit?

And where do urban design skills fit into this pattern? These are some of the issues that are the concern of this conference.

A VISION OF CHAOS ?

by Bob Jarvis

The themes of good conferences are already around us. The best papers pull out of the air what is already on our minds. The Urban Design Group conference "A Vision for London" was one of those. It had already started with the Jefferson Starship tape on my Walkman. At East Croydon she sat next to me and read up her notes on regional planning in south Wales. London is as much a region as a city, but is regional design a possibility? The 7.47 is a few minutes late at Victoria, takes a different track through Clapham. We don't see the crash, but the spectre of urban collapse haunts the conference.

We start off on the bus. Snapshots of visions that almost happened against a soundtrack of business gossip. Click. Lansbury, scuffed trainers and dayglo teddy bears put half-life back in the burned-out shops of this brave new world. Click. They set up a special budget for him to run. Click. The concrete barricade around Robin Hood Gardens. Click. Of course the commissioners know as much as the staff, and now they're all players they have to keep to the rules of the game. Click.

A free lunch is the price of Docklands presentation. No-one asks what exactly an elemental structure plan is. Click. Outdoors past the fibreglass dumb NY lamp-posts decorating the shed. Click. The dead cranes line up, waiting to become design features, toting brand marked bales. Property plc. Click. Broadgate. How many square metres of offices are needed to support a filofax kiosk? Click. And it's sunset over Kings Cross. 81 per cent say "Yes!" to redevelopment of this murky place of gravel silos and derelict potato wharves. But the community worker-priest on London Regeneration's videos won't be drawn in. He won't be edited into seeming consent. Five per cent want it left as it is. "Your property is a rumor of power" - Barbara Kruger. Click. Reflections on the canal side. Slow fade ...

The first day ends with the vision of famous figures, Ling. Hollamby. In person. But maybe they got it - almost. Visions that started with social groups, not corporate valences. Homes before square feet. Somewhere it's still 1951. But we're degenerated. We keep wanting visions but the viewfinder's been abolished. Now it seems nearer 1840 than 1940. Over breakfast we talk art. Broadgate's got 200 tons of Richard Serra and some dead souls by Segal, mummies of the fires yet to come. But would they commission their - almost - local band, the Bow Gamelan?

Tuesday gets off to a slow start. It takes Geoff Holland a while to shake off the caution of having been a chief officer. There's a lot of history being rewritten very quickly these days. Lots of hands washed in public. We live in interesting times, he says. I recall the same words as a Chinese curse. Gradually he unwinds. We are building a city of the dead, closer to Piranesi's carceri than his veduti di Roma. A landscape of private opulent enclaves against a backdrop of public squalor.

In Alphaville "conscience" is not in the dictionary any more. Revenger and reporter Lemmy Caution reads from Paul Eluard's Capital of Pain. Natasha can no longer understand the city her father has built on logic and prediction.

But Peter Rees is still a player. He has to believe in the city he builds. The face-to-face gossip that makes business that makes money that makes buildings that change like rag-

trade copies. This week it's Rogers. Next week it's deconstruction. And at night he walks home across the river.

Robin Clement, London Planning Advisory Committee deputy planner, is another realist, putting forward its strategy for environmental management. Preserve character. Encourage but locate growth. Consider the skyline carefully. All good post Lynch stuff. At SOM they eat this with cocktails before lunch.

By this point it seemed that the only possible visions for London were those of capitalist pragmatism. A good brief the best utopia we'd get. MARS? Not my flavour. Uthwatt-Barlow? Never touch the stuff. Greater London Council? Don't make me cry. But maybe there's hope in the Urban Design Group. It's got Ron "Spider" Herron to bowelise PCL all over Marylebone, just like Archigram. Hey man it's nearly 1965 now! History is catching up. Then the next generation Architectural Association man Nigel Coates, devil's advocate from Soft City, building architecture like B movies and cheap sci-fi rather than frozen-like dead-music. If he can do fish tanks and fragments for Katherine Hamnett what could he do for Kings Cross? NATO would be more fun than the London Regeneration Consortium, that's for sure.

Question time. "Be realistic - demand the impossible", scribble the situationists on the walls of the ruins. "Reality is only a social construction", argue the existentialists in the cellars of lost hope. "Environment isn't just icing sugar", kick back the determinists in the ice rink plaza. London starts at Barnwell Junction and ends in the catchback and rock-roll on Brighton beach - design that vision.

After lunch its seminars - "aesthetics". "development", "decentralisation". Aesthetics seems a better ground for visions. First Peter Low sometime partner of Gordon Cullen, reminds us of the basic values - human scale, public places, design strategies. Then Richard MacCormac, scribbling on the whiteboard, quotes Wittgenstein and Calvino, refers to Piranesi and Escherick, makes a lasagne Spitalfields. Our pasta of buildings needs its Bolognese of space and people. We don't live by durum wheat alone. I'd play nature to this culture any day.

In the plenary session, surprisingly, it's aesthetics that seems the most coherent. Lawrence Revill pulls the rambling dialectic into 13 apostolic points for a design vision. Then to close comes outgoing Royal Town Planning Institute president "You ain't seen nothin' yet" Francis Tibbalds with a final call to the barricades. The good news is that visions are alright! The bad news is that this is of Orwell's 1984 boot in the face. Forever. The good news is that the tide will turn; the bad that in the full flood of enterprise culture all the values of citizenship, or urbane civilization will be drowned. Forever. The good news is that there must be public debate; the RTPI must open its doors of perception. The bad news is that our present chaos is deliberate, a result of political choice, endorsed in democracy. Silence is consent.

And its out into the night. The 5.32 from London Bridge is cancelled. The 6.14 is late; vandals have dumped on the line. At East Croydon I put on my Walkman again. Ashes, ashes, all fall down, sings the Dead. 🏠

This review first appeared in PLANNING Jan 13th, 1989.

JOURNEY INTO DOCKLANDS

by Barry Shaw



To travel from the Lansbury Estate in Poplar to London Docklands is to go on a journey marked out by the milestones of town planning legislation. Lewis Silkin, in his introduction to the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, spoke about rebuilding blitzed areas, the re-equipment of industry, of building new communications networks and population dispersal. Some forty years later, the 1980 Local Government Planning and Land Act, which established the Urban Development Corporations, came about against a sadly similar background, that of a decaying inner city, derelict docks, redundant industrial plant and poor communications. The main difference was that the later Act addressed not expansion and dispersal, but the need to contract back into the void left in the urban heartland. It accepted the nature of a declining economy and set out to bring about a reversal.

The motivating factor in 1980, as in 1947, was "the national interest", an acceptance of the fact that London is one of the financial capitals of the world, and, as such, must continue to compete in a world market. The Government also recognised that building is at the leading edge of the economy and that a rapid response to changing economic opportunity was required. With powers similar to those of the original New Towns, the fundamental change has been the shift away from dependency on traditional public sector investment for regeneration to that of attracting the private sector.

The role of the LDDC is to initiate, to conceptualise and to co-ordinate in order to provide the essential infrastructure and to develop the vision. The overall concept of Inner City Task Forces was not new, but the creation of this relatively small team, supported by extensive use of consultants, to handle a project the size of London Docklands broke new ground. The result has been a highly effective catalyst for change.

Opportunity Planning

The Corporation was given development control powers but not the statutory "plan making" powers normally enjoyed by local authorities. This reflected the inner city context of an area already served by a network of services and already

covered by regional and local plans. It was also an acknowledgement by Government that the statutory plan making process was an inappropriate tool for the fast-track development led approach on which the LDDC's approach was to be based.

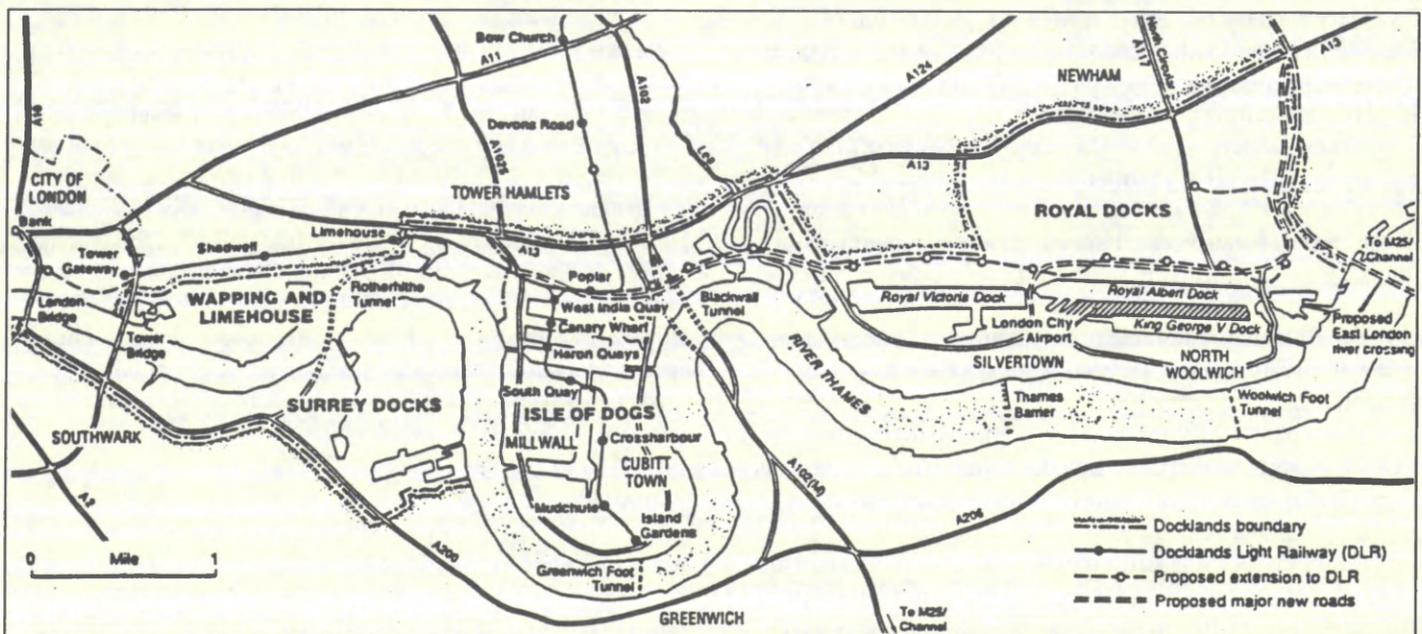
What followed in 1981, therefore, was a pragmatic approach to planning, carried out in what was then quite an experimental climate. Termed "opportunity planning" or "development led planning", it was market orientated, aiming to create a market where none had previously existed. There were, in fact, many separate exercises and many of them were entirely traditional. Indeed all parts of Docklands have now been covered by development framework proposals.

The first framework plan entitled "A Guide to Design and Development Opportunities" was published in 1982. The main study, illustrated by Gordon Cullen, has come to characterise the Corporation's approach to planning. In the "Townscape" tradition it created a somewhat loose vision of an attractive place, retaining water spaces and generating a building form that matched the scale of the docks and the regeneration ambitions of the Corporation. The study also contained more structured conceptual studies from Professor David Gosling, but these were relegated to an appendix. The document showed that urban design could be an effective marketing tool.

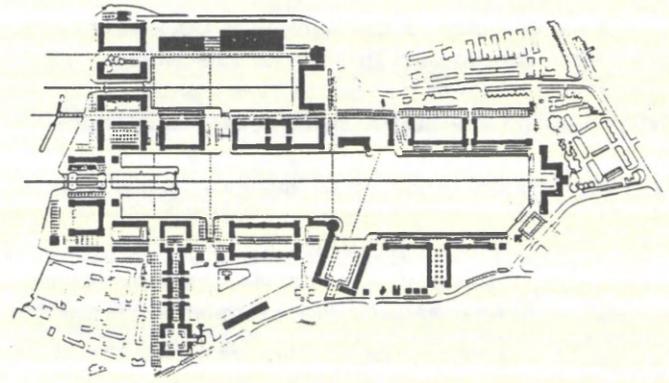
Development in the Isle of Dogs was underpinned by the designation later in 1982, of the Isle of Dogs Enterprise Zone. This gave investors a ten year rates holiday, certain tax incentives but, most critically, virtual freedom from planning legislation. This was followed with a £77 million investment in a light railway and, together with the location next to the City, it produced a uniquely advantageous development scenario. The early development of low-rise low-tech sheds was disappointing (and a reminder of the depth of the recession) but once the railway started to be built, offices began to be attracted.

Second Wave Regeneration

The signing up of the Canary Wharf proposals were, in many



Greenland Dock Urban Design Framework



ways, a vindication of the policy; this one project represented 50,000 jobs and 12.2 million square feet of office and commercial floorspace, an 'inward investment' of £4 billion. The pace of development has gathered a momentum not seen in Europe since the end of the nineteenth century. The change in scale of the development has meant that the whole planning scenario is having to be re-thought. (The Docklands Light Railway in being modified to increase its capacity, while further strategic transport links are being considered, and a £550 million road improvement programme is underway.) Seven years later, the Corporation is faced with what is being termed "second wave regeneration". Canary Wharf is to become the centre of a new satellite of the City and the resulting pressure on surrounding land values will mean that adjacent sites are to be redeveloped with new buildings and uses relevant to a new city.

To deal with this new wave of development pressure, we are reviewing the design work done to date and setting up new mechanisms to control and direct the future form of the emerging city. The Isle of Dogs strategy is being reworked, not only in the light of the local situation, but also taking account of the many other exercises that have been carried out elsewhere in the Corporation.

Conservation

If the Enterprise Zone represents the pressured leading edge of the Docklands operation, there are many more exercises which rely on the development of traditional planning and urban design. The Corporation has, from the start, taken the view that existing buildings and structures from the past should be retained and restored to provide the new Docklands with a continuing link with its tradition and history.

The LDDC conservation programme strongly reflects the area's unique heritage and the retention of the dock basins is the principal contribution. More conventional conservation has been structured around the creation of seven new conservation areas, in addition to the ten which it inherited. A further six have been identified and are in the process of being defined. This conservation programme is a mixed approach which seeks to preserve the character of areas such as Wapping, as well as restore fine individual examples of local architecture such as Tobacco Dock, the Galleria at London Bridge City, and New Concordia Wharf. Nearby at Butler's Wharf, the development area will result in the creation of an area similar to Covent Garden, and where only seven years ago, comprehensive demolition was all that was thought feasible.

Perhaps the most prominent examples of the policy are the magnificent Docklands churches. From the early years, the Corporation has considered these great architectural monuments to be of major visual and symbolic significance, and important centres of community life. A careful programme of assistance has resulted in the restoration of churches including St. Anne's Church, Limehouse All Saints, Poplar, St.

George-in-the-East and St. Mark's, Silvertown. It is the LDDC's intention to maintain a vigorous and comprehensive policy for the conservation of the features which give Docklands its distinctive character.

Housing
With little or no tradition of private housing in the inner city, the Corporation has had to develop from scratch one of

the basic building elements of the urban environment. Those developers who were prepared to build in Docklands in the early days, generally did not use architects or even have a language for building. In these locations the Corporation adopted a range of strategies. Architects were commissioned directly, as at Shadwell Basin and Compass Point, while international competitions were held for sites at Elephant Lane and Cherry Garden Pier. These produced not only schemes for the sites involved, but also a range of architects and developers who shared the vision for the future and were keen to work elsewhere in Docklands.

Social Housing has proved more difficult. Considerable refurbishment has been carried out and one of the largest and most innovative exercises has been carried out in the Downtown area of the Surrey Docks. Some seven estates of inter-war tenements had been largely abandoned, squatted and vandalised. The Corporation, working in partnership with the local authority, produced a development strategy scenario that would retain the flats and restore the area socially, as well as physically.

In urban design terms, it was seen as important to refurbish not only the individual buildings, but to see them as vital to the local environment. The Corporation is working with the Borough on re-surfacing the streets, rebuilding boundary walls and planting trees as part of a comprehensive programme of environmental improvement.

This scheme is particularly important, however, because it achieves a broad mix of tenure. In Acorn Walk, for instance, 25% of the flats are for fair rent, 25% are for shared ownership and the remaining 50% are for sale at prices generally below those for new build houses in the same area.

Greenland Dock

One of the most traditional pieces of development planning has also been carried out south of the river Thames at Greenland Dock. (It is interesting to note that this exercise, carried out in conjunction with lead consultants Conran Roche, was started at the same time as the Isle of Dogs study.) The project began with a careful survey of the historic nature of the area and examined a series of alternative scenarios. These were marked up into a number of plans which clearly established the physical parameters of the development.

The resulting plan, effectively a master plan, established a clear set of physical criteria for the development of the site. These were expressed in a number of ways, including a three dimensional model which established three dimensional relationships between the proposed elements of this mixed development.

The main infrastructure in Greenland Dock was funded by the Corporation to the highest possible standards. Most of the individual sites were disposed of by design and bid tenders. Two of the most successful pieces of architecture, however, were the result of negotiations against land values established by adjacent sites. Even though this scheme is still only partially complete, the Greenland Dock development was commended in the 1987 RICS Inner City Awards.

Two significant points emerge. It is important that the financial returns on this high quality and initially expensive development will produce a notional profit such that the site will be developed at no cost to the public purse. Equally significant has been the establishment of an overall planning framework for the Surrey Docks.

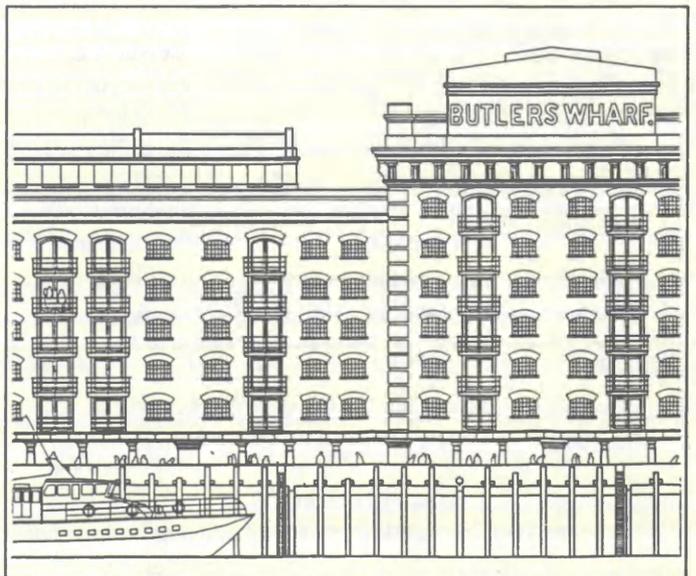
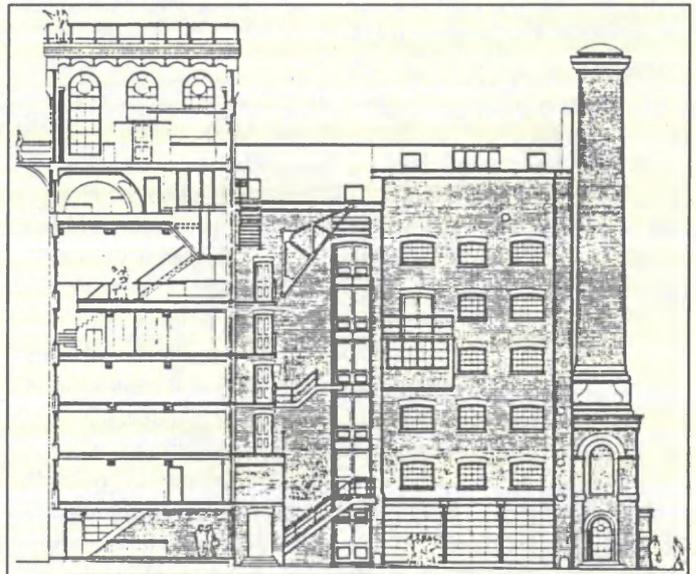
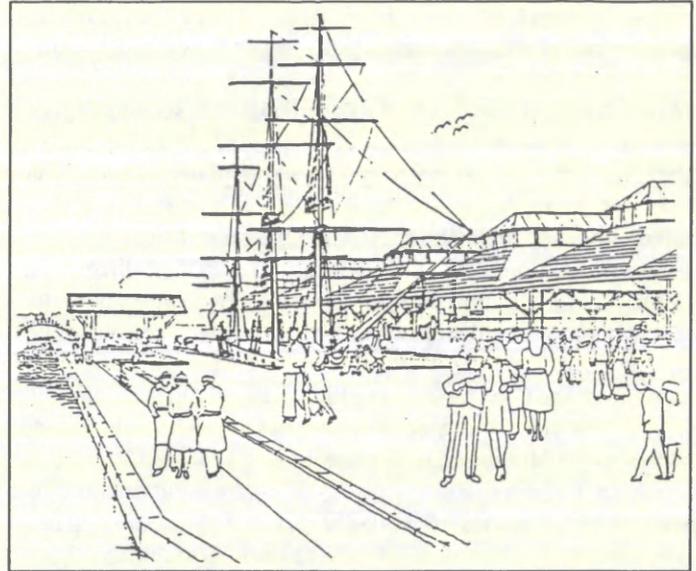
Conclusions

The LDDC is at a critical point in the development of Docklands. It has moved on from having to attract investment to a position where it can consolidate and build on what has been achieved. New emphasis is to be placed on gaining benefits for the local community and this has been reflected in the structure of the Corporation. The creation of my own post as Head of Urban Design similarly reflects a change of emphasis from a project-based structure to policy-based, strategically-directed development.

The image of London Docklands is changing. The Royal Docks will be developed on the basis of a series of frameworks which incorporate detailed urban design guidelines. The process of change is being informed by traditional techniques which are focused on the development of the three dimensional nature of the public realm. A new framework is to be prepared for the Isle of Dogs which will guide the development of the new city. The vision that established London Docklands is being developed to ensure the creation of a built environment that meets the needs and aspirations of the whole Docklands community. 🏠

References

- Isle of Dogs: "A guide to Design and Development Opportunities" London Docklands Development Corporation, 1982.
- Docklands Heritage: "Conservation and Regeneration in London Docklands" London Docklands Development Corporation 1987



Examples of conservation in Docklands restoring fine examples of individual local architecture.

- Top: Tobacco Dock**
- Middle: New Concordia Wharf**
- Bottom: Butler's Wharf**

A REVIEW OF THE PAST

By Ted Hollamby

My first 'Visions of London' stemmed from the socially class ridden, physically smog enveloped London of the late 30's and the writings of Le Corbusier, Gropius, Arthur Korn - Rasmussen (London, The Unique City). As a School of Arts and Crafts student at Hammersmith, and follower of the MARS group and its famous 'Plan for London', I witnessed the first part of its destruction in the fire bombing and destruction of the City, and the Port of London in 1940 before departing for the Far East and relative safety in the Marines. I got back to share the post war years of austerity, hope and intense idealism with the LCC Architects Department after a stint with the Miners' Welfare Commission; to experience the over-confidence of the 60's and 70's at Lambeth; and 'All Innocence Lost' you might say to start a new 'spin of the wheel' at Docklands in the 80's.

But first I must backtrack and endeavour to re-erect a few of the lost, or perhaps just forgotten, signposts which we put up in the post war years. Some of those signposts are still relevant, as well as the 'dead-ends', which inevitably are better remembered by those critics who we are told say 'look back in anger'. In doing so, I must sketch in the context within which our ideas, our aspirations and our actions were developed.

Though the pre war political and economic set up had been decisively rejected in the 1945 General Election, which brought the Attlee Government into power, the country was economically exhausted by the war. Yet it was in those days that much of the boldest thinking emerged.

First there was education - especially Comprehensive Schools. New schools had the light and airy look pioneered by Sturatt Johnson-Marshall at Hertfordshire under the stimulus of the 1944 Education Act. London housing, at first using pre war models, was galvanised by the exciting new LCC Department set up in 1951 under Robert Matthew and led by Whitfield-Lewis. Roehampton was more than just a vision a la Le Corbusier, or a la Sweden; it was a statement in bricks and mortar and reinforced concrete, that architecture with a capital 'A' was there to provide comfort, beauty and enlightenment for the ordinary people set in a mature landscape, itself of incredible beauty. That had also been the message of the 1951 Festival of Britain - a concert hall, restaurants, exhibitions, fountains, sculpture - light, colour and laughter pervaded the atmosphere of Hugh Casson's vision on the South Bank - the Festival of Britain it was called, and it was both festive and serious. Serious in the ideas in layout and design that it stimulated. At Lansbury a model housing neighbourhood was built that can more than stand comparison with what happened later. The mood of Roehampton triumphed then with its vivacity and elan, but Lansbury's modest comfort can now be seen in a different light - though not so Lansbury Market. Most dramatic of all was the effect of the Clean Air Act. Buildings were now worth cleaning and architecture worth looking at. Who knows how much the new found beauty in old buildings, resulting from Public Health legislation, has been the reason for the growth of the conservation movement since the 1950's.

At the strategic level too, the creation of the London Green Belt to restrict the outward sprawl of London, the removal of polluting industry, and the establishment of a ring of 'New Towns' round London are widely accepted as major

achievements of British planning. Ebenezer Howard had pioneered such ideas at the turn of the century and at Letchworth in 1902 and Welwyn in 1920 had put his ideas into practice with experimental 'Garden Cities' financed by private capital; but it was the legislation of the Attlee Government in the late 40's that turned experiment into planned action that now, apart from environmental advantages - a sufficient record in itself - is providing a handsome income for Mr. Lawson.

Restricting the growth, or rather, the sprawl of London, was one side of the medal - planned redevelopment of bombed and outworn London was the other.

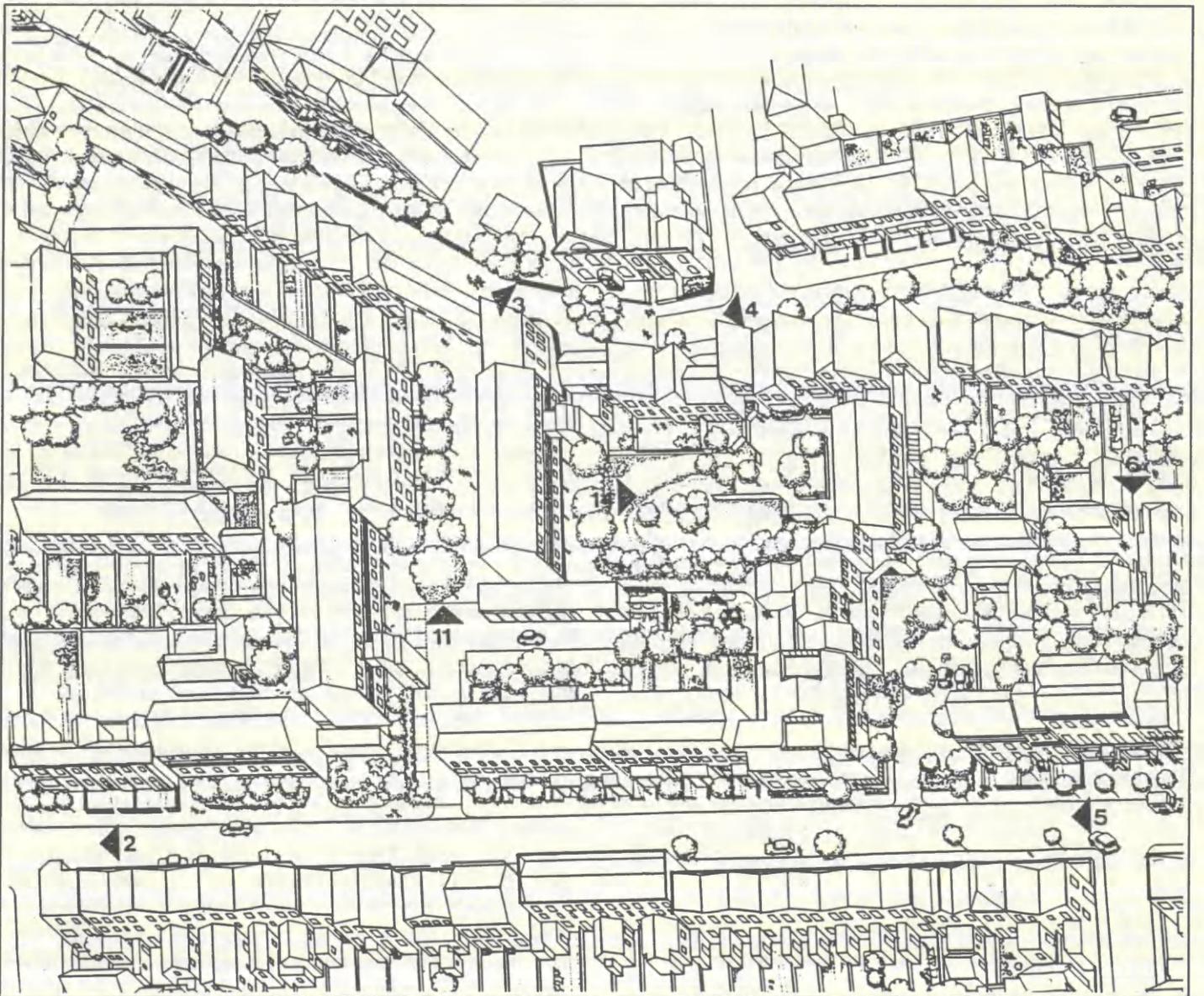
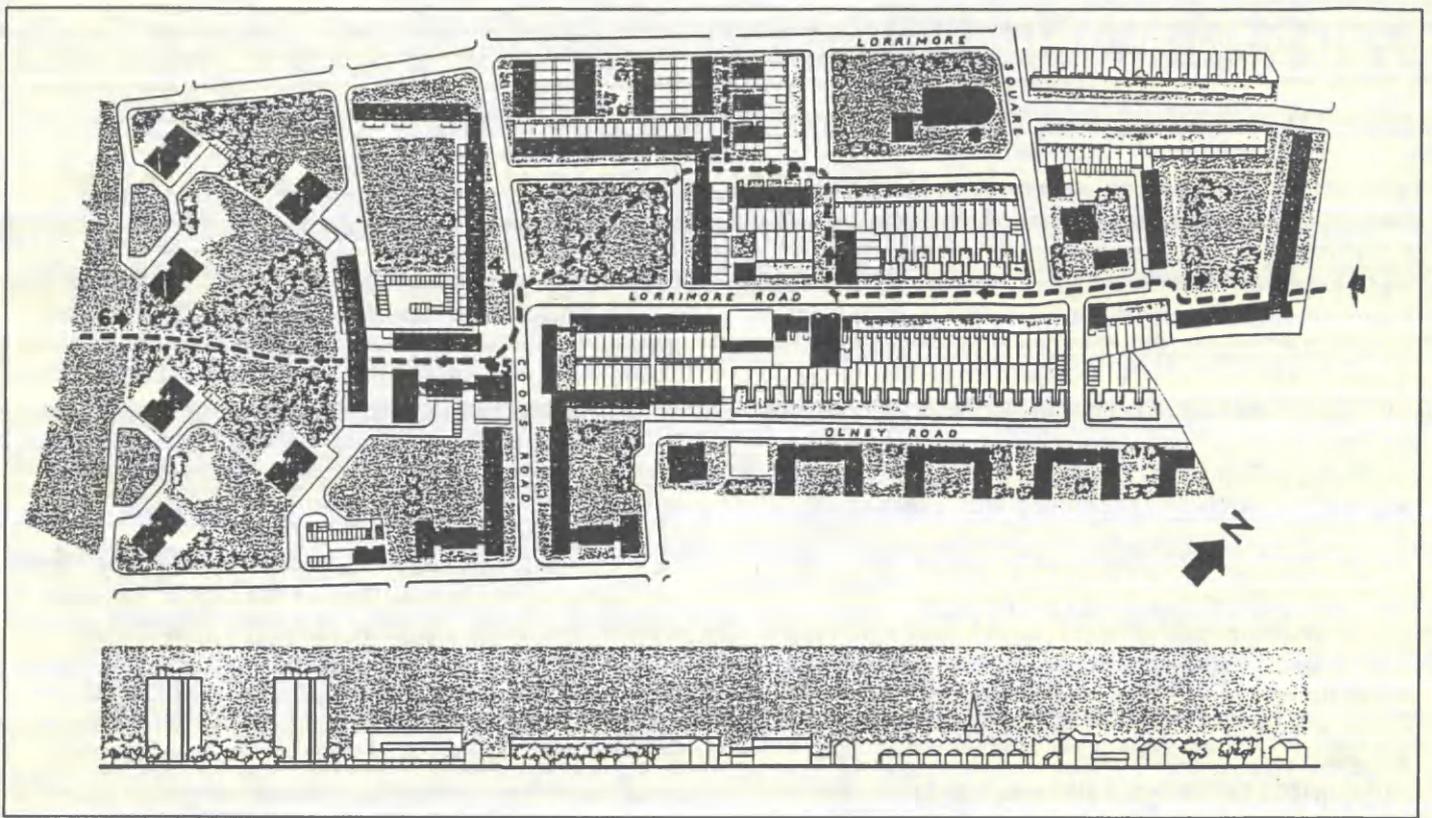
Comprehensive Development

How to do it? - Comprehensive development was one answer exemplified by the Stepney/Poplar CDA. Replacing the height restrictions of the London Building Act by 'daylighting' control was another advocated by William Holford at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning - 'let the offices of the future reach up to the skies and the light'. Both CDA's and daylight controls have, with hindsight, proved a mixed blessing, but it was the density zoning advocated in the County of London Plan carried through into the London Development Plan that was the dead-end for which we have least to be thankful for.

Abercrombie had postulated a plan for London, based on its molecular 'Urban Village' structure, but he had also accepted the Valuation Surveyor's idea of concentric rings of density zones, which cut right across the community structure.

Private land ownership and values related to the amount of development permitted were, and still are, the factors which most distort development patterns to the disadvantage of the rational, humane and sensitive forms which should respond to the 'Genus Loci'. Yet within those limitations, the Architects Department of the LCC became, under the leadership of Matthew and Martin, Whitfield-Lewis, Kenneth Cambell and Arthur Ling, a Mecca for young architects and town planners, and its work brought international recognition and fame. On the positive side too, I would include the beginnings of an understanding of the vital role that conservation must play in any imaginative planning strategy. In the 50's at Warwick Crescent along the Grand Union Canal in Paddington, at Brandon Estate in Kennington, and the Royal Naval Victualling Yard of Samuel Pepys in Deptford, Oliver Cox and I - he in the north, me in the south - led teams of architects and planners to demonstrate how new building could take place without widespread demolition of the old and familiar. Rehabilitation was the word - the conversion and adaptation of historic buildings and familiar urban scenery to new uses and the continuation of old ones saw the birth of conservation techniques in practice. Techniques which in the coming years were to challenge the widespread bulldozing of comprehensive development.

At the same time, in 1957, the ABT (Association of Building Technicians), which was a supposedly more up to date title than AASTA its former incarnation, held a conference on 'Housing the City Dweller' at which it was suggested that London's renewal should be diverted towards a vision of 'Towns within Cities' - another version of Abercrombie's 'communities'. 'Areas of high density, centred within various existing or new communities throughout Greater London,



would assist in solving housing problems locally, and coupled with a deliberate use of defined open space, would give social, of high buildings and local green belts to define the communities, failed to dent in any major way the land value pattern of density zones; but the conference did lead to the setting up of SPUR (Society for the Promotion of Urban Renewal) under the wing of the Housing Centre, and with Lionel Esher as its Chairman. SPUR's activities were vigorous and influential and it prepared a major exhibition for the RIBA Symposium on Urban Renewal held in May 1959. Although the basic pattern of the concentric ring density zoning was not radically affected by these efforts, they were not entirely without effect. I led a study at Erith for a new town which was later expanded in concept to Thamesmead, and at Shirley Oaks in Croydon, a village within its own green belt of a former children's home inherited by Lambeth from the LCC. In Bexley the same thing is being done by the council with Countryside Homes, and at Beckton in Docklands.

The London Government Act brought a new dimension to the planning of London, including the devolving of planning and development responsibilities to powerful new London Boroughs.

The GLC was created out of the embers of the old LCC, to prepare a Strategic Plan, and hold the ring for London-wide planning issues. In my view it failed because it was saddled with functions and an electoral system that virtually ensured competition with the new boroughs. In the development field it eventually moved away from this under the influence of that wise old bird Fred Pooley, and its historic buildings division under Ashley Barker earned the GLC an international reputation for its outstanding work; but electorally it could not rise above local issues and involvements.

Lambeth

At Lambeth, I experienced the exhilaration of starting from scratch and with elected members as eager collaborators. We developed the techniques of conservation on a much broader scale to become a fundamental part of the planning process, in which the amenity societies played an important role: the Clapham Society and the Norwood Society - there were five or six societies in the Borough - particularly so.

Yet it has to be said that this was against a background of pressure for larger and larger housing programmes from Government and politicians of all shades, and we should not forget the traumatic effect of Ken Loach's "Cathy Come Home" on BBC Television. Neither should we forget the enormous pressure on the Government of demographic changes in 'Household Structures'. Government housing subsidies actually encouraged high building, but in Lambeth we only built a handful of point blocks - I was against the Corbusian School of high slabs, as I had been at the LCC. Interestingly, the towers in Lambeth were not vandalised or covered in 'graffiti'; words, incidentally, that only became part of the social vocabulary of the 70's - perhaps because the management policy at that time was strongly supportive of the provision of family houses with gardens, even at high densities.

Eventually the Lambeth local development plan brought most of the Borough within 100 ppa density but by that time it

Top: Brandon Estate, Kennington Park; Plan & Section: Combining new and old in the 'Twilight Zone'- the antithesis of bulldozer planning.

Bottom: Integrating old and new - Axonometric of Clapham Manor as built. Manor Street in foreground.

was too late and much damage from too high densities even without high building had already been done. In retrospect, I think Lambeth's housing, open space, conservation and social services policies and physical development were highly successful, particularly the housing for the elderly. Though there were a number of large scale developments, we were, I think, particularly successful in developing in-fill housing, together with housing improvement that retained something of the flavour of the Borough's diversity.

But was it at the expense of the commercial, shopping and civic centre at the heart of the Borough - Brixton? We had not learned how to plan for commercial and business expansion and growth and we were locked into a planning philosophy that depended on social and economic certainties - full employment and social engineering. That was one thing; the other was the GLDP (Greater London Development Plan). Brixton had the misfortune to be located just where the so called Motorway Box (Ringway 1) was planned to cross the radial A23 at the same point as the existing orbital BR route to Victoria. We had a highly innovative plan, including a great transport interchange station at its centre, but beyond the Borough's resources. Delay, uncertainty and gargantuan complexity stopped the redevelopment of Brixton literally 'in its tracks', although we did succeed in bringing the Victoria Line to Brixton.

The combination of these factors was disastrous for Brixton and has to be seen as a failure of the old style planning system.

Docklands

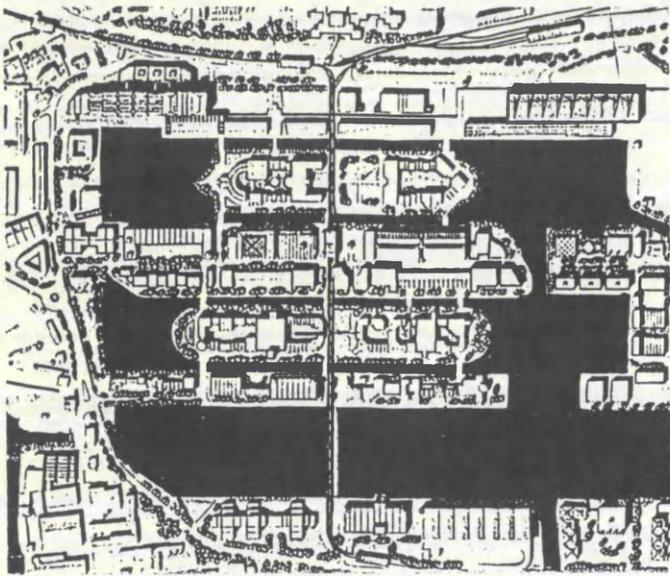
In Docklands that failure was magnified by the enormous dimensions of the problem. Excluded from the initial Development Plan and the GLDP, as 'operational land', the significance of its terminal decline throughout the 60's and 70's was not understood by politicians, economists and planners alike. At first the traditional remedies were sought - prepare a plan. But what sort of plan? Travers Morgan, appointed by the DoE, canvassed a range of options from Euro-City to a recreational playground for London.

The GLC, however, believed that it could, together with the Docklands Boroughs, solve the problem and the Docklands Joint Committee was set up to produce a 'Strategic Plan'. For its part the Government was only too willing to allow its traditional enemy to handle that particular 'hot potato', but the approach to the problem was still the same - in effect the 'East London Consolidated' option from the Travers Morgan study.

Several years later and with little to show apart from the draining of the Beckton Marshes, the Government once again threw down the challenge in the 1980 Planning and Land Act - a new form of Development Corporation. If it worked for the New Towns, why not for the derelict Docklands! Thus the LDDC was born - though not without the most strenuous opposition from the GLC, the local Boroughs and community activists.

The difference from past models was that the LDDC had to plan and be operational from the word go - we were not to produce a Master Plan. Planning and development had to go hand in hand. Planning with flexibility - entrepreneurial planning whose techniques had to be learnt as we went along. Yet, with a clear objective - it was, said Michael Heseltine, to bring about the 'Permanent Regeneration' of Docklands - not just redevelopment in a technical sense, but permanent regeneration. Social regeneration which would be self sustaining when the LDDC, its job done, had faded into history.

But - the great problem for the LDDC was how to obtain



Docklands: The proposal for the Canary Wharf area, contained in the Isle of Dogs Guide to Design and Development Opportunities 1982.

quick results, yet set high standards in planning and design. Fast action, visibly apparent on the ground had to be achieved if the confidence of the public, the Government, and most important of all the Private Financial Sector were to be secured.

Policies

In the 'Shadow' period up to July '81, some fundamental policies were formulated and discussed.

Firstly, there was to be no more filling in of the water areas of the docks, that offered so much for the future environmental quality of the area.

Secondly, the isolation of the area was to be attacked and public transport improved by building an overground railway to link Docklands with the City and Central London, with new bus services to isolated areas such as the Isle of Dogs.

Thirdly, a major programme of 2000 homes a year, many for sale to owner occupiers was to be started immediately.

Fourthly, the repair and restoration of historic buildings was to be supported and conservation areas designated to augment those already existing.

Fifthly, the reclamation of polluted land and an infrastructure programme of water, gas, electricity and drainage services on a vast scale, with roads of high visual quality to be carried out to serve the Enterprise Zone in the Isle of Dogs.

But what sort of place was Docklands to be for these works to serve - an industrial area? - a pleasure ground for London? - a residential suburb of workers' housing like much of the post war East End? and, if the latter, where would the workers work and what work would they do? Some of us apprehended the fundamental changes - equivalent to a new Industrial Revolution, painfully taking shape throughout Britain's entire economic structure. New high technology, low labour intensive forms of industry and services were appearing, particularly in information and communications technology - computer, electronic and micro-engineering - design and marketing services, newspaper printing and so on.

These were the sort of new, clean industries emerging from new technology that Docklands would seek to attract:

But to attract business investment in such new industries, in which the difference between workshop, office, studio and laboratory were minimal and interchangeable, required new sorts of buildings freed from the constriction of 'Use Class' planning controls - and as architecturally transient and impermanent as the Festival of Britain. Housing and environment of a calibre to attract choosy newcomers and stem the outward flood of young talented eastenders seeking homes with an image of tradition and domestic comfort, something the old style municipal estates could not do.

All this was critical to any attempts to transform Docklands from its old image as the 'Back Yard' of London.

Promotional design was therefore a priority, if we were to sell this new image of Docklands to the outside world. The Isle of Dogs Design Guide - area planning strategies and frameworks, reflecting the community based village like structure - often deeply parochial - of Wapping and Limehouse, Rotherhithe and Bermondsey were conservation led. 'Planning Strategies' and 'Development Briefs' pointed the way for areas of development opportunity such as Greenland Dock and The Royal Docks.

Policy papers covering specific subjects such as landscape strategy, conservation, public access to water areas and the River were produced to back up the Development Control work of the corporation.

Conclusions

It was the aim of those of us who helped to pioneer the regeneration of Docklands, to fundamentally shift the economic, social and physical balance of London away from the old West End/East End polarisation. If that intention is realised - and I hope it is - does it mean that those earlier visions of a London before we were overwhelmed by the motor vehicle and consumerism, before caring and public service were ridiculed and crushed, before private profit was seen as the main motivation to solve our urban problems - does it mean those visions were mere illusions? I think not! Certainly they were flawed; equally certainly valuable new planning and development techniques have been learnt; but equally these new techniques show dangerous tendencies to get out of control. Canary Wharf is more than just a warning. Fleet Street and Kings Cross - not to mention Paternoster and Poultry, and how many other such massive redevelopments are round the corner. In the free market - which has its virtues and its strengths - where and how will such developments be controlled and coordinated with transportation investment? Is the ragbag of ideas unleashed recently by the Secretary of State for Transport what we will get? - who will control London wide views and skylines and historic areas? and who will clean up London - the degeneracy fed by alcohol and drugs - the filth of street rubbish and garbage - London's tube and suburban railways covered in the mindless graffiti of sadistic defacement - all symptoms as Michael Heseltine said at the Conservative Party Conference "of an economically affluent but spiritually and humanely less caring society". Yes the post war utopias were flawed - but was it the buildings or the people that inhabited them that produced the concrete jungles?

Architecture starkly mirrors the society it serves and which creates it. Did the New Brutalism create brute characteristics in society or did it reflect them?

But I must desist from straying into the path of others who will be speaking - though I am looking forward to taking part in the debate. 🏠

THE COUNTY OF LONDON VISION

by Arthur Ling

I have been asked to remind you of the planning situation in the forties and fifties when the County of London Plan was prepared and launched on a receptive people who had made many sacrifices to win the war and were determined to win the peace too. But to do this effectively I must go back a few more years to 1936.

Pre-war Planning

Planning control then, was administered under the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act with an interim two dimensional zoning plan and control provisions covering heights and densities of development. The guiding lines were relatively simple and definite. Office buildings were controlled in height by the 100 ft length of the fire brigade's longest ladders, after this height there had to be set backs to form terraces from which fires could be fought. There are still many examples of this control on building design to be seen today.

Pre-war Housing

For new residential development in the suburbs there were equally simple controls - 12 dwellings to the acre for semi-detached and 8 dwellings to the acre for detached.

The situation in the inner areas was more complicated for the problems of slum clearance and rehousing were paramount. High land values and the number of people to be rehoused on restricted sites resulted in the standard pseudo georgian five storey blocks of flats which was the limit for residential buildings without lifts. Hence the nature of pre-war housing in flats by the L.C.C. and such charitable institutions as Peabody. Even so there was an overspill which demanded "cottage estates" in the suburbs or outside the County altogether. These represented some of the finest achievements of the architects and planners of the L.C.C.

The Wartime Vision for London

With the outbreak of war, planning and development, except for air raid shelters, came to a standstill. In 1941, a year after the first major blitz on London, the Government asked the County Council to prepare a plan for post-war reconstruction which would provide the basis for dealing with war damaged areas and help to determine the kind of planning legislation required.

Two years were allowed for the preparation and publication of the plan - a daunting task when you consider the difficulties of obtaining basic information for research purposes when, for instance most cars were immobilised, the population census was replaced by an estimate and other statistical references were distorted by abnormal wartime conditions.

The Three Reports

Parallel with this undertaking, work had been or was proceeding on a series of three important reports. The first of these, the Barlow Report, advocated decentralisation of work and people from the London area, partly to reduce wartime vulnerability but also to secure a more equitable distribution of work opportunities throughout the country. With this as a starting point there eventually emerged a system of regional grants and controls to encourage existing firms to move out of London or new firms to establish themselves in other parts of the country. This report led to the New Towns Act which took this policy further and enabled 28 new towns to be built in Britain. The rest of the world seems to consider that this

represents Britain's outstanding post war planning achievement. The second report was that of Uthwatt. This looked ahead and tried to deal with basic financial problems involved when planning controls restricted the extent of development to that already existing on the site or less. It was an attempt to control the force of market economics by balancing compensation with betterment. Development rights were to be nationalised with compensation which would come from betterment charges on developments and land which gained betterment values from planning permissions. Legal provisions were included in the Town and Country Planning Act 1947.

The third report was the Scott Report which dealt with the problems of the countryside eventually leading to the establishment of National Parks, the Countryside Commission and a conservation policy.

The Position Today

What is the position today on the policies which these reports initiated?

One has sadly to report that the regional re-distribution of work and population that arose from the Barlow Report has been undermined by the continued concentration of activities in the south-east and a change from a balanced regional policy to an ad hoc policy treating every case on its merits. The County of London Plan proposed the decentralisation of some 300,000 people and equivalent employment opportunities in industry, commerce and Government. Now, the reverse policy has been put into operation - the more work spaces that can be crammed into the south-east and central London the better - despite what this means in increased traffic movements and congestion. Moreover the New Towns programme has been brought to a standstill while Nicholas Ridley is making things worse by advocating greenfield sites for new townships near London. Gone too are the policies of the G.L.C. for the siting of more sources of employment in the suburbs near the railway stations and more residential development in the central area so as to reduce the commuting load on the railways and roads.

The Uthwatt proposals had a much shorter life. There was a not unexpected political opposition and with a change of Government they were abandoned on grounds of the difficulty of finding adequate finance for the compensation involved without causing inflation and of the administrative complications involved in collecting betterment. Market forces were reasserting themselves.

The Scott proposals and subsequent policies have so far survived but there is concern that privatisation of water and some aspects of national parks might undermine them. The fear that if the privatised bodies wish to increase their profitability for shareholders then the development of land they own would not escape their attention.

To return to the County of London Plan which in retrospect could be described, I suppose, as a Vision for London. Some of you may be thinking - yes but its 'old hat' now; the vision has faded if not disappeared altogether. You would be mistaken in thinking this for the plan was translated into the first post war Development Plan 1951 for London under the Town & Country Planning Act 1947 with a 5 year priority programme within a 20 year longer term plan. Many of its proposals are still being carried out today or have already

been carried out, such as the decentralisation of Covent Garden Market, electrification of railways, smoke abatement, the transformation of the South Bank and the Thames barrage. **The Community Structure**

The starting point for the plan was people and their social groupings. London was not treated as an amorphous urban mass but analysed and planned in relation to its many communities which developed around the villages from which London grew - and which provided the focal points for local loyalties. Despite local government reorganisation which has upset the correlation between communities and borough boundaries Londoners still know where they live - it's Hammersmith not Hammersmith and Fulham, it's Stepney or Poplar not Tower Hamlets. The aim of the plan was "to accept the best of existing London, to respect and develop its structure and major use zones and to remedy its manifest defects". It was also intended that communities and the neighbourhoods within them should be the basis of planning for education and other public social services. A supporting plan was prepared suggesting a revision of electoral ward boundaries so that they corresponded with this structure but Lord Latham to whom this was submitted was not keen - it was too political!

The intentions were fine but to what extent have they been realised? Has the community structure been recognised or enhanced or has only lip service been paid to it?

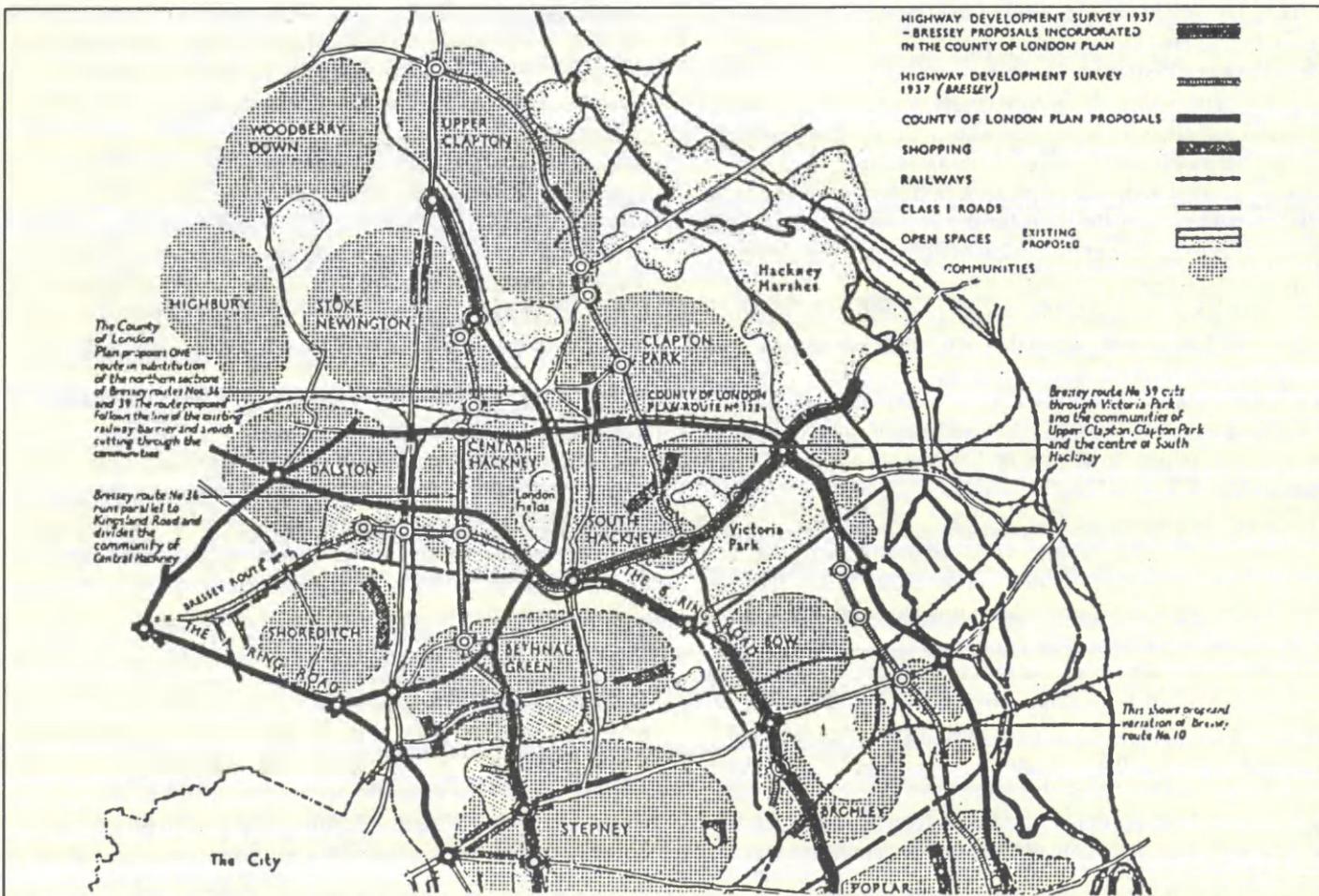
So far as the boroughs are concerned, because they are much closer to the people and their needs, I found on my recent visits and in their plans that they regard the community structure as an essential planning tool. Whitehall, however, appears to take a more detached view. Mrs. Thatcher has in

fact declared that she only recognises the individual and the family; community life for her, does not appear to exist. But Mr. Heath also did not appreciate the importance of communities as they existed in his local government reorganisation. It is easy to recognise a village community if surrounded by countryside but in an almost continuous urban area it requires a special effort. Some of the new open spaces in the Plan were located between communities so as to give emphasis to their identity on either side. An example is the new Mile End Open Space (which now exists) alongside the Grand Union Canal separating Stepney and Poplar. Under the reorganisation of 1965 these two communities were, with Bethnal Green, brought together into the enlarged borough of Tower Hamlets. There were many other amalgamations which hurt local pride. They were justified on the basis that economic and administration convenience required an average population 200,000. In the case of the East End the change of name helped to overcome objections although two planning offices had to be set up, one in Stepney another in Poplar. But in the West End there was louder protest. In the case of Kensington, Chelsea insisted that their name be added before the Order was confirmed. Changes by agreement took place later in respect of Hammersmith which became Hammersmith/Fulham. Not only was Fulham added but it was agreed that one Council meeting each year should be held in the old Fulham Town Hall.

Departmentalism

Another enemy of community planning and development in London has been departmentalism in both local and national government administration. What was really needed was the breakup of the departmental system into professional teams

Diagram from LCC Plan 1943 indicating the community structure. The line of earlier proposals for main traffic roads was altered so that main roads followed the line of existing barriers between communities.



serving community committees looking at all aspects of development. Instead we had separate committees for housing, education, open space, roads, etc., with planning also separated and often fighting a losing battle or regarded a damn nuisance. The lessons were learned in new towns where the practice of establishing joint teams to produce and execute plans and designs for complete neighbourhoods eventually became the rule rather than the exception. This arrangement brought together architects, town planners, engineers, landscape architects, education planners, social welfare officers and so on, so that departmental divisions were broken down. In this way the isolation of planning as a regulatory fault finding process including the fussing over elevations, was removed.

Housing

Housing is the major land use in community development and if organised on a separate departmental basis it can be detrimental to community cohesion. What happens is that a Housing Committee asks for a search to be made throughout their area for sites for development and they are treated as separate Council estates rather than integral parts of communities. Moreover if votes depend on numbers rather than neighbourhoods pressure mounts for higher densities if necessary in tall blocks of flats. The original Lansbury neighbourhood as illustrated in the 1951 Development Plan had no tall blocks but after the demonstration of the first stage at the time of the Festival of Britain the pressure for increased densities came from the Government and the Councillors and a low rise scheme for the rest of the neighbourhood became high rise. The policy over the County as a whole was successful in quantity but, with certain exceptions, not in quality.

At this point I must say that although there is very little in what the present Government is doing or not doing in the sphere of housing with which I agree, I do agree with one aspect of its policy namely that the Local Authorities, whilst they should participate in the formulation of housing needs, should not be responsible for housing construction and administration. I think the whole idea of 'Council Estates' undermines planning for communities by giving a ghetto-like character for the housing of those groups who cannot obtain or afford a mortgage, groups which in the future will represent an increasing proportion of the population. I favour much greater use of Housing Associations assisted where necessary financially, with owners and tenants deeply involved and maintenance decentralised as is happening in many boroughs today. However I do not favour private landlords taking over the existing housing for the purpose of gentrifying and officifying it and raising rents so that the present tenants cannot afford to remain or return.

Unfortunately despite the heavy backlog of maintenance required on post war housing the Government, by rate capping and reductions in investment finance has held back both urgent new construction and the maintenance of the existing housing stock. The allocations of finance to boroughs have been cut by three quarters in the last ten years, as shown below:-

1979/80	£ 1,356m
1988/89	£ 372m (Source Hansard)

This has resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of those on the housing waiting list in Greater London who have been rehoused.

1980/81 11% of those on the waiting list rehoused

1986/87 only 3% rehoused and there were still 264,000 on the list with 80-90,000 new applicants.

Lettings by local authorities in Greater London were as follows:-

1980/81	50,200
1986/87	29,100

In these circumstances it is not surprising that the number of homeless households has increased three fold over a ten year period from 10,190 in 1977 to an estimated figure of 32,160 in 1988. Add to these the homeless households in Bed and Breakfast which has risen from 890 in 1981 to 8,542 in 1987 - almost a tenfold increase and the total number of homeless households is 40,702. If the average household size for the homeless is the same as for London generally, i.e. 2.48 in 1986 this means a total of up to 100,000 individuals in this homeless predicament. One sees the end of the Government's process of virtually eliminating local authority and other forms of subsidised housing in the number of people seeking a night's shelter in flimsy cardboard boxes under the railways and road arches.

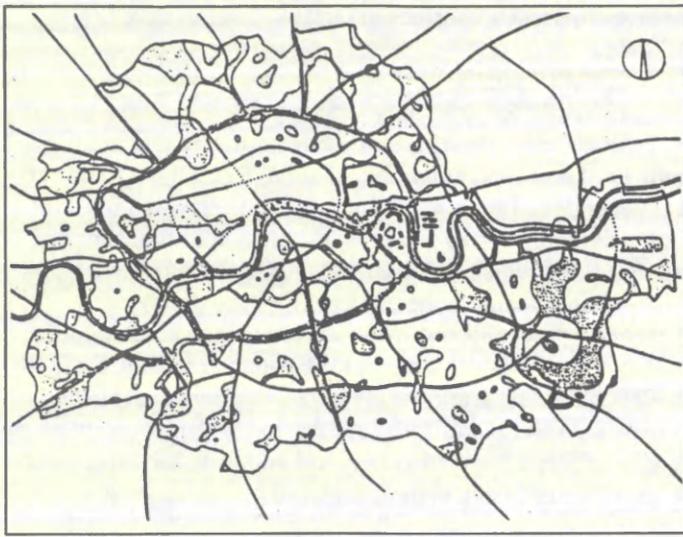
It is not surprising therefore to learn that "homeless people in the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham may be put in temporary relocatable accommodation instead of Bread and Breakfast". 14 Swiftplan units with 20 years life are being tested out with 28 families from the housing waiting list. Back to the prefabs but this time shared between two households. This is worse than where we started in 1945.

Open Spaces

One set of proposals in the County of London Plan which has been acted upon more persistently than others is the provision of new open spaces and sports facilities. A national and international Sports Centre was proposed at Crystal Palace. It is there now. A British Tivoli or Vauxhall Gardens was proposed in Battersea Park. It was established there but has since closed. Many new riverside open spaces were proposed and have been provided. One of the largest of these is the extension of Southwark Park to the river. St. Katherine's Dock (the only redundant dock at the time) was proposed for leisure purposes and although it has taken on a slightly different character it can be regarded as a leisure improvement. I found on my tour of the boroughs and by examination of their latest development plans that the deficiency formula of the Plan - that everyone should be within a walking distance of 400 metres of a public open space of reasonable size is still very much in operation. Several of the new parks originated from areas of war devastation; examples are Mile End Park between Stepney and Poplar which eventually will link with Victoria Park and stretch southwards almost to the river. In Southwark there is the Bricklayer's Arms Park between the old boroughs of Southwark and Camberwell. In Lambeth there are the extensions to Myatts Field and the improvements to Rush Common in conjunction with new housing. In Hammersmith there is the riverside open space in front of the Town Hall and several other riverside open spaces have been created. Of all the proposals in the County of London Plan these perhaps give me the greatest satisfaction as I recall the boldness with which I dipped my brush in the green paint to create the open space plan.

The Road Plan

One of the main principles which the County of London Plan aimed to establish, by example, was that a plan had to be comprehensively considered with all aspects balanced against each other. In particular there was the need to reduce land use with traffic movements. as the County of London Plan commented:- "The need for improved traffic facilities in and around London has become so acute that unless drastic



Left: Diagrammatic open space proposals
 Right: Diagrammatic road proposals
 Far Right: Diagrammatic rail proposals

measures are taken to relieve a large number of its thoroughfares, crossings and junctions of their present congestion there will be a grave danger that the whole traffic system will be slowed down to an intolerable degree". This comment was made when there was only 1 car per 22 persons.

In the past road engineers tended to argue that the road pattern was the most important element. Just before the war the engineer, Bressy, produced a road plan for London but when we came to examine it, we found that the new routes proposed took little or no cognisance of the community structure, many of them cutting through the middle of shopping and residential areas and we had to start again.

The Ministry of Transport now appears to be making the same mistake by examining with the help of consultants various road and rail improvements on a piecemeal basis without a co-ordinated plan for London as a whole. This partly results from the separation of this Ministry from the Department of the Environment. The County of London Plan on the other hand proposed a new main road structure which was integrated with all the other proposals. It consisted of two ring roads (they were in fact more elliptical than circular on plan) the outer one of which became adjusted to what has been described as the ill fated 'box route'. There were also radial routes linked to it with segregated traffic intersections.

Some proposals have been carried out - the Cromwell Road extension, the Westway link between Marylebone Road and Western Avenue and the underpasses at the north end of Tottenham Court Road and Hyde Park Corner. Other proposals are still alive to the extent that the 1951 Development Plan is still referred to by Borough Councils for the purpose of searches for the conveyancing of properties. One part of the 'box' has recently come alive - the extension of the M41 southwards to join a link with an embankment 'cut and cover' road alongside Cheyne Walk after which it proceeds to Wandsworth Bridge exactly as proposed in the County of London Plan.

One of the major difficulties involved in carrying out the 'box' routes is the extent of housing which has to be demolished. The County of London Plan had lessened the disturbance to communities by aligning them alongside railways and canals. The property involved, although mainly of poor quality, had many working class occupants and there was strong opposition. The same problem arises with the "new generation of road schemes" which consultants have recently prepared for the Ministry of Transport, for they involve the demolition of up to 5,000 houses but in this case they are of

good quality occupied by the middle classes and are likely to arouse opposition.

In the absence of the 'box' routes one can only be thankful that the radials were not built for they would have led to intolerable levels of traffic congestion in the central area - even worse than now. The main effort in this area has been to ease the flow of vehicles by traffic management. One obstacle in the way of securing a balanced traffic solution is the political dogma that has become attached to the problem, dividing public and private transport solutions to the left and right of the political divide, although it is encouraging to note that Mr. Bottomley (Mr. Channon's Junior Minister) has widened the consultants terms of reference to include public transport options and traffic control measures such as exists for instance in Singapore.

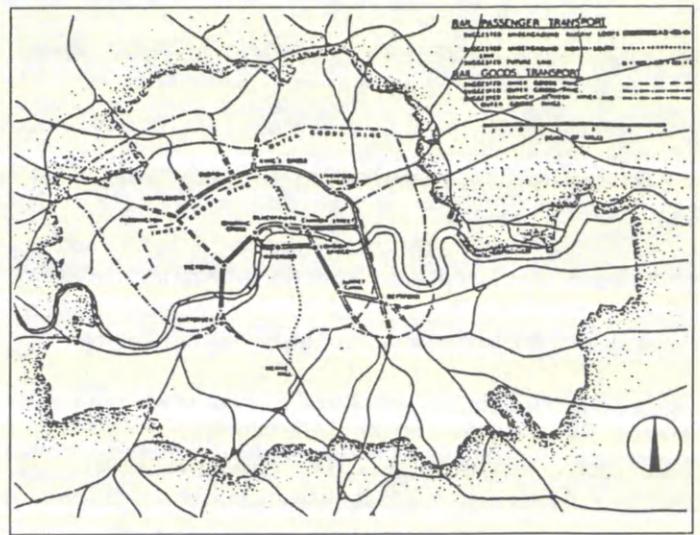
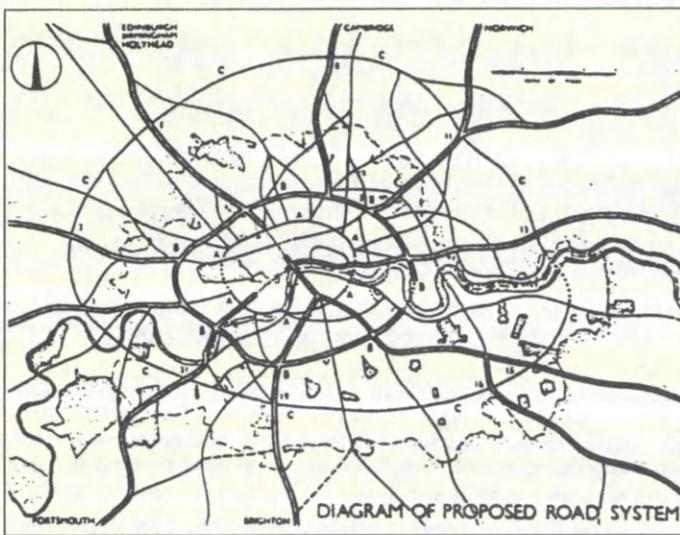
Railways

The County of London Plan envisaged rail connections between the main line stations. Some of these proposals are now being taken up particularly in relation to the Channel Tunnel. A serious congestion crisis has arisen with railways serving the London area and a Central London Rail Study is reported as saying that a ten year investment programme of between two and three billion pounds is required to deal with a projected growth of at least another 20% in peak hour traffic. There is a project for a p4.7 million private underground line from Waterloo and London Bridge to Docklands which is at present a dead end traffic wise. This is a high price for locating a rival City of London for which there is no urgent need. The earliest that this line could be opened is 1994.

To solve London's traffic problems will obviously require substantial financial investment. The Government's answer to this need is privatisation as it is for the housing crisis and most other needs of London such as the deteriorating infrastructure. The renewal of sewers will become the responsibility of the privatised Water Authorities. Tolls will be introduced to encourage private firms to build new roads and tunnels. All opportunities for the public taking responsibility for London's future are rapidly being suppressed. Will London Transport be privatised?

Administration

At local level a vicious political and administrative attack has been mounted against the traditional role of the Boroughs; at strategic level the Greater London Council has been abolished. As a result there is no elected authority to which responsibility can be given for the preparation of a new up-to-date plan for London as a whole. The Residuary Body is only a winding



up, or rather down, body. There are two Borough Associations (one Conservative controlled the other Labour controlled) which seem unlikely to provide the basis for a new plan. In any case they have no authority except to pass observations with the aid of consultants to L.P.A.C. (The London Planning Advisory Committee) or to the Secretary of State for the Environment. The L.P.A.C. is only an Advisory Committee to the Secretary of State who has taken over responsibility for London's strategic planning. This Committee is made up of members from each local Borough Council and it has sent round for consultation a document entitled 'Policy Issues and Choices - London in the 1990's. This had been described as a 'broad fresh approach'.

However, the DoE, having the final authority, may make parallel and independent moves to investigate London's problems as was indicated by its recent action to set in motion feasibility studies of 2000 acres of surplus industrial and railway land in several boroughs. Other ministries such as the Ministry of Transport are also taking independent action.

What is needed is an independent research and planning team, free of interference for a period of at least two years with responsibility to collaborate with the borough councils in drawing up a new plan that covers all aspects. Better still would be if a new Greater London Council could be established to give a democratic backing to this procedure. This is obviously unlikely in the near future but it is a sensible long term aim.

"More than Just Money and Market Forces"

The presented political situation makes it difficult to contemplate objectively a Vision for the future of London. If one is in favour of market economies and wholesale privatisation as the starting points it will perhaps be easier to proceed or at least gain acceptance, but will with provide a satisfactory basis on which to build? The Prince of Wales speaking to an audience of architects in the United States earlier this year complained that "building is about more than just money and market forces". There are certainly differing opinions on architectural style but few would disagree with the Prince in his criticism of the way the post war development of tower blocks had damaged the London skyline in the vicinity of St. Paul's Cathedral. Once the problem of firefighting in tall blocks had been solved, the pressure in the planning authority be developers to allow high plot ratios and therefore more letting space became increasingly intense. The same kind of pressures arose after the war in residential areas which were previously zoned for houses for permission to build blocks of

flats. As land values rise it becomes more profitable to increase densities even if this means demolition of sound existing property in the process.

In the central area, redevelopment usually takes places every 60-80 years as the buildings demand higher or more dense building in order to cover the costs of demolition and the higher value of land. Already developers have secured concessions in calculating plot ratios; in some cases the common use of ground floor areas has been excluded; computers in basements are excluded and more recently staff amenities such as canteens and social facilities have been excluded. If this process continues every time redevelopment takes place what happens to our Vision and in particular the skyline? It is too late now to cry over spilt milk but at least we need not spill any more. This is the basic issue that confronts the developers and planners of the Paternoster Square area and made more difficult to deal with as the redevelopment comes so soon after the present buildings were erected.

When one seeks to ensure quality in urban design it is necessary to appreciate that it is in part a battle against market forces operating with decreasing restraint. Some planning authorities in capital cities in other parts of the world have given up the struggle and now seek to secure planning gains. These could be monetary improvements to the ground level layout or the provision, say, of a theatre - all in exchange for increases in the extent of accommodation allowed and the relaxation of planning control. I suggest that the morality of this is open to question. We have seen how it is possible to attract developers into areas like Canary Wharf with the prospects of higher profits by the lifting of planning controls so that the sky is the limit for offices, the local authority in whose area it lies has very little say in the proposals and low cost housing for rent or first time buyers is reduced to a minimum. However the demand is changing. Now it is for groundscrapers rather than skyscrapers. Offices used to be limited to a depth of 50ft. including corridors to ensure that everyone could work in daylight. Now with the widespread adoption of artificial lighting and air conditioning the corridors have disappeared and large open spaces without impeding columns or internal lifts are demanded, as are horizontal sandwich layers between floors to give easy connections to the telephones, computers and other electronic devices below, and capable of being easily adapted for new requirements as the working practices of the City change. Are skyscrapers becoming, therefore, architectural dinosaurs? Will the Canary

Wharf's towers with their 50,000 additional workers be out of date before they are built?

The extent of new office development in the City and spreading elsewhere to Kings Cross, Spitalfields and the Isle of Dogs is alarmingly high, especially in relation to a transport system which is already being used above the level of its saturation point. It has been estimated that one third of the city is being redeveloped. The City Corporation has approved 60 new buildings in the last two years; 13 million square feet is in the pipeline with approval. Is it not time the alarm bell sounded and a serious examination was made of how much office space London needs and can cope with. Already 1 million people come into central London daily and in the last 10 years there has been a 60% increase in transport demand on roads and railways. What is happening is that overall planning is being forgotten under the intense pressure of developers who see the opportunity of making a quick buck before the potentially disastrous effect of their action on London's infrastructure is understood. Why these huge increases in working population are being allowed or contemplated is all the more difficult to understand when one considers the lengths to which previous Governments have gone to reduce the pressure on London by moving its previously centralised activities to other parts of the country. Inland Revenue to Newcastle, The Mint and Car Licensing, etc. to South Wales and so on. This decentralisation process has not appeared to affect efficiency. Now with computers, car telephones and fax machines there is even less reason to return to an over-concentration in London.

The lack of a coherent plan is becoming increasingly evident but the Government in taking over responsibility has split into bits and pieces what is essentially a single planning team's job between several Departments and Ministries - The Department of Environment, the Ministries of Transport, Trade and Industry, Employment and the Treasury, with no inter-departmental or cabinet committee to pull the whole process together, including the contributions of London's 33 Boroughs. It is doubtful whether a comprehensive plan for Greater London will emerge from this complicated arrangement.

Urban Design

Finally, what do we mean by urban design? We would agree, I think, that it is much more than a collection of individual buildings each one considered on its merits. Consider what this process has done to Bloomsbury. The aim must be to design on a larger scale considering the design relationship between buildings and the contribution of the spaces enclosed by them whether they be streets or squares. Usually we have to go back into history for examples to John Nash for his Terraces and Regent Street group to Edinburgh for its New Town, to Bath for its Crescent, Circus and Squares. More recently we can point to the post war new towns.

Large scale ownership of land, either public or private, or agreement amongst owners to commission an overall design is required if a reasonable element of continuity is to be secured. For architects urban design is the most enjoyable and interesting end of the whole planning process and they have been increasingly critical of the negative aspects of planning controls. Planning and architecture have to be brought

together again. However, this will not happen without an understanding of the need for a structure for a neighbourhood, a community, a city as a whole to which urban design can contribute. It is also essential that the political and economic circumstances are taken into account and, if necessary and possible, changed. In recent years utopias have come in for criticism as the arrogant objectives of architects and social reformers likely to be monotonous, overpowering or totalitarian if the design element is all too embracing. However, the aim of all designers at whatever scale is to seek perfection. An architect with the help of professional colleagues strives to design a building which is functionally, construction-wise and visually perfect. He doesn't always succeed but he strives. I see no reason why this search for perfection should not extend to the larger urban design scale. Obviously in dealing with an existing city with a past history which demands an effective conservation policy, a present life which has to be kept going, and a future which brings changes, there are many more frustrations and complications to deal with than in the case of an individual building, and these will in themselves ensure variety of design.

Conclusions

In conclusion, with some trepidation I would put forward some basic points:-

1. Greater London requires an elected body to represent London as a whole, deal with strategic planning problems; and act as a co-ordinating point for the constituent Borough Councils so that there are democratic links with the people they serve. We cannot expect the GLC to be re-established in the near future but it is a sensible longer term aim. Meanwhile an alternative improvement would be to give LPAC executive rather than advisory powers.
2. A special planning team should be commissioned to prepare an overall strategic plan covering all aspects, either by LPAC or, if all else fails, by the Department of the Environment. The extent of office accommodation required in London should be urgently examined particularly in relation to the capacity of the transport system.
3. The Government's policy of suppressing Borough Councils enthusiasm to serve the people they represent should cease and a *modus vivendi* found.
4. That subsidised Housing Associations should take the main responsibility for housing but not for the purpose of gentrification which does not provide dwellings for existing residents at rents or prices they can afford.
5. That market economics should not be allowed to undermine desirable planning constraints, nor should planning gain be adopted generally as a means of securing basic planning requirements.

I have not added a sixth point regarding architectural style. Such a discussion has its place at the end of the design process for London and I am sure you will discuss this if you wish, but first, the essential political, economic, social and physical as well as administrative problems have to be studied and resolved as a basis for a new plan and a new vision. 

THE FIRST REAL MOVE TO A PLANNING OF LONDON

by Hermione Hobhouse

The major part of this Conference will be concerned with the actual achievements of the post-war period, as well as the position today. Few of these problems are new: what gives poignancy to the post-war reconstruction was the confidence felt by so many of those concerned that these problems could be overcome, once and for all.

Already we have heard something about the post-war planning and reconstruction. Before we order a set of white sheets for those responsible for the problems which arose from mistakes in post-war planning, it might be instructive to look at the climate in which they were operating, and at some of the age-old London problems which they set out to tackle.

We do not need to go back to Wren - whose plan was expressly discredited by the City planners in the Report drawn up by C J Forty, the City Engineer¹, to see the intransigent nature of many of the general philosophic attitudes they were facing, or the particular physical environmental problems which they were attempting to solve. London, like most capital cities, is never short of helpful suggestions over reform and new town-planning initiatives, and many of these are hardy perennials, coming up year after year, often greeted as new and interesting varieties.

The post-war planning initiatives can be said to have begun in 1940, after the destruction of the German Blitz. This began on Saturday, September 7th 1940, and lasted through the winter of 1940/1, terminating effectively on May 10th 1941. That first raid of some 375 bombers² was the only big daylight raid on London, but was the precursor to a winter of aerial attack at night. The heaviest months for London generally were September, October and November, when over 12,000 people were killed, 20,000 injured, by 36,000 bombs. For the City, the single worst night was December 29th/30th 1940, with the 'great City fire'. During this night, Guildhall was partially destroyed, large parts of the City were burnt out, particularly the Manchester warehouses in the Moorgate-Aldersgate area. In addition, All Hallows Barking and ten Wren churches were badly damaged, including St Lawrence Jewry, St Brides Fleet Street, St Anne and St Agnes, St Mary le Bow and Christchurch Newgate. James Pope-Hennessy visited them the following morning, and has left his account of them, revealing the shock and horror which affected many architects and historians who saw the widespread damage all over Europe:

*They had suffered a disgusting change, a metamorphosis at first stupefying. How could these dear interiors, panelled, symmetrical, murky, personal, redolent of the eighteenth century, filled with monuments and busts, urns, tablets, organ cases, carved swags, pulpits and galleries, pews, hassocks, and hymn-books, have been turned into dead bonfires, enclosed by windowless and roofless lengths of wall, with pillars like rotten teeth thrusting up from the heaps of ash?*³

To St Paul's Cathedral and the Houses of Parliament, Wren churches and livery halls, docks and commercial buildings had to be added many acres of housing. In September 1940 the City Improvements and Town Planning Committee 'first instructed the City Engineer to take advantage in his town planning proposals then in preparation, of any opportunities which arise from enemy damage to facilitate improve-

ments to the City'⁴.

Lord Reith

One of the first politicians to respond was Lord Reith, late of the BBC, but in 1940, a minister of the Crown, at first Minister of Information under Chamberlain, then at Transport from May to October under Winston Churchill and from October 1940 till February 1942, Minister of Works. On October 22nd 1940, he agreed a communique with Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister of Health, which he noted was 'pretty comprehensive':

*It is clear that the reconstruction of town and country after the war raises great problems and gives a great opportunity. The Minister of Works and Buildings has therefore, been charged . . . with . . . reporting to the Cabinet the appropriate methods and machinery for dealing with the issues involved.*⁵

Despite his immediate concerns over providing Churchill with a safe flat to escape the bombs, and new meeting places for both the Lords and Commons in Church House, Reith was able to make some progress in the matter of post-war reconstruction. In January 1941, he set up the Uthwatt Committee to deal with the problem of betterment and compensation 'in respect of the public control of land', an essential matter if any form of comprehensive redevelopment was to be achieved. He pursued the question of 'reconstruction' throughout the next year despite varying degrees of enthusiasm from his colleagues. On February 11th 1942, he was able to announce in the House of Lords that his Ministry would henceforth be the Ministry of Works and Planning, but ten days later his ministerial career was ended by a letter from Churchill. The Ministry of Town and Country Planning came into official existence on the 1st December that year.

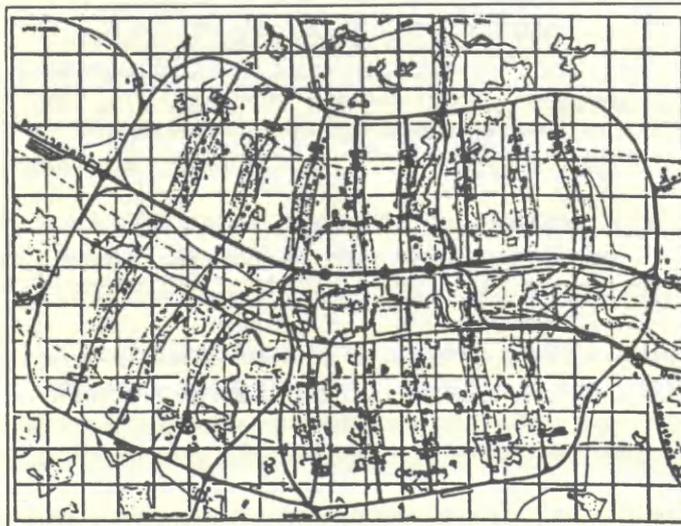
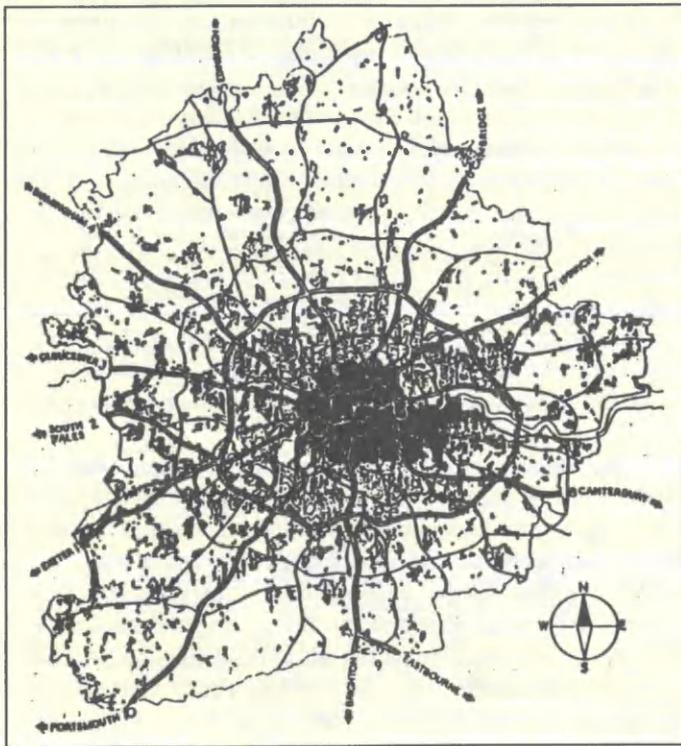
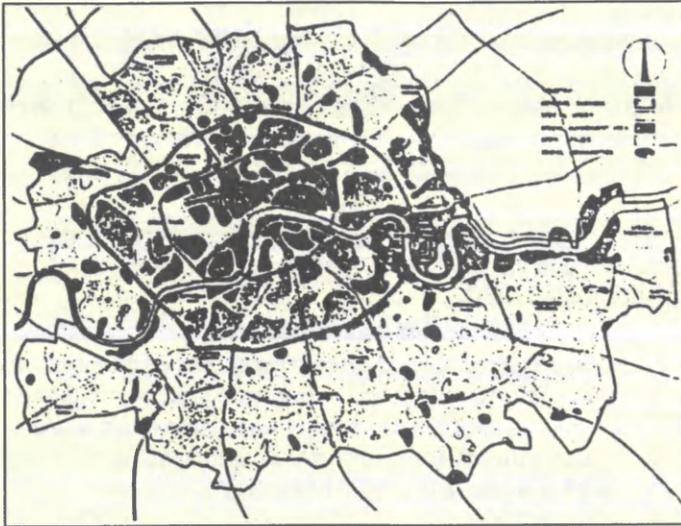
It is interesting to speculate on whether things would have turned out differently had Reith been in charge. He was of course, autocratic and undiplomatic to the level of caricature, but a phenomenal organiser. Sometimes there were unintended results, as when his efforts at the Admiralty resulted in the reorganisation and streamlining of the administration of Coastal Command to such good effect, that the Admiral, Charles Meynell, who had taken him on, found his job had been streamlined out of existence!

For London, Reith organised a key meeting in January 1941, as he noted in his diary:

*Meeting 11.15 to 12.15 with LCC people, with Malcolm Macdonald and Moore Brabazon, [Minister of Transport] present. Likely to be exceedingly important. I suggested a committee of officials from LCC and Ministries of Works, Health and Transport - also with City included. Immensely significant this - the first real move to a planning of London*⁶

Reith's meeting was a major move in a series of initiatives which led to a number of reports. The City asked the existing Improvements and Town Planning Committee to take up the matter of reconstruction on November 14th 1940. Reith asked both City and County to prepare Reconstruction Plans in March 1941, resulting in the Forty Report of July 1944 for the City, and the Forshaw Abercrombie County of London Plan, of 1943, for the LCC, and eventually, the 1944 Greater London Plan⁷, again prepared by Patrick Abercrombie, this

Top: Development and zoning diagram - LCC Plan 1943
 Middle: Road proposals - Greater London Plan 1944
 Bottom: MARS Plan, A Master Plan for London as published in the Architectural Review, June 1942



time for the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning.

These reports incorporated schemes long in the pipeline, or developed in the 1930's under the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act. They were, of course, considerably modified after the war. In July 1946, the Manchester Guardian noted with satisfaction Morrison's rejection of the City's 'thoroughly bad plan', which would 'have greatly intensified the existing congestion of traffic, buildings, and humanity within London's oldest square. It consulted the interests of the City's ratepayers with little regard for the health and convenience of their employees'⁸.

Other Initiatives

Initiatives involved not only local and national government, but professional organisations and a number of distinguished individuals. There was also the Exhibition Living in Cities, held in 1940, designed by Ralph Tubbs and circulated by the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts. The accompanying book, which put forward a lot of modern town-planning concepts for public absorption, was published by Penguin Books, who were also to publish Carter and Goldfinger's classic exposition of the County of London Plan.⁹

One of the first groups on the scene was the MARS Group - the Modern Architecture Research Group - which had been in existence since 1937. Their scheme had been put forward at a pre-war Exhibition, and was publicised again in the Architectural Review of June 1942. It was based on a lineality, and on the grouping of lineal neighbourhoods.

The Royal Academy set up a Committee, at first under the chairmanship of Sir Edwin Lutyens, then under Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, which issued two Reports, the first *London Re-planned*, unveiled in October 1942 with an Exhibition at the RA.¹⁰ This Plan, which followed the pre-war Bressey Plan in many of its major schemes, was reviewed by Lionel Brett, later Lord Esher, under the title 'The New Haussmann' - the emphasis, he found, was on architecture not on land use - 'the boulevard, the avenue, and the rond-point are their monotonous solution'¹¹. A more unkind left-wing critic suggested that the plan was peopled by Fascist figures, including Goering and his dog. A second report dealing with *Roads, Rail and River* in London was published under Scott's chairmanship in 1944.

The RIBA produced another Exhibition, again held at the Royal Academy, in February 1943, opened appropriately by William Beveridge, entitled Rebuilding Britain. This was the work of the RIBA Reconstruction Committee. R Myer-scough-Walker was very suspicious of the whole matter, suspecting 'the war has created a new class who see Town Planning and Reconstruction as a profitable future'.¹²

There were other initiatives, often with far-reaching consequences - the National Buildings Record was set up in January 1941 by a number of architectural historians under Walter Godfrey and John Summerson, to record historic buildings before they were destroyed.

The shock and anger caused by the bomb damage generated a great desire to restore and rebuild in a worthy manner. In the words of one proponent of planning:

The rebuilding of London should be approached in a creatively generous manner as a civic task with cooperation as the leading motive, and it ought not to be

*skipped or hurried on the supposition that the people cannot think ahead or devote themselves to a common purpose.*¹³

The end of the war was seen as an opportunity to deal with a whole series of problems which had concerned planners and architects and politicians throughout the inter-war period, and in many cases for over a hundred years. 1945 was therefore for many an *annus mirabilis*, when old wrongs could be righted.

These historic problems concerned the major issues of traffic flow or rather its congestion, the problems of traffic on the river and later on the railways, the provision of open space, the routing of roads and streets, the building and the freeing of bridges. Later hygienic questions came to the fore - health, the provision of decent living conditions, pure water, adequate sewage, and later still the provision of adequate libraries and spaces for recreation. An Edwardian view of that elusive ideal - the quality of life was provided by the architect, C R Ashbee, in the first volume of the *Survey of London*, when he linked to the provision of museums the preservation of historic buildings - to be carried out by private enterprise, apparently voluntarily. He summarised the task before 'all citizens of London':

*...we plead that the object of the work we have before us, is to make nobler and more humanly enjoyable the life of the great city whose existing record we seek to mark down; to preserve of it for her children . . . whatever is best in her past or fairest in her present; . . . and to stimulate amongst her citizens that historic and social conscience which to all great communities is their most sacred possession.*¹⁴

Most of these problems had been identified in the nineteenth century as suitable subjects for 'improvement', and this very impetus spawned most of the attempts at improving London government. One of the most important consequences of the many campaigns by private citizens and by groups of concerned individuals for reform were the changes in London government. Occasionally perhaps one can say that an *arriere pensee* can be detected in the alteration of London institutions, but generally major changes have followed public perception of some problem in London living conditions.

Improvement Schemes

One of the earliest and indeed the traditional vehicle for improvement was the Crown, and the Department of Woods and Forests had been the power behind the creation of Regent Street by John Nash. The Commissioners for the Improvement of the Metropolis sat throughout the 1830's and 1840's, reporting annually to Parliament. Before they handed on their powers, they had created New Oxford Street, purchased land for Battersea Park, had been responsible for the 1844 Building Act, which improved the construction of London buildings, and had identified the problem of London sewerage. The first London-wide authority was probably the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers, formed as an amalgam of the existing nine Commissions, but it lasted a short eight years before the Metropolitan Management Act 1856 created the Metropolitan Board of Works. This was the first modern London-wide authority since the growth of the London suburbs outside the City had led to the development of a plethora of Vestries and

Paving Trusts. The MBW was charged first with the creation of an improved up-to-date system of sewers discharging into proper treatment plants rather than into the Thames, and the building of the related Embankments along the Thames. There followed a series of other 'improvements' including the creation of the Charing Cross Road, Shaftesbury Avenue, Northumberland Avenue and the southern end of Park Lane.¹⁵

In due course, the Board gave way to the London County Council, only created after considerable pressure from the London Municipal Reform League which campaigned for eight years before the LCC came into being in 1889. The more pressing reason for the creation of the LCC was its 'common interests in fresh air and pure water, in traffic and public order and supplies of food, and in treatment of the poor', historic problems which were difficult of solution under 38 different vestries. The immediate cause was the reputation for corruption of the MBW. It is also worth remembering the civic ambition which found the creation of a metropolitan authority a matter for pride. In the words of an early LCC Alderman:

*The trust that London is essentially a community of human beings which ought to have an organic government of its own, was established. It may seem strange to the upper ten thousand who live in the pleasantest parts of the town, and who, after all, are hardly Londoners, for they run away to their pleasant rural homes, where their interests are, directly they have earned their money or had their amusement, - it may seem strange to them that the shopkeeper or the artisan may have his imagination fired with the greatness of London and with the idea of making all its parts work together for the good of the whole.*¹⁶

It is not a coincidence that the LCC brought together a lot of the agencies which went to work to replan London in 1945. It gradually absorbed such existing bodies as the London School Board, the Fire Brigade, the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and the parish workhouses, whose infirmaries were among the major London hospitals. It developed the concept of public housing, and with the increasing emphasis after 1910 on the importance of town-planning, it became the planning authority for the metropolis. It provided a focus for the interest in town-planning problems which characterised the period.

It is interesting to look at some of the earlier proposals, most of them dating back to at least into the nineteenth century. Many of these are now familiar concepts - providing better housing, improving communications on rail, river and roads, reducing traffic jams, and, more controversially, improving the quality of life in terms of open spaces and more places for recreation.

One of the most all-pervading concerns - in the past as today - was the problem of communications and traffic, both north and south through London, and through radial roads into and out of the central London area. Some palliative measures had been taken in the nineteenth century, like the making of Regent Street and Kingsway to provide north-south routes, and the embanking of the Thames, partly to improve the Thames and partly to provide a new series of routes through Central London. Some warnings about the need for planned routes to

avoid the creation of new traffic jams was given by nineteenth century developers and town-planners; Thomas Cubitt warned:

*Unless some care is taken, many of the districts round London will be covered with houses, without good roads or drainage, and many places will become quite as bad as the worst parts of London are at this time, and which the Commissioners are desirous of improving. But arrangements might be made at present to make good lines of streets and communications for a small expense, which at no distant time would be required to be done by cutting through lines of occupied houses.*¹⁷

Many thought London would benefit from a degree of Haussmannisation. One architect, Arthur Cawston, devised a number of schemes for improving certain 'black spots' like Lincoln's Inn Fields and St James' Park¹⁸.

One major concern was the provision of a Strand bridge, something addressed in the late eighteenth century by Sandby, who provided an elegant design never realised, and solved for a time by Rennie's Waterloo Bridge. This bridge's increasing dilapidation in the early part of this century led to a series of initiatives for creating a new Charing Cross Bridge. A scheme was proposed by the London Society before the Great War, and the matter was again raised in 1929, when John Murray and Lutyens were amongst those putting forward proposals. These schemes proposed to cut short the extension of the railway to Charing Cross Station, remove both Station and Hotel, replace the truncated Hungerford Bridge with a new road bridge, and to lay out a magnificent avenue from south of the river to Trafalgar Square. This scheme was rendered less immediately necessary by the replacement of old Waterloo Bridge, by the LCC under Herbert Morrison, though it surfaced again in the Royal Academy Plan.

There were numerous attempts to deal with the problems created by the Railways, identified as destructive to the environment by Dore in 1860, throughout the 19th century. The 1943 County of London Plan put forward proposals for moving several of the termini. More interesting are some of the early schemes for air travel: one LCC member suggested before the Great War, that there should be a 'garage for aeroplanes' on the top of County Hall. A futuristic perspective

by Walcot 'The Savoy Hotel in 2000' shows an airship moored to the riverfront.

The South Bank has also been a long-term concern for London: Cawston addressed himself to the problem in 1893. He saw it as the American's introduction to London, and an unworthy gateway. It was indeed a collection of food factories, an armament works, builders yards and the Depot for the Lambeth Borough Council, where refuse was loaded on to barges. Rather curiously he suggested that the removal of Billingsgate from the City to Waterloo would improve the area.

A major element in the decision to place County Hall on the South Bank was the desire to improve the area, seen as an unworthy part of London's riverside, by crusading figures like John Burns, an early Labour MP, and a leading member of the LCC. The proposals for the building reflect this sense of the magnificence and drama of the Thames, as some of the County Hall schemes, particularly those by Riley and Lutyens. Knott's own scheme was less dramatic, and the final result plainer still, though a fine civic building.¹⁹

After the building of County Hall, the rest of the South Bank was a matter of concern for town planners. One project was put forward by the Royal Academy Committee, following on suggestions by the LCC, proposed a large civic building on the site of the Hayward Gallery.

Finally a quick look at some earlier solutions to perhaps our most prestigious current proposal - that of St Paul's precinct. It is difficult today to remember how St Paul's dominated London described by A H Mackmurdo in 1883:

*The pale cathedral lifting itself aloft - boldly central among her square massive mansions, and huge blocks of seven-storied offices: yet standing not alone, but surrounded by her daughter churches.*²⁰

The Forty Plan addressed itself to clearing the view of St Paul's from Cannon Street, by rebuilding with a wider street leaving the Cathedral less tightly enclosed. It also proposed that the railway bridge across Ludgate Circus should disappear showing it as a thin line across the view of the Cathedral. The Royal Academy Reports devoted a lot of space to splendid perspectives of the Cathedral from all viewpoints. However,



as we know, when the City was told by Morrison to drop the Forty Plan and to employ Dr Holden and William Holford to re-design the City, not all the heroic ideas proved practical.

Thus by 1945, a number of problems had been identified, and an even larger number of proposals put forward as to the key problems for solution. A good deal of propaganda followed, from all points of the architectural and town-planning spectrum, some of it utopian, much frankly political. These arguments are still with us today as we consider the post-Reconstruction problems for London.

Perhaps the most percipient comment on the whole matter was made by Myerscough-Walker in 1943:

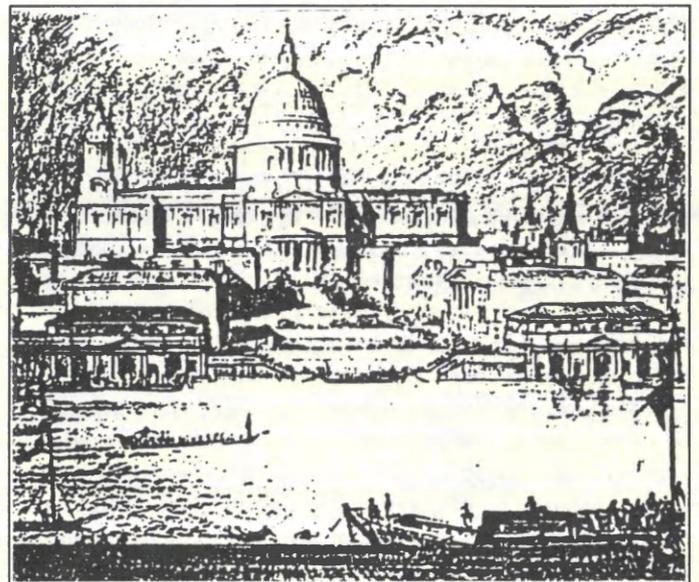
*In looking at any new town-planning suggestion you need to know, 25 years from now, the answer to these questions: - Who will be the autocrat - the State or the individual? What will the working life of the individual be? What form of transport? Will the standard of equipment rise or fall? Will family life have increased or decreased? What will dominate the spiritual life of the people? . . . the materialistic life . . . ? What financial system will obtain? the . . . Plan you approve must include your positive answer to these questions.'*²¹

I hope that I have demonstrated that London's problems do not vary much from generation to generation. What made the position between 1940 and 1945 almost unique was not only the opportunity for Reconstruction, but the existence of the LCC, at that time a powerful and comprehensive metropolitan authority with skilled and experienced staff, with which the government agencies responsible for roads and public transport generally, public health and planning, housing and schools, were prepared to cooperate, indeed to support. This conference is concerned with the consideration of how such a combination worked and how effective it was. 🏛️

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Below: Cover of London Replanned (1942) shows St. Paul's at the end of a vista from a riverside stairway



Left: St. Paul's given increased isolation and dignity with a semicircular piazza reminiscent of St. Peter's, Rome. Ludgate Circus in the foreground is opened out into a tree lined square. The elevated railway, Holborn to Blackfriars, has disappeared: From London Replanned (1942)

THE URBAN IMAGINATION OF THE ATTLEE YEARS

by John Gold

I am interested in the question of urban imagery, particularly the way in which ideas about the future are presented and communicated. What I want to do is look back to a key period, the years of the Attlee Labour Government between 1945-51. I intend to re-examine the type of urban visions that were being put forward and also to say something about their relationship to the planning process of the time.

Before doing so, let me take a little time to explain what I mean by this nebulous word 'vision'. It is a word about which we must be careful, since it is loaded with ambiguity: e.g. is a vision just a visual demonstration of something or does it have other dimensions? is it something concrete or, as in another meaning of the word, is it an illusion? However, given that it is a word very much in the public domain at the moment, with Sunday-night television series devoted to the subject, and it has a useful connotation of being a comprehensive view, it is entirely appropriate to talk about it in this gathering. I will use it here to mean something more than just a simple projection or an elegant piece of draftsmanship. To me, it implies planning and architecture that has the quality of transcending, and making a sharp break with, existing practice. Visions are sketches or alternative realities. They are produced to show how different the future could look, or how different it might look if certain positive steps were taken (as in the utopian tradition), or how different it might look if certain negative trends are allowed to persist (as with the dystopian tradition). Most of the time, they remain peripheral and have little impact: sometimes, however, the times are propitious for them to exert a considerable influence. The period under consideration here seems to me to be one such period.

The Demand For Planning

Turning now to look at the Attlee years, let's begin by supplying a little background about the wider context. My starting point is the obvious one. With the end of the war, there came the need for massive investment in urban reconstruction. The losses to industry and commerce from aerial bombardment were enormous, but all political parties saw that a key thrust to the policy had to be housing, with any number of brave if foolhardy targets being set, e.g. five to seven million houses by 1950. The problem, of course, was desperate. Estimates were that almost half million dwellings were either destroyed or made completely uninhabitable, a further quarter million were severely damaged, another three million had suffered lesser damage.

Replacement would have posed problems in itself, but further difficulties were added by the effects of population increase (the population had grown by one million between 1939-45), by the decrease in household size, and by the fact that almost no slum clearance work had taken place since the outbreak of war. The cry for the problem to be thought of in holistic terms rather than in terms of piecemeal replacement had gone up throughout the war and was echoed in the Election Manifesto of the Labour Party, which, as you will recall, was then elected to power with an overall majority for the first time. Interestingly, there was no mention in the manifesto of a new town building programme, a programme which, as I will note a little later, was to be established with remarkable speed. But, the manifesto did give clear recognition to the need for a



massive programme of house building, and also linked that need to the broader guiding principle of planning. Sections of the manifesto contained specific commitments to generating a house building programme; to restructuring the building industry, to a coordinated approach to the demands of different sectors, and contained loose commitments to 'good town planning', land nationalisation, and the reorganisation of Ministries to streamline town planning matters.

As we know, some of these things proved difficult to achieve. The manifesto pledge about the reorganisation of Ministries to streamline town planning matters was not honoured.

Responsibility was spread widely: the housing drive in England and Wales alone involving no less than four different Ministries - Health, Supply, Town and Country Planning and the Ministry of Works. In the process, it was to involve Ministers with very differing, indeed conflicting, personalities from that broad church that was the Labour Party during the Attlee years. These included Arthur Greenwood, Hugh Dalton, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer who became Minister of Town and Country Planning, his predecessor Lewis Silkin and Nye Bevin, as Minister of Health.

The emphasis on housing, however, did come about, albeit getting off to a dismally poor start due to appalling logistical problems and labour and material shortages in the construction industry. Nevertheless, one and a half million units of accommodation in flats and houses were provided by 1951. The vast proportion of this was local authority housing for rental, with the building licence system being deliberately used to restrict the activities of the private sector. Largely as a result of Bevan's influence, the houses, primarily semi-detached, were built to the relatively generous space standards of the Dudley Committee's report (1944). It can be argued, however, that these high standards reduced the overall numbers of houses that could be built. Certainly Dalton increased the rate of house building late on in this period by reducing space standards.

The housing drive itself gave a boost to the recruitment of professional planners and architects, especially in local

authorities, to whom most of the responsibility was devolved. Many other developments had a similar effect on professional recruitment. These included the powers available under the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act by which planning authorities could define Reconstruction Areas for comprehensive redevelopment, the structures created by the 1947 Act and related legislation, and special initiatives such as the schools building programme all of which created demands for teams to work on the designated tasks.

Before leaving this subject, it is also worth pointing out that people like these, and particularly those who moved into the planning professions, may well have had a different training than their predecessors. Many of them were primarily architect-planners as opposed to those who were already there who, if they had specialist training at all, tended to be either surveyors or engineers. That point is not without significance in view of the visual imagination that they could bring to the job and perhaps their overall sensitivities to visual matters in the first place.

Sources of Vision

This is as much as I have time to say about the broad context: a context in which one has a rapid demand for planning initiatives and a rapidly expanding demand for people to perform the requisite tasks. Taking all in all, this was precisely the sort of time when one might have expected visionary planning and architecture to gain a receptive audience, especially in supplying ideas for reconstruction at the urban scale. Indeed, it cannot be said that the arguments of those who wished to exert influence were anything other than well-rehearsed. There had been powerful lobbying throughout the war years on behalf of the idea of comprehensive urban planning.

I will pass over the war-time lobbying by interest groups and the impact of plethora of Commission Reports to emphasise three important sources of influence for visionary planning and architecture in the immediate post-war period. Two of them, the Garden City and Modern Movement, we will talk about in detail presently. Discussion of them, however, is incomplete without mention of a third, if conceptually awkward category, the Advisory Plans.

Advisory Plans

Well before the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act made statutory plans a requirement, there had been the spate of advisory city plans. Of central interest to this conference are the two great London Plans: Forshaw and Abercrombie's County of London Plan (1943), with its important social and functional analysis, and Abercrombie's Greater London Plan of 1944, with its support for the principle of planned decentralisation. We must remember, however, that these are also part of a wider national picture. We also have innumerable other plans linked with Abercrombie and associates, including the fascinating Lutyens and Abercrombie plan for Hull (1945); Thomas Sharp's Exeter Plan (1946), with its clover-leaf crossing and clearance to reassert the line of the medieval town walls with a linear park; and Sir Charles Reilly's remarkable Birkenhead plan (1944), with its houses in estates around potato-shaped greens, the estates themselves being laid out around the central area, which contains the community building.

Taken together, these plans supply a varied imagery. As might be expected from a knowledge of the architects responsible for them, the advisory plans do not constitute a single, unified body of plan-making that coalesced around any agreed set of design principles. Analysing them one can see ad hoc mixtures of different influences, including Beaux-Arts formalism, neo-classicism, Arts and Crafts, mild modernism, Garden City satellite town development and so on. Moreover they vary greatly in their lasting significance. Occasionally, they were seminal in impact and relevant to future action, as with the County of London Plan and the Greater London Plan, but are more often now relegated to the historian's footnote. Yet, whether or not they proved significant in influence on city design or planning thought, all may be read as indicative of the mood of the times. They were addressing similar problems and came up with similar answers, producing visions of cities that would be dramatically reconstructed to accommodate demands for better housing, improvement of infrastructure, alleviation of traffic congestion and problems over land-use. Collectively they underpinned a growing consensus which looked to social improvement through a root-and-branch approach to the existing urban fabric.

Garden City Movement

As we have noted, the Garden City Movement had had a long period in which to rehearse and refine its arguments and it used a wide variety of media, including pamphlets, books, magazines, exhibitions, even film to communicate its message. The message focused on the social, economic, cultural and environmental problems of the existing metropolis contrasted against the advantages of decentralisation, with that blend of town and country for which the movement stood. In design terms, there was already the experience of the two privately sponsored Garden Cities and new imagery had been added steadily during the inter-war years. These included neighbourhood units, Radburn layouts and various experiments with housing layout, such as Parker's use of Cauchon hexagons at Wythenshawe. Such design imagery was accompanied by a considerable amount written about the desired society of the Garden City. While this might no longer be the 'altruistic commonwealths' of the early days, the goal still remained that of the 'cooperative civilisation . . . embedded in a decentralised society'.

With the end of the war, things moved remarkably quickly in the Garden City Movement's favour. Unlike the 1950s, when the containment debate took greater hold, the 1940s were marked by a strong belief in planned decentralisation. The wartime planning reports and the powerful impact of the Greater London Plan and its associated exhibitions quickly affirmed the value of satellite towns, leading Frederic Osborn to write triumphantly to Lewis Mumford in September 1945 to announce that 'the broad principle of the Plan is what we have been fighting for all these years'. However, even Osborn seems to have been surprised by the speed with which the Labour Government embarked on the course of new town building. Despite the difficulties it was facing, the establishment of the Reith Committee took place within three months, with the actual passage of the Act taking place within eighteen months of the end of the war.

I doubt whether you require me to supply too many

details of the size or the actual designation between 1947-50 of the fourteen 'first generation' new towns, of which eight were around London, usually centred on small existing towns. The New Towns, of course, owe a major debt to the Garden City Movement. They did differ profoundly in their funding, administrative basis and some of their social ideology from the original Garden Cities, but in design terms, of course, the continuity with the underlying vision was retained. The housing of, say, Letchworth is, of course, somewhat different from the new housing to be constructed at the new towns of the late 1940s, but such differences would be expected in that period of evolution. Certainly the gap was not so great that the existing development at Welwyn could not be successfully integrated into the new development.

Now there is more that I want to say about the Garden City Movement and the connection between vision and reality, but I want first to feed in another part of the jigsaw by considering the work of the Modern Movement.

The Modern Movement

Like the Garden City Movement, it is fair to say that the Modern Movement similarly had had plenty of time in which to rehearse its arguments. The starting point, as with the Garden City Movement, was again the state of the existing city, especially with regard to the poor inner city housing and poorly-planned spec-built suburbia. Naturally, the conceptions of the cities proposed were very different, but I must stress the word 'conceptions' in the plural here. Despite what is often assumed, the pre-war Modern Movement held no collective or unified view of a future city. In 1938, for example, the MARS Group 'New Architecture' exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries had displayed both linear city and city of tower schemes with equal weighting and no particular preference for one as opposed to another. Certainly, as far as the British experience goes, there is little to support the war time assertions by Sert and Le Corbusier that a charter of agreed and fundamental principles had been drawn up at CIAM 4 in 1934, the so-called Athens Charter.

Indeed, with the exception of the MARS Group's 1942 London Plan, itself a hotly-disputed and decried attempt to suggest the potential of restructuring London on linear city principles, most urban scale schemes consisted of endless variations on the themes of traffic segregation and precinct developments, by people such as the Tatton-Browns and Stephen Pierce. In the mid-1940s, what one had from the Modern Movement is less a cohesive and consensual visual imagery than an evolving set of principles and a striking set of fragmentary visual images. Even more fragmentary, but nevertheless, genuine was an underlying strand of social imagery. This is not a subject that I have time to elaborate here but, as I have pointed out elsewhere there was an implicit, and sometimes explicit, conception of how people in the future city should live and work. These ideas vary depending on who you read or talk to and how much they wish to revise history, but there was a body of normative notions about the desired life styles, hopes and aspirations of the future urban society that played a significant role in the Modern Movement's gradual construction of a vision of the urban future.

This, then, was the situation as it stood in 1945: a movement with a loose constellation of imagery rather than a

blueprint for society. The period that we are considering here does not reveal the marked impact that modernist ideas were to have subsequently in the late 1950s and 1960s. Quite simply its moment had not yet arrived and did not do so until the early 1950s, with the arrival of a new generation of architects with a more doctrinaire approach and the releasing of the redevelopment machine of the early 1950s. There was a prefabricated house building programme, but this was rooted in housing crisis rather than the Modern Movement's more idealistic notion of using prefabricated housing for speed, economy, convenience and flexibility.

By and large, what happened was ideologically low-key. Despite the first full visit of a CIAM Congress to Britain in 1947, modernists were still trying to re-establish their agenda after the war and the associated dispersal of the pre-war European Modern Movement to all parts of the globe. Some of the pre-war British Modern Movement figures had given up architecture altogether, many moved pragmatically into private practice, where work was at least forthcoming. A significant number, however, did move into public service, at home and abroad, where opportunity was presented. Some of the favoured areas included: the school building programme of counties like Nottinghamshire and Hertfordshire, in which modern construction methods could produce light flexible structures which could offer new environmental conditions for school children; and public service with notably progressive local authorities, as at Coventry and at the LCC's Architects' Department.

Occasionally, as with the Festival of Britain, there was the chance for a more significant input, but this occurred at the very end of the period that we are talking about. An interesting comment, however, may be made in relation to the fact that a number of those connected with the Modern Movement, like Lionel Esher, Freddie Gibberd, Peter Shephard and Berthold Lubetkin had moved into positions of responsibility for planning the first generation new towns. Leaving aside the experience of Lubetkin's abortive plan for Peterlee, the point has often been made that they seemingly did little to reshape the predominantly Garden City direction of their design, other than the occasional gesture, such as Gibberd's ten storey point block at the Lawn, Harlow. This argument, however, misses one important point. It can also be argued that many modernists could fit in with such a context not through cynicism or opportunism, but because their views were not so alien from what was actually taking place.

That point needs careful introduction, since it is a topic that can still raise considerable hackles. I am in no sense saying that their respective arguments of the Garden City and Modern Movements are all of a piece. They were not, and they fought like tigers over issues such as homes versus flats, and urban densities. However, on many issues concerned with design, the differences between the two movements were not as great as often appears from the adversarial comments made by their respective contemporary leaders or by historians who insist on seeing them as two polar opposites perennially locked in mortal combat.

We have already seen earlier that they shared an imagery of what was to be avoided, the congested and dirty existing city and the low-density, poorly-planned suburb. Scholarship

by people such as Jane Jacobs and Alison Ravetz has demonstrated the shared outlook between the two with regard to their dismissive attitudes toward the existing town; Lionel Esher and others have explained how the two schools could co-exist within a post-war consensus on housing and related matters. Yet they had more shared features than that. A good example is supplied by neighbourhood units. Neighbourhood units, planned entities for 5-10,000 people were a fundamental building block of the first generation new towns, but they were also a key area of interest of the Modern Movement. Maxwell Fry wrote in support of the idea; Erno Goldfinger, his wife Ursula Blackwell and others had produced a fascinating manifesto in 1944 called 'Planning your neighbourhood', which presents many of the same ideas. Indeed the first linear city plan devised by the MARS Group for CIAM 5 in 1937 was framed in terms of neighbourhood units for 3,400 people arranged around a serpentine road and having mixed developments of housing, with flats in the centre and houses-with-gardens along the road. Such ideas do not seem to me to be a million miles away from some of the development associated with the new towns, even if I would agree that the spirit behind them was probably different.

Conclusions

Now, I could carry on in this vein, drawing attention to similarities in such things as the use and handling of public open space, functional differentiation of land-use, chosen methods for segregating movement systems and so on, but I must bring this paper to an end.

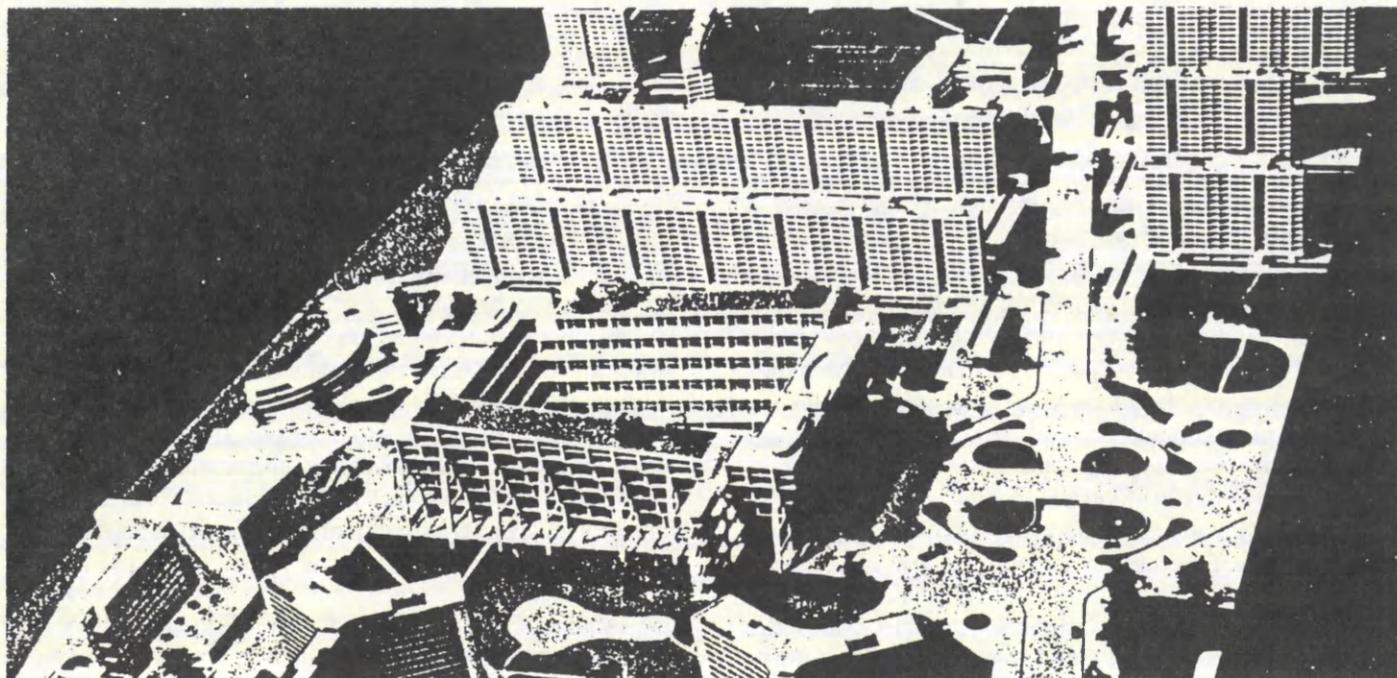
We have looked back to a time in which there was profound need for reconstruction and looked at the sources of

vision of undertaking the reconstruction process. Visions occasionally are powerful things and in the case of some of the advisory plans and the Garden City Movement, the flow of influence was profound. In the case of the Modern Movement, the influence was more muted, although in the years immediately following the period considered here that influence would grow rapidly as comprehensive redevelopment took hold. This is one of the conclusions to this paper, the other concerns the fact that, as well as highlighting the individual influence of these different schools, I have also highlighted areas in which there were actually underlying similarities in design and social imagery. I repeat that I am not trying to minimise differences, but simply pointing to the fact that there was far more consensus and overlap than suggested by those who wish to see them as complete polar opposites. The message here is one of pleading for an acceptance of complexity, recognising that there is a complex culture of professional architecture and planning, which is perfectly capable of extracting influences from different sources, regardless of ideology, even to the point of reconciling opposites. And that, I would submit, is an issue that I would suggest has considerable significance well beyond the specific period and topic that I have been looking at. 🏠

Reference

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The 'Concrete City' by F.R.S. Yorke and Marcel Breuer. Built for the Cement and Concrete Association in 1936, this model was widely shown at exhibitions in the late 1930's as a demonstration of modernist thinking on the inter-relationships between land-uses and the segregation of traffic flows.



A REVIEW OF THE PRESENT

by Geoff Holland

Any vision for London faces very severe problems, co-ordination in terms of transport, social ones in terms of deprivation and social divisions and co-ordination in terms of urban design. The present time is difficult, because the co-ordination that is necessary used to depend upon quite powerful and strong institutions. These have now been abolished or have been emasculated. Central government appears to be hamstrung by its own dogmas and there is clear paranoia in the highest places in the land about the ability of local democracy to know what its own problems are and how to solve them. We have now got 33 boroughs plus approximately 60 committees and quangos dealing with London's problems of co-ordination and one cannot see a great deal of success coming out of that.

Let's go back to the early 1970's. At that time we had strong policies for London and we had strong policy-making institutions that affected the urban image of London very much. Whether it was calculated to provide vision or to really avoid the worst excesses, I think we could debate for a long time. We did, however, have the Greater London Development Plan and coming from that, apart from the major structural elements like the transportation proposals, location and development, we did have policies for urban landscape. The GLC had powers of direction over the boroughs particularly over large buildings and the development of major highways. There was great concern shown for many years over the form that London took, what it looked like, how the buildings interacted and how the views were kept and very sophisticated methods of testing were made available. There were ways of constructing perspectives of proposed developments which were exercised over a long period, by very expert people and there were a number of considerable successes for which we have to be grateful to them. For example the first proposal for Hays Wharf was demonstrated by the GLC and this played an important part in producing a more modest development. A lot of important views particularly of St. Pauls were preserved. The whole system was structured around St. Pauls, rather like the City Heights which were an older control. This system was in a sense an all-London version of City Heights and did preserve a great number of important views of London.

The GLC had a very important role in transportation not only because it controlled the main roads and the construction programme, but it also controlled public transport, through the London Transport operation. That was an ideal arrangement and was very soon, of course, broken up by the government. But the GLC also had a very important role, and the boroughs had an important role at that time, by intervening in terms of the building types which were not profitable for the private sector and could never form part of the market approach to developing London. I am thinking now not only of council housing but of arts complexes, education and so forth.

It seems very strange looking back that the main driving force was to avoid congestion and to reduce pressure on London. New towns and expanded towns were still being built, a hangover from the 40s and 50s and does anyone here remember the Location of Offices Bureau? That is an amazingly dated bureau in today's attitudes. Let us look at some of the proposals current at that time. Some of them were even considered laughable, something like the motorway box that



Cut loose before London office costs squeeze your company to death

Location of Offices Bureau

had vision. It scared the wits out of everybody and quite rightly so. There were action areas and study areas going on for most of the places which today we are looking at as potential growth areas: Victoria, Kings Cross, Waterloo. There were early plans being prepared for Docklands up against a more balanced investment attitude. Office building which was always the great towering force in development was strictly controlled. It was seen as the principal congestion-maker. Car parking was strictly controlled in order to cut down car commuting. Conservation areas were breaking out all over the place like newly-hatched butterflies, again destined for various degrees of success. The thing which struck me, working in planning at that time, was the opportunities that people saw everywhere and on quite a large scale. When we were in the early stages of planning Covent Garden there were serious proposals for the redevelopment of the whole of Piccadilly, the whole of Regent Street and Whitehall and over a period of twenty years, there were proposals for roads alongside the river and pedestrianising Trafalgar Square.

What was actually being built at that time? Well, we had the stop/go development of offices, carrying on from the 60s, the opportunities being grasped or fiddled, depending on how you look at it. There was quite a frenzy of building hotels although they didn't all turn into hotels and some of them turned into offices subsequently. Major public sector complexes which were a hangover from the previous age of enlightenment or vision such as the Barbican. That is a mega-scheme even by today's standards and it really is an enormous development with very little in it of a commercial nature. We had the South Bank complex grinding on towards its completion with the National Theatre. Council house building was still in full flood throughout London.

Now, in ten years the situation is quite transformed.

Looking for the critical factors what transformed it, it wasn't altogether a one-directional move, because in 1973 we had four very major events. We had a property crash which took the wind out of the development industry's sails for several years, we had an oil crisis which did the same thing on a much wider global scale and we had the victory of public participation, largely through interest at that time taken by the media. It was the really hot issue at the time. I know because I was on the other side and had a very unpleasant few months. That brought with it, as night follows day a strong push for conservation of London's fabric, familiar landmarks, the buildings which people loved and the kind of buildings which people felt that they could live with and carry on living with. We had a political change in London at that time, the motorways were scrapped and the Covent Garden plan, which really sprang out of participation, emerged as a balance between public and private sector development.

In 1975 it might have been thought quite safe to consider London had got a very rational planning regime, the controls were in the right place, the right balance was there, the institutions were in position to make sure we had a fairly modest and sensible future. Then of course we discovered the population was declining and following up on that we had the 1979 election which I think was the major major sea change which affected government, society and the development industry. So since 1979 we have seen progressively the controls on enterprise dismantled. The public sector has been largely crippled or undermined and renewal has quite clearly been seen as the engine of regeneration in this country.

Some fairly desperate measures have been taken, not least enterprise zones, but there has been a very powerful movement to create a climate for investment for the enterprise culture. Planning not only became unfashionable, it has systematically been dismantled or emasculated by Acts of Parliament and by circulars or by the Secretary of State taking too many of the decisions himself.

Co-incidental with this, there has been a build up of a head of money and this comes initially from the institutions who monthly have this great tide of money flowing in which has to be placed and the development industry has come in for a great deal of that. It is almost as if the buildings have become commodities for trading as well as habitations or things in which people work. And following that we have the influx of foreign money, initially Arab money, then American money and now Japanese money. We have seen this in the kind of developments which would perhaps have been regarded as courageous in terms of location some years ago.

Britain meanwhile has sought to produce a climate that these people are used to, to make them feel at home. Investment is seen as the measure of success and we have had a great measure of success on that criteria alone. Co-incidentally the redevelopment pattern has changed radically, based on the needs of information technology and the different types of business activity has led to new building forms, which in a way are more exciting and probably less damaging to the London image as a whole. New forms of development have been required to replace the old forty foot office block built in the 50s and 60s and of course the Big Bang coming on top of this has compounded the pressure.

Meanwhile the public sector is effectively withering away and council housing has really run into the sand, both building and maintaining. The GLC continued later than most, I think it was very strongly swinging against the times when its own end came in 1986. Abolished with it was strategic

planning as we know it in London and much of that was taken into the bosom of Marsham Street.

Public participation has become marginalised. First of all the press have lost interest in it, the media have lost interest very largely, except through the person of the Prince of Wales which is hardly public participation, though in fact his interest is very much welcomed. The methods of dealing with proposals, the forum for discussion, the massive public inquiries of the past, the involvement of the public and the community are seen as nuisances and delays. I recently spent several weeks in the House of Lords, fighting against an attempt to take away a piece of Hampstead Heath and build something on it. Fortunately our side was successful but it shows the different planning climate. Planning inquiries in the House of Lords are slightly different.

There is a great deal of vision being shown by architects and by developers at the moment, far more than has been shown for many years. The kind of buildings that are being built for the larger part show a massive increase in quality, both of design detailing and in finishes. They will be much better buildings in the long term, I think than in the buildings of twenty years before. But against that, we are seeing this problem of co-ordination coming to the fore. We can see it most obviously with London Transport, problems of congestion, problems on the Tube, and we are going to see more as a result of basic structural change to society coming through things like Poll Tax, privatisation of basic services and the establishment of true market commerce for all the services which Londoners buy. I think that in itself is going to have a far greater impact than the built form.

London Today

It is an interesting time and I think first of all I would very quickly like to describe how I see London today.

The first thing that strikes me is that it is still an extremely beautiful city, whatever one might think about individual buildings. We have to look at the City of London as the heart of the vision because of the sheer volume of change in that area. You see schemes there where the problems of integration of old and new and the bringing in of new information technology based floor space have been done with tremendous skill such as in the conversion of the Cutler's warehouses, the old East India company. I feel there has been this massive improvement in the quality of the materials and in the detail since perhaps ten to fifteen years ago. In Broadgate we can see how the best practitioners and architects are approaching it. The way in which these large lower height buildings are handled gives much greater ability to produce a livable city than the 50s and 60s where we were trying to simply build towers.

The fundamental problem is that offices are an excessively boring use. It is therefore particularly important in new development how the ground level spaces are treated, in order to give interest over a long period through their management regimes. At Broadgate, whilst certain parts of this are extremely interesting and cause you to stop and look, you are overwhelmingly aware of the presence of very large amounts of office space. I think part of this is possibly due to the fact that the range of advisers that the developers and their professional teams take on board have a slightly narrow experience of life.

We have got the equivalent of our Medieval cathedrals forming the focal points for London in the 21st Century. We have got to look at Lloyds as being the supreme Medieval cathedral towering above everything else around. I think apart

from one or two rather laughable bits, it is a tremendous symbol and has that kind of arcane mysticism a Medieval cathedral has, but related to insurance which is just about as abstruse in most people's minds.

Fortuitously it has created a powerful impact and the space now contained between the Commercial Union building the PLO building, Lloyds and a little group of stone buildings, is tremendous and is one of the best places in London. Lloyds also shows up the pedestrian nature of the design of much of the rebuilding in the City.

I think one thing which we are in danger or running into, is the balance of old and new buildings in London. Particularly in the City because we have a large number of very good, very high quality stone buildings, human scale buildings and the larger and perhaps more exciting modern buildings of today around them. You get to a certain point I think where you get too many of the one category and too little of the other.

We have one or two what I regard as masterpieces built over the last few years. The Queen Elizabeth Centre in Parliament Square is a superb building, beautifully related to the space and contributes a great deal to the space. Not far away is Richmond Terrace which is a splendid piece of integration. It is a pity one usually has to see this as a background to someone being interviewed from the Department of Health and Social Security.

Docklands Development

I looked at the programme for the conference and it seemed to suggest that Docklands might be seen as a vision of tomorrow. I would hope not myself. Docklands as I see it, although it has got the most wonderful potential, is the product of a very artificial and pretty desperate climate and it is hailed as a success in terms of investment. It certainly is in that respect but at the same time more or less everybody that I have met is expressing very severe doubts about it indeed. Some of them in pretty furious terms and architecturally see it as very tacky. How has this come about? How is it that this feeling is abroad? Are we looking at the first stages which are going to get better? Surely, where architects have in an enterprise zone very largely total freedom to do more or less what they like and tremendous opportunities are presented to the developers, why do we have to produce something which people criticise so much? I think it is extremely sad and results not in the failure of planning because I think people planning Docklands could have, with a normal and sensible and rational approach have produced a splendid result. I think what has happened is that their advice was ignored and we have had an architectural free-for-all, and a developer's free-for-all.

I think the riverside treatment of the buildings, particularly housing, on the whole has been better. There have been serious attempts to create an urban edge to the river. One or two things appear which are a bit dubious. The Cascades development is certainly a landmark but it is very disruptive and out of scale with what is there now, although later on perhaps it won't be out of scale. You have various visions presented to one of Docklands but the reality is somewhat different. On the occasions when I have visited the area there is never anybody about. The houses are mostly up for sale. The boats, the wonderful living by the river seems to be epitomised by sunken dinghys and unused moorings. I don't know whether people are too tired earning the money to buy these places, but the impression gained is not that of a thrusting, exciting and wonderful environment. I find this extremely disappointing, but perhaps what Docklands lacks is a heart or

something to bring it together. Some kind of symbol that will give it a town centre. There is one in Canary Wharf which is about the biggest thing to hit London or Europe in a very long time and it is very difficult to appreciate fully the scale of the development. The scale of the tallest tower makes it similar to a piece of Manhattan. The danger is of course it is going to be a piece of Manhattan in the form of a Manhattan theme park. Can you imagine being in a city of that size built within a period of five or six years. One looks for why it is as it is. I mean why is it taking the form it is? Is it because of a critical mass in as much as you have got to create a certain quantity of office development to support all the services? I am told that is one reason and I am told that buildings have taken their form because of the location of workers doing different things and due to information technology networks. Again that is possibly true. It is seen possibly as a La Defense in London as in Paris we have a development on the outside taking the strain, perhaps Canary Wharf can take the strain here. Possibly. It would be a nice thought if it could. But I think the real announcement is a visual announcement of its presence and I think this advertisement quite blatantly equates London and New York almost by setting up a series of icons, suggesting you can't be serious in business unless you have got a tower.

What is it actually going to be like when it is built? Well, it is almost going to be a clone of something built in Battery City in New York. Looking at those buildings, beautifully detailed and constructed, well, maybe this could be quite a splendid group of buildings. Alternatively it could look like Shell but a lot bigger. So we have got to reserve judgement. At the end of it all I don't think Docklands is a model for us. What Docklands might be a model for is the kind of boom and bust we are going into. As we get influxes of finance from abroad and developers from abroad and professional advisers from abroad we are moving towards the situation they have in other countries, in Australia for example where they build a massive amount and then there is a cyclical fall-off. I think even now, because so much is based on this growth of financial services in London, we have already got rumblings in the City about losing money on equities dealing and losses and high rates of sacking. One wonders whether this is a situation which just stretches into the distance. I have a piranesian vision of shepherds and people like that living in huts built in the ruins of a half-completed Canary Wharf or bits of Docklands.

Gains and Losses

Another very serious danger is a loss of building types because with a market-led economy, what gets built is what makes most money and we are going down an office, office, office train with a bit of leisure centre here and a bit of theme park there. We are losing the public sector contribution, we are getting homeless people on a vastly greater scale. The land is being, in a sense, gobbled up and used up before these very important issues are tackled. We are suffering increased social deprivation in the system at the moment. It is being compounded by the ruthless search for development opportunities. We are in danger of losing the unique visual structure of London, of getting all sites in the same sort of use and the same sort of estate agents shiny buildings going up on a lot of them. I am not talking about the masterpieces of the moment, I am talking about the run of the mill office blocks that are going up. We are in danger of moving towards the Japanese situation where we have rows and rows and rows of shiny building. For example look at Victoria Street. We have rows of shiny, quite well-designed buildings, utterly boring to the

onlooker. At least the Japanese are capable, when they produce a row of beautifully designed, utterly boring buildings, at least they have their graphics, which, whatever you think about them, liven up the scene. I think we have got quite a way to go before we get to the Tokyo situation of a completely free-for-all development situation here.

I think one of the saddest things that has been lost recently has been the railway station. I can understand why they are being built over, but they were a type of 19th Century temple that expressed arrival in the Metropolis, great spaces, wonderful spaces. They are all disappearing now under a sea of dealing rooms and other financial services. Only one of the schemes that are going on at the moment, Terry Farrell's scheme for Charing Cross gives anything back to the city. I think the replacement of a large arched building in Charing Cross in a position where Charing Cross roof used to be in the early years of the century is giving a lot back to London announcing "this is where you arrive in London". It is a tremendous scheme. I think the only unfortunate part is you still, as far as I can see, will be arriving into something which will look like one floor of a multi-storey car park. You have no real feeling of arrival once you are there.

Another issue which I find particularly disturbing is the trivialisation of conservation into theme park values. In the early 80s in Covent Garden we were carrying out the conservation of existing buildings through adaptive reuse, with a great deal of integrity and sensitivity. There were examples of buildings simply being re-used and others in the private sector where a building is quite radically re-built.

Further down the path we have Terry Farrell going off in the directions which architecture could have been in the mid-18th Century which, as it happens, didn't. Again a very exciting way of dealing with the conservation issue. Another approach involved the removal of the entire inside of a sound building to replace it by a different structure. You can produce an awful lot of reasons for doing it, but there is an inherent enormous waste in doing that.

You take this approach a stage further, where at Coutts Bank the existing building simply fills a hollow tooth even with a visible filling in this case and the existing structure becomes bookends around a new, totally different building, in this case one of the first atria that was built.

And there are odd cases where you can build a new historic building. How do you extend an Opera House? I agonised over this for years. Finally I had to admit what they built to extend the Royal Opera House was probably the only thing they could do. Once in a very large number of cases, perhaps a new historic building is allowed, but the next stage of course is full theme park Georgian, all integrity cast to the winds where you are buying it by the yard and stretching around the hi-tech interior. Now I may be at odds with the Prince of Wales, and a good deal of other people on this, but it is one about which I feel utterly convinced.

The Future

I don't think any of you need to have brought home to you the problems we have got with transport in London. There is now a siren call to allow new roads to run all over London again. In Tokyo in the 1960s the Japanese in their pragmatic way decided to provide a series of new roads and they fitted them round and in between the buildings. We may have this brought to us in the next few years as a very highly intelligent engineers solution. I think it is a warning to all of us, because even in the City of London you can see the impact of roads on an otherwise fairly human area where the riverside has been

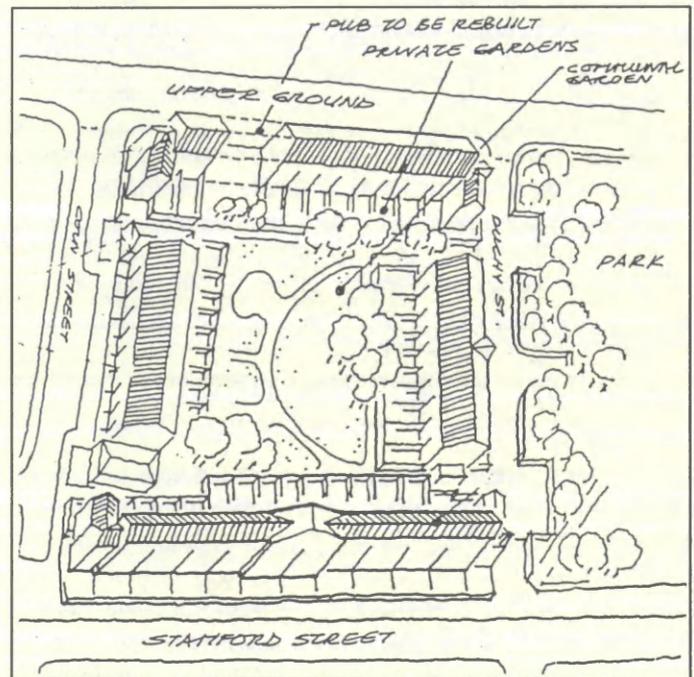
totally denied to people.

The last point I am going to make is on the question of exclusivity. The creation of private enclaves within developments where in a world of private splendour and public squalor you have these areas which you enter and you can enjoy and you can feel a superior person, provided you conform to certain standards of dress, behaviour and generally that you are there for some good business-orientated reason. I think there is a very great danger to society of creating these places.

Last week I had the pleasure of taking the Queen round Coin Street development, round an open space we had just finished in Com Street, for the local development group there who are a local community group who started off in fighting developers and turned into actual developers themselves with the help of the late lamented GLC. They are now in partnership with the private sector and housing co-ops and are creating a not entirely profit-led development in Coin Street. This has open space and housing with 56 houses in the first stage. The Oxo building which has just been semi-demolished is going to be converted for market use, for offices, for flats and for a small museum by the local community group and with a temporary market on part of the site. This I think is a direction in which you will see very few sites going. However, I am particularly pleased that this one, being the last of the undeveloped riverside sites has progressed this way.

Conclusions

In summary I don't have a particularly happy vision of London at the moment. I think it is not too late to save it by any means. I think it is still a beautiful city but underlying it you have got a great feeling of chaos, social deprivation, problems not being addressed and tunnel vision by not only central government but those responsible for the development industry. 🏠



First stage of housing development at the Coin Street end of a 13 acre development on London's South Bank.

THE CITY OF LONDON

WORLD FINANCIAL CENTRE

by Peter Wynne Rees

Planning in the City is like a chariot race. It is fast and exciting, and it is dangerous because there are no brakes. You can only steer. Some say it is out of control and might well stop because a wheel could drop off at any moment. It is my job to ensure that both the wheels are on while helping to steer at the same time. The City of London is a very unusual place. It is probably the smallest planning authority area in Europe but one of the busiest, and most exciting. Shortly after I took up my post in the City I received two complimentary items of press coverage. One was an editorial in "Country Life" welcoming my pro-conservation attitude to the City, and the other was a profile in "Chartered Surveyor Weekly" describing me as a new broom for the developers. I need to be able to encourage both conservation and development. But then, nothing should be impossible for a chariot driver!

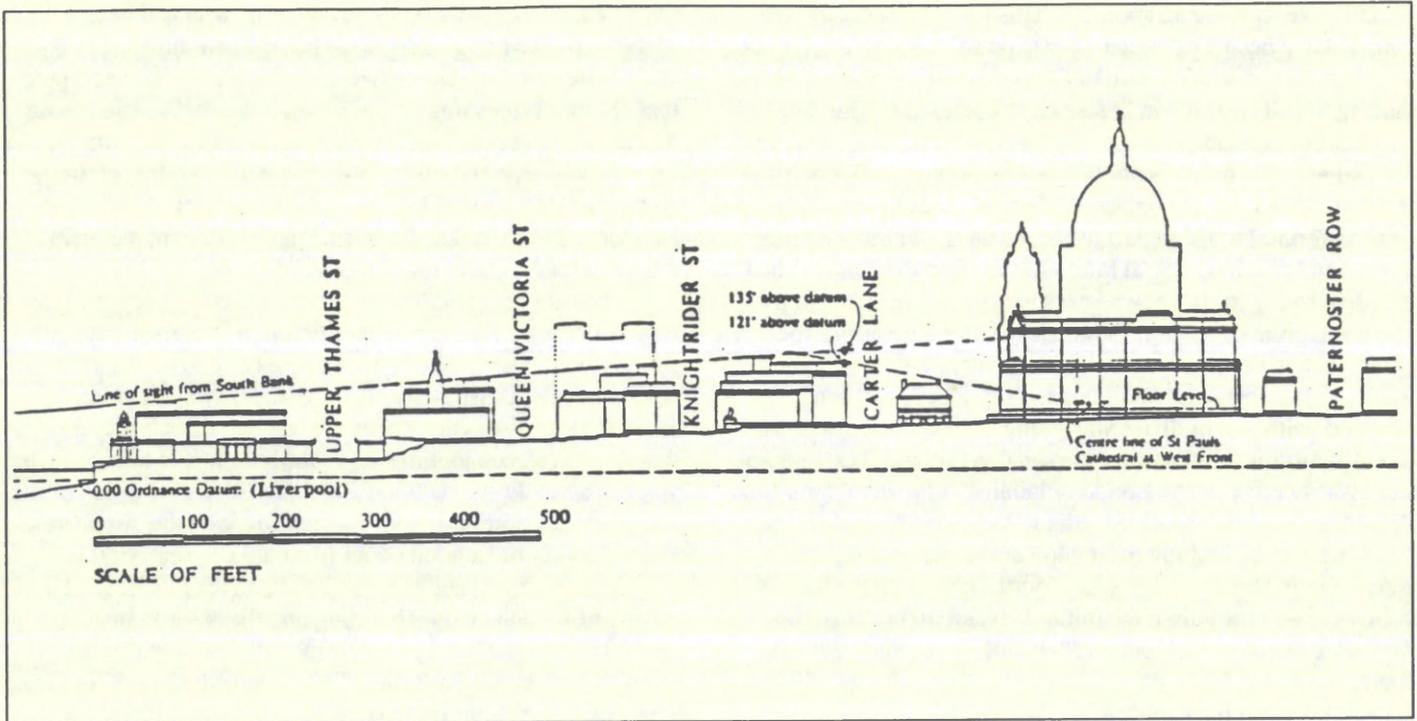
At a recent Conference in Paris, the French didn't seem too pleased when I told them that they were wasting their time trying to be a world financial centre since we had a two thousand year start. London is competing with New York and Tokyo to be the world financial centre. It would be catastrophic to be thrown into the same competition with Frankfurt and Paris. Far better if they continue with activities which they are good at, and we get on with what we are good at. Between us we can make a Europe that can take on the World. The rate at which overseas investment is coming into the City is strongly indicative of the way that others, especially the Americans and the Japanese, see London as the pivotal point in the world financial markets.

Although I don't know all the answers to where the City will be in ten years time, I know that we have to maintain and manage it as we are doing at the present. We have to ensure that it isn't killed off and that the two thousand years of organic growth is continued. However, it must remain a human scale City where people can go from office to office, from office to restaurant, and from office to pub. The Banks started in the pubs and coffee houses and I suspect there is still more real business done in the pubs and restaurants of the City than on the new dealing floors. You cannot create such a Financial Centre at La Defense, Canary Wharf, or Battery Park City because you can't design a gossip network. Even Planners are unable to do something as simple as ensuring a flow of gossip in a new town. We cannot build a community, all we can do is build an infrastructure and the physical fabric. It takes generations to build gossip patterns. I can assure you that what makes money in the City, and makes the City a world beater against Tokyo and New York is the gossip. This has grown up over a long period in an environment where people can walk from building to building. In theory you can now work at home and send all your business down the cable to someone anywhere else in the world. But things don't work like that for two reasons. Firstly, gossip does not go down the wires - it is only exchanged when you can look into the other person's eyes and can work out whether, and how much, to trust them. Secondly, people do not want to work at home. Only journalists work at home, which is probably why they keep pushing the idea that everybody is going to be working from home in ten years time - which they have been saying for the last twenty years. But even journalists go to the pub, which is where their business is really done.



We have begun to hear of buildings called ground-scrappers. I have always called them "doughnut buildings", because they are generally built around an atrium. Whatever you choose to call them, they fill the whole of the street block and are relatively low-rise fat buildings. They allow you to build dealing floors right across the site, and smaller offices above with a central atrium providing light. You can extend floors across the atrium to provide more dealing floors later, or you can push the atrium further down into the building if you want to create more office space. The concept has a degree of flexibility which the forty-five foot wide slab block did not have. Those slabs were built for the "battery-hen" paper era when people sat in little offices on either side of a corridor and sent memos to one another. They were needed after the war to get London going again. If the planners and architects of the period had not built them, we would not be here now arguing about the future of the City. We would not be a world financial centre. The blocks had to be built rapidly, with limited resources, to keep London going. However, their form is no longer applicable. Luckily, in the City we are rich enough in rental terms to be able to pull down all those 60s buildings and replace them. The job is well in hand. Much of what you see happening in the City at the moment is not about creating extra floor space - although extra floor space can, and is being created. It is about replacing those 60s buildings which are not adequate for present technology. They don't have the raised floors for cabling; adequate slab to slab heights; adequate width for the group working that is required; nor the flexibility to reform and regroup staff at regular and increasingly frequent intervals. For these reasons the traditional narrow slab or point block is no longer appropriate in the City.

I would not necessarily rule out high buildings or sky-scrappers in Central London. I think those who look back



fondly to the past and say that London should not have skyscrapers, must look at the historical precedents. They should study Medieval London. The City churches punctuated the skyline and created a jumble of towers. Medieval London was a City of skyscrapers, because it is the relative difference in height between buildings that is important, not the absolute height. Although I don't rule out high buildings, I do worry when those buildings start to form themselves into a wall across the skyline. I think that Prince Charles described the effect as a rugby scrum jostling and colliding with the dome of St. Paul's - an excellent description of what we see. We have had a planning policy for longer than the planning system itself - the St. Paul's Heights Control - which has protected the views of St. Paul's from the river and from various other strategic London viewpoints. When people ask what planning has achieved in the City, I often answer that but for planning you would not be able to see St. Paul's from anywhere by now. Although some of the buildings that have resulted from that policy are somewhat stunted in their top levels, because of people building right up to the heights control limit, at least you can still see the dome and drum of St. Paul's. So something important has been achieved.

Rebuilding

After the Fire of London, Christopher Wren offered to plan the City, but the offer was turned down - although his merits as an architect were realised and given much scope throughout the City. Again, in the post-war period there was a desperate need to rebuild rapidly. It was done within a rather simplistic planning vision - which everybody thought was the right way to do things at the time. Pedestrians were segregated from traffic, and buildings were set out on grids based on the old Roman plan for the City. The post-war buildings that resulted were very much "built planning". Lord Holford produced his

design guide, or masterplan, for Paternoster Square and Trehearne, Norman, Preston and Partners took it on and built it. I suppose that was fair enough. After all, if the planners tell you what the pass mark is why bother to put in any more effort? Build a "pass mark".

Of course you will always have copyists. As soon as one building gets planning permission there will be developers who will leap on the bandwagon and say "that one got planning permission, I want another one of those". Interestingly, recent buildings by Terry Farrell, which were some of the first in that particular style in the City, have had built next to them copies which were out of the scaffolding almost as quickly as the Farrell buildings themselves. They came without much original thought going into them. "That got planning permission, give me another one of those!"

Quality

The quality of architecture depends upon the quality of patronage. Planning cannot achieve excellence, it can only raise the standard of the really awful to mediocre. It is about improving the worst and allowing the best to rise through the process. It is not always an easy thing to do, to let go, but it is often necessary in order to achieve architectural excellence. Of course planning is necessary - in terms of managing day-to-day change and the way a new building fits with what is around it.

There is much to be said for planners offering a challenge to developers and architects. Saying: this is the site for the new building; these are the planning constraints - within broad parameters; this is the plot ratio to achieve a reasonable density of development; these are the surrounding buildings with which you have to integrate your scheme; these are the pedestrian routes around the site and the other existing constraints. What can you do? Can you do better? 

PLANNING PROSPECTS

by Robin Clement

First I have to make an apology. This part of your conference was to have been a politician's 'Vision for London'. I am not a politician and neither is John Popper, whom I replace, who is having a well earned rest before he becomes City Planning Officer at Cambridge.

I am very nervous about speaking to you at all on visual matters since I am a geographer planner. Some years ago there was a proposal to fill in part of the Thames and build houses. At the end of a long day at the Inquiry, when the Counsel had finished trying to find a weakness in my evidence, he got to the usual point of saying, "what are your qualifications for giving urban design observations". In an unguarded moment I said, "I have seen a few buildings in my time" and then realised, with horror, that I was going to be quoted! So what I say this morning are my own personal views and therefore not necessarily those of the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC).

Strategic planning in London at the moment is, yet again, under review. This is the fourth time since the war following Abercrombie, the Initial Development Plans, the Greater London Development Plan and its proposed amendments.

LPAC's Vision for London

Can I commend to you our latest publication, 'Strategic Planning Advice for London'. It is available from LPAC at £3, or £10 if you are consultants, plus postage and packing. This sets out the Committee's Vision for London. Last February LPAC held its first public conference at which we considered the strategic planning issues and choices that London is facing. George Nicholson, the former Chair of the GLC's Planning and Transportation Committee, was invited to speak. In his usual and very forthright fashion, he asked,

"Where is LPAC's vision?" Those of us who had been working on the documents, were brought up short.

After the Conference we stopped to think and accepted that George's question was an important one. We tried to set down what sort of vision we, as planners at LPAC, had for London in the period up to 2001. After a great deal of discussion by LPAC members we set out a "Four-fold Vision for London". Four straight-forward, inter-dependent elements, none more important than the other.

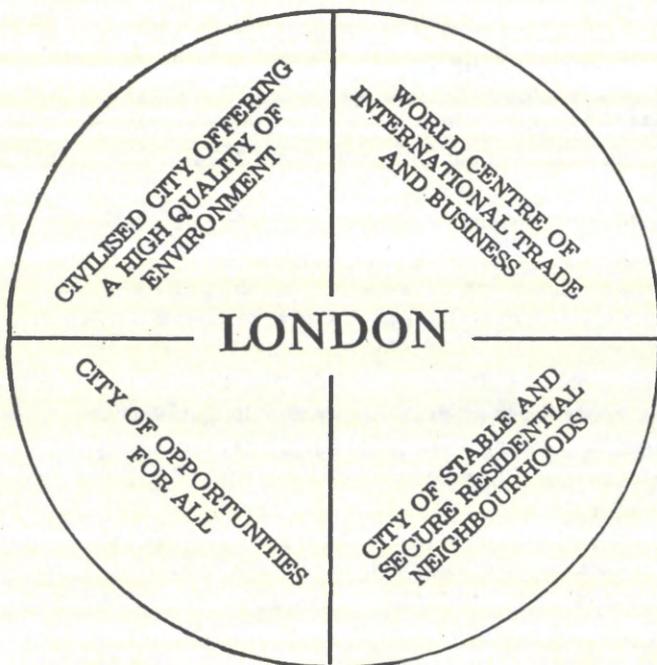
The elements of the Four-fold Vision are very straight-forward. They have been set out before by others many times and yet the Committee felt it was necessary to restate them again; they are illustrated in the accompanying diagram.

In your discussions over the last two days it is quite clear that you have been looking at 'vision' not just in terms of what you can actually see with your eyes, but also of a vision of the social and economic structure which supports the city. Peter Rees, the City of London Chief Planner noted earlier this morning that social and economic factors lead to the kind and quality of both the City's building and the environment in which they are set. They also influence how we keep the buildings which we have already got, and what we do in them.

The Policies Behind the Vision
Perhaps I can now return to the question of politics. Local Government in London is politically hung. There are 33 boroughs, 15 of them are Labour, 14 of them are Conservative, 3 of them call themselves Democrat, sometimes with or sometimes without an 's' and one of them claims to be politically independent. Anybody who believes that the City of London is entirely politically independent, perhaps believes in Father Christmas too?

LPAC, of course, is not a strategic planning authority. I understand that yesterday one of your speakers suggested that London needed a strategic planning authority. I certainly am not going to suggest that, politically hung and with purely advisory functions, LPAC can, or should, become such a strategic planning authority. All it can do is give advice! First, we have given Advice to the Secretary of State, and we will now all have to wait and see how many pages of A4 paper his guidance to London will require and the extent to which he shares our 'Vision for London'. Secondly, we have been giving advice to boroughs in individual strategically important development proposals. Thirdly and lastly, LPAC coordinates strategic planning with the rest of the South East through SERPLAN, the South East Regional Planning Authority. At the same time as LPAC has been agreeing its advice to the Secretary of State, he has requested SERPLAN for a revised and extended Regional Planning Statement to him. All being well, the Secretary of State anticipates that at some time during the early summer he is going to issue Strategic Planning Guidance for London to the boroughs, concurrently with the commencement orders for Unitary Development Plans.

Earlier in this talk I suggested that political interest in Strategic Planning for London was low. When we sent Advice out to the 94 London MPs and MEPs, I think we received 15 cards saying that they had received the document, otherwise we recorded no other response at all. So far as most London borough members are concerned, it is my view that there may well be a growing crisis of confidence in local politics in



Fourfold vision for London

London. At the elections in May 1990 we are going to see an awful lot of borough members who have spent their time, efforts and energies taking part in local government, and particularly in planning, saying they have had enough. Some of them will leave because they are no longer going to be allowed to stand. Some of them are going to leave because that are employed in other authorities. Some of them are going to leave because that are dependant on the future planning in London and do not see their involvement as being particularly worthwhile. Nevertheless, and much to my surprise, when LPAC considered Strategic Advice, its members unanimously agreed the policies in the document and sent them off to the Secretary of State. And that this agreement came from Croydon and Bromley and from the City of London, from Lambeth and Southwark as well as from Richmond, is startling. So I have to say that a bouquet should be given to London's local government politicians represented on LPAC. I hope that when you meet LPAC members, who may have put their political careers in the line, and that applies as much to the Labour members as to the Conservative members, you should congratulate them on the 'Vision'!

Key Problems to Solve

LPAC said in Strategic Advice that there were four key problems which it had identified as needing to be solved if its 'Vision' is to be achieved:

First is the problem of housing essential service workers, young people and others on low and middle incomes.

Secondly, there is the labour market mismatch problem leading to labour shortages, growing long distance commuting and sustained Inner London unemployment.

Thirdly, there is growing congestion and overcrowding on roads and the public transport system, with worsening

environmental, safety, efficiency and accessibility problems.

Fourthly, there is the problem of the 'Two Londons' arising from the imbalance between East and West London, and the quality of life for those on low incomes compared with those on high incomes.

Of the four problems, I am quite certain that 1989 is going to be London's year of transport. Once again in London, transport planning and land use planning are out of sync. We have a situation in which the Central London Rail Study is going to be published; the various major Road Assessment Studies are going to be published; somebody is going to have to publish something on coaches; and of course the hoary chestnut of London's airport policy is once more coming to the fore, but Uniting Development Plans are not going to be ready to give a land use context for their coordination.

I have to say that if ever the thinking which LPAC has put forward concerning restraining car use is justified, the suggestion made recently by the Press that London should be building itself a new road network, 80 feet underground and 80 miles long proves the case. Nobody seems to have considered what its effects might be at the points where it goes underground! It just shows the lamentable vision some people have for London's transport planning, when that sort of suggestion can seriously be put forward and published.

So enough about those four key problems which must be achieved if the Advice's Vision is to be achieved. If you want to know more about them please read the document.

Environmental Policies

I now turn to the question of the environment. One of the most interesting things that came out of our consultations was the general heightened interest in London's environment as a whole; not only in skylines and high buildings; not only from



people in high places talking about successes and failures in architecture; not only from the people who have now discovered that London has an ecology within the City as well as in Open Spaces and the Green Belt; not only in the question of noise and pollution but the overall and general environment of the City. And again there are surprises. A month ago, I listened to the evening news. I heard Mrs. Thatcher saying: "the future of the economy is inextricably interlinked with the future of the environment".

It is a very hopeful thought that we now have from the Prime Minister, from developers in the City, from the commercial world, from the people who are interested in developing shopping, from those who have proposals for housing, from the whole world of people involved in decision-making in London, that the environment is not just something which is nice, not just something which is the icing on the outside of a Christmas cake, but is an essential prerequisite to the future of London as an economically successful city. And it cannot be said often enough and clearly enough that this is the case. People come and live and work in London because basically it is still an attractive city, a relatively easy city to get about in; I can still actually leave this meeting in Bloomsbury and can safely walk home to Stockwell. That is not the case in many other of the world's great cities, and that is what we are all fighting to retain.

There are at present four environmental factors on which LPAC is doing specific work. The first is on skylines and high buildings and I will describe that in more detail later. The second is the preservation of areas of character, the areas that are particularly worthwhile within London: the Thames, the other rivers, the Green Belt, the open spaces, and the best of the architecture and the historically important areas. They form a significant part of the fabric of London and they must be preserved and monitored. LPAC has focused on the question of keeping whole a co-ordinated framework of Conservation Areas and Areas of Special Character. I think we also have a fear, that we should not create a situation in which the best is preserved but the quality of whole urban fabric in which they are set, is not.

Thirdly, we have focused on the whole question of east/west imbalances and the need to ensure that growth in the east makes a positive improvement to the environment of that sector of the Capital; and the fourth area that we have looked at is to focus on some of the worst parts of London towards which attention should be particularly drawn. The sort of things which we are looking at are not just the obvious existing problems, for example, those long street frontages which are unattractive and eroding. We have also looked at the growing problems of suburbia. We think that there are going to be new problems in outer London, suburbia is under pressure for redevelopment, and has growing problems of maintenance on which vast sums of money are going to have to be spent in the future.

A Vision of London's Skyline

I come back to the topic of London's Skylines and High Buildings, and the sort of mechanisms that are needed in order that decision making takes place in an informed way.

LPAC was asked by the Secretary of State in 1986 to look at the sort of policies there should be for Skylines and

High Buildings; LPAC have employed consultants over the last year, (the London Research Centre and Greater London Consultants) and Tim Catchpole, who is here today, is one of the people who has been most involved in the work. Their study report will be published early in 1989. Strategic advice policies have already taken account of the work which the consultants have done.

LPAC in effect came to the conclusion that the policy for high buildings set out in the GLDP is still as valid now as it was when it was set down in the mid 1960s. The problem has been the decisions made by the Boroughs, the GLC and Central Government. The London Research Centre (LRC) studies have identified the cases in which those who took the decisions set aside the GLDP policy. They have also found that the data upon which decision-making needs to be made has got desperately out of date. A large amount of work has been undertaken by the LRC to produce new accurate, up to date maps at 1:10,000 for London as a whole and 1:50,000 for Central London. These have been published informally, and can be seen at borough planning offices now. We are hoping in the early part of 1989 to publish them as dyeline prints.

A second matter for policy that the LRC have picked out in their Study, and LPAC has taken on board in draft Strategic Advice, are the lists of major landmarks and major viewpoints. The idea is to create a framework in which proposals can be properly considered, both by developers, by planning authorities, and by the DoE so there will be a new framework of up to date information and a new planning tool to add to the policies already in force to protect London's skylines.

Another new idea which the consultants have proposed is that there may be some change in the future to remove those buildings which are most intrusive on the skyline, or, when they are re-clad or redesigned, that this be done in such a way that they make a positive rather than a negative impact on the skyline.

Support for LPAC's Policies

In conclusion, I want to say that LPAC's 'Vision for London' is just a starting point. We are now waiting to see the way in which the Government responds. It is not only the Secretary of State for the Environment, whose response is important, but the other departments whose decisions are just as influential on the character of London.

What I would like to ask is "please take part in the debate which will start as soon as draft Strategic Planning Guidance for London is published" - it is your chance to help the Secretary of State to respond to LPAC's 'Vision for London'. 

DESIGN PROSPECTS

by Nigel Coates

What I am going to describe on the subject of a 'Vision for London' is not an elaborate, specific scheme, but some projects and some exhibition work which illustrate perhaps a softer and yet more artful approach to handling the City.

I suppose my approach to architecture is more like that of a movie maker in that all the work I do considers events, the occasions, the situations that occur in and around the buildings or spaces we are considering and I should confess that a lot of this work comes from many years teaching at the Architectural Association. The work that I have done has always stressed two things. One that there should be an urban consideration, an urban starting point for all the projects that the students do and for that reason we have mostly done projects in London where the students could actually sense exactly what was going on there, but also that there should be what could be called an avant garde cutting edge to the work we were doing. In other words it would test the conventions of architecture in urbanism at every point possible. This isn't to say that we were trying to be unrealistic about what we were doing, but rather the reverse. If architecture as language was going to communicate to more people than it does at present, it would need to consider the relationship between an architectural language and the language of everyday life and the language of commercialism, television, all the things that influence peoples' lives.

If you look at an aerial view of London it becomes clear that London is a glorious imperial carcass for the most part a 19th-century city. And I wonder how much vision we have now in how to re-interpret that? I think our approach as designers has not been to look into the future as a utopian approach might have done, as Archigram might have done in the '60s, but rather to say what is an appropriate way of manipulating, adding, underscoring, exposing certain qualities that the City has already and bringing those to meet what is important about lifestyle now. And one of the lessons, looking at the texture of the City, is of course that it has been overlaid numerous times with all kinds of different kinds of ideologies such as the area near Southwark Cathedral with the railways and market buildings adjacent to it. This sort of layering and richness of completely different strata of significance is almost totally absent from what has been built in London in the last few years.

Much of London was bombed in the war and this was seen as a great opportunity but we all know that this resulted in unresponsive buildings. This is a familiar situation and unfortunately this is the kind of architecture that the majority of the public experiences. And indeed it seems the majority of architects are ashamed to the point that it is more likely that the shell of an existing building is to be retained and the interior restructured than taking architecture head-on as a contemporary possibility.

When people are walking along the street they are likely to be fascinated by shop windows, by advertising, by traffic passing in the street. To appreciate what a city is about, one has to think about this continuous event process and a sort of theatricality, an emphasis of communication in messages, in style and in the object world coming to meet the world of desire through all different layers and associations that are not really to do with the object frameworks of building.

It is the layering of the city which puts architecture in a broader spectrum and if one takes ideas like these, it means that one is considering landscapes, communication systems, actual physical forms and movement of traffic, but one is also considering how these things reach the public. An example of what I mean by the term narrative architecture might have been the Festival of Britain in which architects, artists and other creative personages of the time managed to give architecture this narrative dimension. The reason perhaps is because it was an exhibition format, namely that the ideas and the physical entities actually had to work together. I continue to find the Festival of Britain inspiring even now, though one might say in terms of architecture in its greatest sense, that it didn't quite make it.

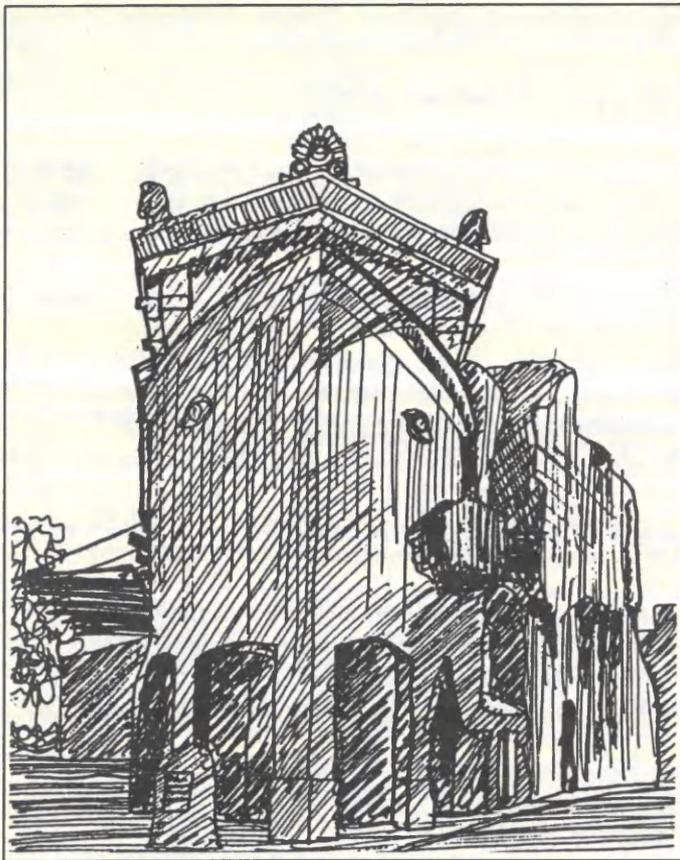
My practice does not design huge chunks of the City and in Britain almost all the spaces we have done are interiors which I think are relevant because they carry the same spirit of layering, manipulation of signs, fragmentary story-telling and the possibility of creating a desire or provoking a response from the users of these spaces which in most cases are customers, because they are shops.

Shopping

In Prince's Square in Glasgow, Katherine Hamnett was invited to be the star shop owner and they more or less gave her the space, because they wanted her to be in a key location. We follow on from Norman Foster as Katherine Hamnett's shop designers and have now done two of her shops, the first one in Glasgow and the second one in Sloane Street.

We were not allowed to touch the facade in Prince's Square apart from putting these two torches, her own name and blitz lamps like camera flashes, and I was amused to see when Prince Charles was visiting it in his television programme that there they were flashing away heroically, a little bit of naughtiness on a stone facade. The important thing about Katherine Hamnett's work is that it has an attitude, not so much a style; it is the way things are put together, a sense of movement. There is an organic undertone to everything we do, so a Gaudi-like bench twirls around the space and then becomes a spiral of tiles in the centre and the clothes zip in and out from the wall with various hanging systems that have a different relationship to the plaster wall. The lighting system I wanted to look like the very first electrical system, so it has huge ceramic isolators supporting wires with tiny little 12-volt lamps perched on them like sparrows.

For Katherine Hamnett's London shop she said 'I want the shop front to be completely black, with a square in the middle with a fish tank in it'. So this is a modest version of that idea. It is not completely black, there is an enormous curtain to the left and the fish tank is a sort of wall that you can see through and by and inside. The shop is really a comment on the traditional salon/Knightsbridge shop so it has quite a lot of fabric in it, a huge semi-circular carpet, an enormous venetian mirror and that same lighting system as in Glasgow. Another design concerns a jewellery store on the corner of Cork Street in Burlington Gardens. Again it is to do with layering with a certain poise like a jewellery store in Paris in the earlier part of this century but it also has lots of laboratory refined industrial details. All the lamps are fitted with retork lamps and all the cabinets are formed with suspended



View of the Noah's Ark Restaurant in Sapporo, Japan, by Branson & Coates.

glass in brass frames which have a floating effect. The fabric is really important too, glass against the fabric and the jewels in front of them. The idea is that the jewellery would be the real subject of the space and that it would float and glitter in the interior display cabinets as well as the ones in the street.

We have just completed a shop in Kensington for a High Street chain called Jigsaw. It is a little bit less shrill than Katherine Hamnett's shop and the idea was to make a space which had a permanent sense of sunshine. You can see the huge sun lamp reflected in the mirror which is the focus to the shop and can be seen from the street. Although it is absolutely full of clothes and full of people on a Saturday, people tell me they feel comfortable and like being in there, that it is un-intimidating, even though it is somewhat baroque. The lighting system is like snakes which in a sense direct or choreograph you through the space and the hanging system. The beacon scrolls at the top of them give a South of France flower shop atmosphere.

Schemes in Japan

Meanwhile in Tokyo, and indeed in Japan, we have started doing real building, much to the shock of many of my colleagues. The first spaces we did were interiors but handled with this architectural approach, which I should remind you, I think is very related to an approach to city design.

The Cafe Bongo is the most published of our projects in Japan. It is an enormous, full-sized aircraft wing. Once again it is the layering of opposites. But what we were asked to do here was play the Tokyo game and although this looks quite startling here when you see it in the context of Tokyo it is not that different from what is going on around it. It is on the busiest pedestrian corner in the world, especially on Sundays,

which is the only day people have off to go shopping, and this cafe forms the focus for one of the largest department stores. They don't have shop windows as such but sell themselves with a cafe. The idea was that it would be a sort of cultural airport lounge, which I think is a bit what Tokyo is anyway, receiving and sending out people and information.

A scheme just finished in Japan is called Noah's Ark and is on a tiny triangular site. We were faced with the problem of this small irregular site on which the client had asked for a classical building. We were forced to build right up to the edge, because every millimetre counts in Japan, but if we went over it by projecting any elements then the building department would say no. But of course the great advantage of working in Japan is that there are no aesthetic planning rules, hence, there is no demand that the street should be unified in any way. In some respects I regret this. I believe that somebody said earlier today that there are no buildings worth preserving in Tokyo and I would strongly contest that. I think the saddest thing is that in Japan there is no sense of the need to preserve anything and there are many buildings which I have seen and liked and have been demolished in the three years I have been going there. A lot of those buildings might be wooden ones, or perhaps even fake European ones that were built at the turn of the century.

Anyhow this one is here for a while. It conforms to earthquake standards and therefore has the usual doubly oversized structure. Inside it has a piranesian sense of doubling movement. Upstairs is a restaurant for about seventy people. Downstairs is a bar and a cafe and from the prow end there is a staircase like the ramp that the animals might have gone into the Ark with and that crosses the spiral half way up and that produces an extraordinary sense of movement and lifting. There are several commissioned works here too that were done in the etruscan spirit of the whole building. These were especially made for us in Italy. The whole building is full of references to the Ark and exploitations of the situations the building provides.

ICA Exhibition

More recently, we were invited to take part in an exhibition at the ICA this summer in which there were six practices displaying their work. The show was called the Metropolis and we decided to produce our own version of the Kings Cross redevelopment. We weren't putting our ideas forward as a direct and viable attack on anything that had been considered for Kings Cross in reality.

On the other hand I think the serious part of it was that there is a more mobile sense of what development in a city can be about. It was suggested to me that what we were doing was a type of soft planning which is that we are accepting and using what is there, we are allowing all sorts of elements to cross and feed into one another, but we are giving it a symbolic dimension, which acknowledges what was there before, but in a sense catches the events of today and carries them forward.

One suggestion that we made is that the homogeneity of development should be avoided and that it is important that there are partial structures that suggest a more specific way of considering offices or any other blanket type of space in the city. This would suggest that one would have to think as architects, not only about different kinds of office situations that might suit very varied sorts of organisations but one would also have to consider communications and information and the objects which go along with those processes and perhaps let those become expressed architecturally as well. 

WORKSHOPS

AESTHETIC ISSUES

summarised by Lawrence Revill

Our role was to look at the aesthetic aspects of a Vision for London. In doing that we inevitably looked at a series of generalities about the quality of life in cities, but then we tried to relate those to some of the issues that we felt were particularly important in London.

The first thing that came over loud and clear from everybody in the room was that a vision for London must be concerned with quality, and that depends on enlightened patronage. It was also very clearly stated that there were roles for the Urban Design Group. The first was an educational role to help fill the gaps in design education and ensure that enlightenment of patronage actually included issues of urban design. The second role was as a political pressure group to start campaigning on some of the major issues that are affecting life not only in London, but in other major cities in Britain.

When we looked at the aesthetic issues in urban design more closely, we came to the conclusion that aesthetics must not, and cannot, be separated from the other functional aspects of life in Britain. If we are looking for guidance at all we would be looking for bench marks against which to measure the success or failure of urban design schemes, rather than the idea of having commandments to which everybody adhered.

Richard MacCormac identified a problem which affects the creation of new, good, public spaces in British cities, and in London in particular, in that the creation of those spaces has always been a commemoration of some historic event. And as we no longer live in such an heroic period, there is some difficulty in creating new spaces which have the same sort of strength of identity and links with the past that they once did have. Another view was that cities are about a continuity beyond the sum of individual lives and the physical fabric of the city is a collective memory of the life of the city in the years before. Some sort of continuity over time was essential to the quality of urban life. But the scale of development which is currently being contemplated, particularly the scale of redevelopment, is mitigating against this. A number of us feel that we are actually the oldest things in the place when we walk through some of the new developments that have taken place in Central London.

On the question of the scale of development Richard MacCormac made a very simple point, which also struck a chord with a number of people, which was that people will put up with big objects if those big objects actually represent things that are important to them. That leads to a general dislike of large office buildings, because, by and large, offices are not important aspects of their lives. The question of scale is very much a political and power-related problem.

Having said that, we all felt that it was necessary, where large buildings are being considered as part of a redevelopment scheme, to look at the ways in which street level activities, which are incorporated into those buildings, promote what Richard MacCormac has called a transactional value. There must be a relationship with the people who actually use the spaces outside, and the uses on the ground floors of those buildings should relate to the people passing by.

A definition of aesthetics that we hit upon was that aesthetics are not merely to do with style, or taste, but aesthetics are to do with the experience of everyday things. The wider the debate is thrown, and this was very much a role that

was seen for the Urban Design Group, the more likely that the outcome of the debate will lead to successful development. There must be a mechanism to change things and the planning process is the way in which that may, and indeed should, be brought about.

There was concern over the disparity nowadays between the physical entity which is London and the fact that cities have traditionally been places where people both live and work. Definitions of London according to where people live can range from Doncaster to Brighton Beach. The definitions of its physical entity nevertheless are much smaller than that, and there are some difficulties in trying to give London a vision and an identity which is relevant to the people that use the place.

An important point that Ted Hollamby brought up is the fact that the city needs the illusion, at least, of districts which can be visually defined by people and are comprehensible to them. The example that he gave is that for people who actually live in the centre of London, London is quite readily defined by the green ridges that lie to the North and the South of the river. The perception of London to those people is not much greater than that.

Very closely linked to this is the whole idea that London consists of a series of identifiably different places and that the differentiation between those places needs to be enhanced. There was a profound worry that London is merely becoming yet another "global" place with no identity of its own.

And finally we felt that it was very important that all urban design proposals and all redevelopment proposals that are being contemplated in London should be reviewed from a user perspective as an integral part of any urban design process. Reviews from the user perspective were not simply to do with aesthetic issues, but the form, function and circulation around the developments concerned. 🏠

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

summarised by Ian Bentley

This topic was concerned with decentralisation and concentration in the city, the changes that have been happening recently and are continuing to happen; are they a good thing, what should our view be about them and how do they relate to our vision of London?

Sid Sporle, Director of planning and Transportation for the City of Westminster, made the following points on the issue of Dispersal or Concentration:-

Both dispersal and concentration are needed and both will in any event occur. Central London has the basic infrastructure and can draw in labour from wide areas without leading to immediate pressures for new house building. It also has the international infrastructure - access to airports, Channel Tunnel terminal, telecommunications, specialist expertise.

Can Central London provide the space? Yes, the City of London has shown the way with levels of development during the 80s well in excess of anything historically achieved. Westminster too has responded to increased pressures and has made provisions for higher levels of development (Paddington). But a balance is needed. In Westminster's case, as in other parts of Central London, there are residential communities to protect, other uses of value and historic buildings. Protecting these amounts to a policy of restraint, but the aim is not otherwise to restrain.

Is there a problem of availability of Labour? Not generally, although certain skill shortages exist. The market can correct better through salary adjustments and training

than planning can through locational controls.

What is the role of the Inner London Labour force? Unemployment in areas around Central London remains high relative to the Rest of the South East. Getting people into Central London jobs is one aspect, opening up the housing stock another - so unemployment is not locked into the inner London public housing stock and new entrants to Central London jobs market could live in Inner London.

Should there be more onus on employers to recruit unemployed locally? Local compacts are developing as in the case of Canary Wharf and East London employers. More could be done.

How much is traffic congestion/capacity of the rail network a constraint on growth? On the roads, traffic levels are increasing and speeds deteriorating. On the tube/rail, capacity and congestion problems are growing. New infrastructure has a very long lead time. Growth offers opportunity to implement much needed renewal programmes.

Implications for renewing old buildings. Again, growth offers the chance to renew and regenerate on a larger scale. (Canary Wharf, Broadgate, King's Cross, Paddington). Many 60s office buildings are no longer suited to modern needs.

How will the changing structure of employment change types of building/demand for space. 70s trend was to higher order occupations plus new technology leading to larger average floorspace per worker ratios. 80s has seen the emergence of the office factory - large floor areas to provide dealing floors. Where to next? Trend to more space per worker likely to continue.

The discussions that followed started off with virtually a consensus view that what was happening to London, in common with other big cities, was a result of being part of the global economy. These enormously powerful forces tended to bring about a process of concentration of major economic activity in points with rather low areas in terms of building density in between them. There was a certain ambivalence amongst us as to whether this was a good thing or not. Certainly it was a trend which we all recognised.

On the other hand I think we did all feel that since we seem to be in a world where there are three major financial players, Tokyo, New York and London, we weren't in a situation where we could envisage opting out of that and that therefore we needed to continue to play this global game and that the effect of that was, whether we liked it or not, that London was going to continue over the next ten years or so to be subject to these sorts of pressures. In other words that there were going to be these large chunks of decentralised dense, exciting, lively development with low density gaps in between.

What we thought was important was that we didn't just totally lie down and wave our legs in the air and go along the model of Tokyo or New York, but that we had to produce, in some way, or try to play some role in producing, a specifically London version of all this, which didn't depart totally from the London tradition. There was discussion about whether we could envisage re-investment from the profits of these large centralised developments being put in to the rest of the city. Making the rest of the city more like most of us would probably think of a proper city with a greater mixture of uses, with greater opportunity for the less well-off to take part in economic activities there and so forth.

I think that we had no very great insights beyond what I have just told you. We think that Londoners have got to play this global game of trying to become a major financial centre,

or staying as a major financial centre. This will have the effect as a trend for some of us, and may be a vision for others that this will lead to a kind of lumpy city with big massive centres with not a lot of investment going on in between. We ought to be looking for ways in which the heavy investment in individual parts can be channelled into improving the bits in between to make it as much like a traditional London city benefitting as many people as possible. 🏠

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES summarised by Arnold Linden

A representative of Bovis Construction gave a brief introduction to begin the session. He described something that was definitely a development-led view of London in emphasising the developers need for a constant flow of work. He referred to a rolling programme, not only of individual buildings, but whole areas of development, citing one and a half million square feet in Sheffield being turned round in two years. He said that wasn't only typical of large developers, but also occurred with smaller developers who have a similar need for a rolling programme.

David Gosling then described his work as a consultant in Docklands of which the following is an extract:-

In 1981 a comprehensive urban design study was prepared for LDDC by myself and Gordon Cullen. However, this report lacked any statutory authority and the design team felt that the objective of the study would be to prepare a series of alternative options which were not definitive in the normal sense of the physical planning process. Conventional land use plans were not considered as an integral part of the study, but rather as a series of flexible land use alternatives within a strong social and visual framework. These were rejected by the LDDC Executive as too prescriptive and a more pragmatic plan showing the amalgamation of developers' proposals was established in its place. I felt, however, that without a total urban design framework it was difficult to see how development could proceed in a coherent manner.

The urban design framework I proposed suggested that development proposals could be seen as the amalgam of two urban approaches - the public realm and the private realm. The public realm concerns the public spaces formed by new and existing buildings; public movement systems (including pedestrian routes, access roads and rapid transit systems; and the squares, streets, arcades, parks and open spaces of the quartier which form the urban morphology or physical shape of the plan. This is not to say that such a plan would establish rigid rules which would inhibit development. Future industrial, recreational or housing development would allow individual architects to seek the highest design standards. Visual and social success is seen to be only possible if development is within a public framework (public realm) which in itself has sufficient coherence and identity. This is the purpose of an urban design plan as opposed to a land use plan or even an urban design guide. The urban design plan is intended to stimulate ideas for development and, above all, to weld together existing communities instead of allowing their destruction. This is the primary goal in the reconstruction of declining inner cities in a post-industrial age.

As part of the preparation of the urban design plan, a visual appraisal and townscape structure plan by Gordon Cullen provided a vocabulary of eye-level planning which identified identities and networks. Though this study was beautifully drawn with a poetic text, it failed to provide a strong enough framework to guide developers and also

received a negative reaction from the local community. Cullen said that "... The reliance on dramatic planning gestures is probably a waste of imagination - most people live at eye level and there must be a vocabulary of eye level planning." The alternative planning options that I prepared looked at the possibility of a public realm/private realm urban design plan.

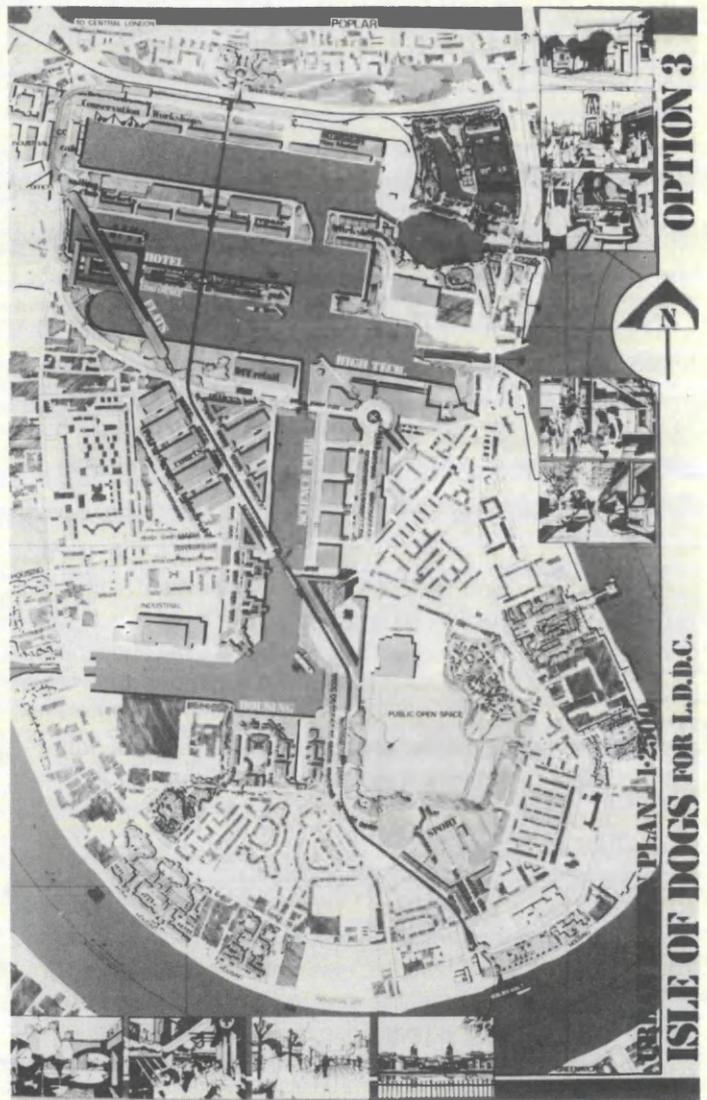
In 1984, Michael Wilford of James Stirling, Michael Wilford and Partners, wrote a penetrating critique in "Architectural Design" (1984) (UK):

"... The conceptual studies prepared by David Gosling represent approaches based on clearer urban structure and stronger relationships between the public and private realms than those indicated by the conceptual diagram (the officially approved pragmatic plan). The options advocate the strong and coherent public realm necessary to organise the inevitable variety of architectural form and quality entailed in the Enterprise Zone concept. In Option 3, for example, the All Saint's/Blackheath/St. Anne's Limehouse axis, together with vistas, topographical relationships and the new movement systems are suggested as the bases of a suitably vigorous framework within which individual developments can be accommodated. It is unfortunate that these studies were not presented in the Guide as alternative strategies alongside the conceptual Diagram rather than consigned to the Appendix."

The negation of a proper Urban Design Strategy and the subsequent ad-hoc development is well recorded. What really changed planning attitudes in the Isle of Dogs was the Canary Wharf proposal in late 1985 by American developers with architects Skidmore, Owings and Merrill of Chicago. The proposal involved a 10 million square feet financial centre in the West India Docks of the Isle of Dogs. This included three 790 feet (265m) high towers. It is ironic that LDDC had previously rejected the concept of an urban design plan as an example of prescriptive planning, but welcomed a master plan with strict design guidelines produced by an outside agency. Gordon Cullen questioned the unusual height and haphazard siting of the three towers and the conflict between them and the Greenwich axis. Cullen suggested that the eastern sector of the development should be re-analysed and that instead of the three disparate towers, a cluster of medium height towers at the eastern end would be more appropriate. An analogy would be to envisage it as a miniature Manhattan rather than a vertical 19th Century neo-classical city. Cullen also pointed to the reduction of the water areas as a result of this proposal.

In January 1987, Stephen Proctor, John Ferguson and I drew up an alternative proposal for the eastern end (Phase 2) of Canary Wharf which eliminated two of the skyscrapers but retained the major one on the north-south axis of the Docklands Light Railway. The public spaces and squares were seen in a more formal relationship and the eastern end terminated by two lower gateway towers on the east-west axis. This proposal has been incorporated in the revised scheme drawn up by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill for the new developers (since summer 1987), Olympia-York of Canada.

The mounting public criticism of the visual anarchy and functional incoherence of rapid development within an Enterprise Zone suggests that a doctrinaire policy of abolishing conventional planning systems and controls is unacceptable. A combination of uncontrolled speculation resulting in plot ratios and development densities at a North-American urban level but superimposed upon what is essentially a medieval street pattern and inadequate infrastructure (especially public transport) may ultimately result in a total seizure



Option 3 of Conceptual studies for The Isle of Dogs undertaken by David Gosling Associates, illustrating the importance of the Greenwich to St. Anne's Church Limehouse axis as a possible visual structure.

of the urban structure. Town planning and urban design exist as essential aids to rational urban development. The present urban form of London, appropriately criticised by Prince Charles, is a direct result of a developer-led urban process which cannot be cured by the mere application of neo-classical facades.

One of the members of our group, Jim Grove raised a number of questions which I think summed up some of the issues with which the workshop was concerned. He said that the developer was a means of delivery and the delivery process would deliver the buildings that we were going to get, or the product we were going to get. He questioned whether designers could influence the way in which products were delivered. What was the preferred means of delivery? What view did we have about the way in which the products of our cities were produced? Could the designer be a deliverer? I think there are quite a number of PLC's about which suggest that the designer could be a deliverer. And finally, he asked the question, if the Urban Design Group has a view about the vision for London, should we not set up a new MARS group, an extension of CIAM, in order to present a vision for London and I presume, in the process, rewrite the Athens Charter, not forgetting the mode of delivery. 🏠

AN OVERVIEW

by Francis Tibbalds

Some twenty years ago, I wrote a thesis for my planning degree. It was called the Significance of Images of the Future in the Planning Process. In the course of preparing it I looked at lots of different images of the future by different people. One of the most chilling that I came across was a single sentence. It was this: "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face, for ever". That was, of course, from George Orwell's "1984" and it came from the very harrowing dialogue between Winston Smith and his torturer O'Brien. It is one of the most unpleasant images imaginable. So why do I use it? Well, let me explain the relevance of 1984. Let me ask you to recall to your minds the grim vision of a squalid, brutal, soulless, uncaring London that was portrayed in both the book, and if you saw it, even more so in the film. May I be wrong, but my vision of London is this. I fear that the city is drifting towards a 1984 style, dirty, threatening, public environment with travel almost impossible and with countless people living on the streets, but with a few incongruous set pieces like escapist islands in a sea of pollution. In short, I describe it as an environment of private affluence and public squalor with no effective means of controlling it.

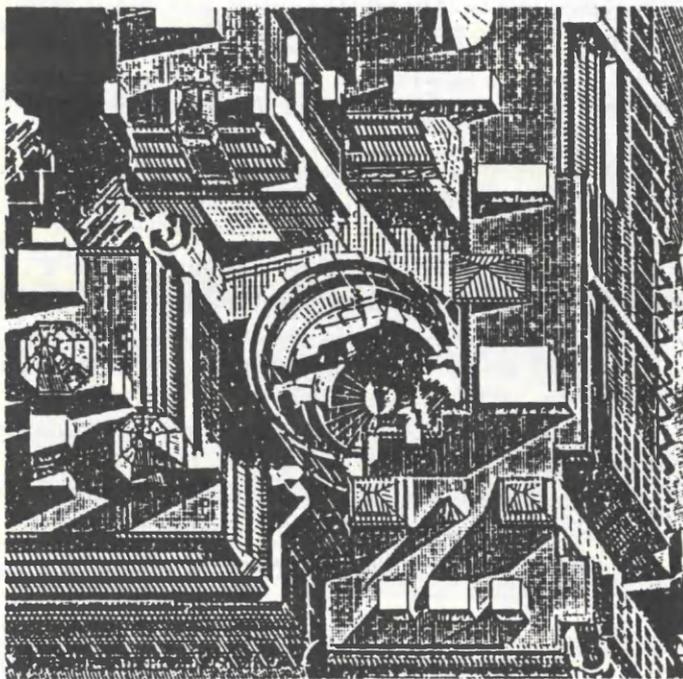
Let me at once acknowledge that there are many good things happening in London. You have seen and heard about some of them in the course of the extremely timely Conference. If you think of King's Cross, Paternoster Square, Broadgate - and I hope you all saw the filofax kiosk contributing to the mixed uses at pedestrian level - Covent Garden, Charing Cross, the South Bank, and many, many more - where enlightened developers like Stuart Lipton, Godfrey Bradman, Geoffrey Wilson, Trevor Osborne and a few others, are working with quite imaginative architects and urban designers to produce better, more popular environments. But my concern is this: if you consider Greater London as a whole, those schemes, despite the size of some of them, are but drops in the ocean and it is not a very attractive ocean at that.

Earlier this year a Canadian, Michael Ignatieff, wrote very cogently in the "Guardian" about our situation. I will briefly quote him: "Yet even Mrs. Thatcher, when she speeds through our cities in her Daimler, cannot help but see how dirty and neglected they have become. She delivers homilies on litter as if the decay of the inner city would smell sweeter if only the streets were cleaner. It would not occur to her that litter is a symptom of decay in a public environment starved of expenditure and imagination. Clean streets depend on the inter-relationship between private virtue and public institutions, between people who care enough to struggle against the defacement of public places and public officials who will back up their commitment with investment". And he goes on in his article to describe how England used to be very poor in what he called the "private domain", but dazzlingly rich in its "public dimensions". He asserted that now he felt he lived in an England whose private households were starting to ape California, but whose public domain was struggling to avoid the damnation of the South Bronx. Very strong words! He concluded "The tide will turn because it must. Private affluence will lose all savour amidst public squalor".

Now his remarks were about England, but I suggest they were even more acutely relevant to London. I had a ride in a Liverpool taxi last week with a fairly outspoken driver. He asked where I was from. I told him. "Ah, London! That is where they are all chasing money, haven't got time to live, and they die in their mid-30s". Well, he has a point hasn't he, because as individuals a lot of us have become richer in the somewhat selfish "me first" approach of the so-called enterprise culture, but as citizens and as Londoners, we are infinitely poorer. Look around! Pavements are crumbling, street lights are not repaired, public buildings - libraries, museums, schools, hospitals - are all struggling for survival and even the buses are not what they used to be. The question I ask is: "don't Ministers see this decline of the public realm as they are driven around? It means that considerable public investment is urgently required to complement what the private sector is prepared to do and within its own terms is doing very well.

Now there is in the UK at the present time, particularly in London, some of the greatest planning and urban design opportunities of the century. For example Docklands which is the single, largest piece of urban renewal in London since the Great Fire of 1666.

Now unfortunately, in Docklands, the need for some overall coordinating framework, whether you call it a Master Plan or an urban design strategy, appears, until recently, to have gone unrecognised. But I think we would all admit that a remarkable transformation has been achieved in just 8 years. Notwithstanding unparalleled experience in the UK of building new towns, we all find it still very difficult to achieve large-scale change without it ending up as something alienating, painful and lacking in richness, coherence and maturity. At the other end of the scale, sensitive, friendly infilling, implemented gradually on small sites in places like Covent Garden is altogether much easier and I think that is because we try and jump too quickly. We try and jump from abstract masterplan, policies, financial equations, straight into constructing roads and buildings.



Now, what did you all think of the Isle of Dogs when you saw it? Did you come away thinking that the urban design challenge of the Century adds up to little more than opportunistic chaos? I have heard it described as an "architectural circus". You see there a sprinkling of post-modern gimmicks. They have commenced the ghastly "mega-lumps" of Canary Wharf. You have a fairground train to get you there. Now there was a necessary intermediate step that got missed in the rush. It is called urban design. Now what about Canary Wharf? What is the relevance of all the tasteful bits of conservationist infilling, cobble-scaping, that sort of thing, when that development is already underway, started off by Mrs. Thatcher, in a tin hat. What are future generations going to think of all of us for seeming to allow it? My comments about it looking like "a chunk of some ageing, tired and dreary US downtown, dropped from a great height on to the Isle of Dogs" have been published and broadcast all round the world and I have had scores of letters of support. Only one person has disagreed with me to date other than Sir Roy Strong, and I am afraid I do not regard him as impartial, and that was an architect in Bristol who said "Your comments are quite right, but I like it because it is so f...ing big!"

Even the Corporation's own staff sidle up to me when I go down there quietly to take a few photographs and they say "We all agree with you, keep up what you're saying". But despite all that support, I do feel quite lonely and exposed. Why aren't other people speaking up? What is the Urban Design Group doing about it? Why are we allowing American architects to spoil our City with clumsy inappropriate lumpy buildings? And why do we leave it to the heir to the throne to articulate our concerns? Is it perhaps that we are constrained by personal interests, I don't know?

If we want to save London, I think we have got to agree a new agenda - an agenda which elevates the needs and the aspirations of ordinary people above a combination of rampant, private profiteering - when I say that I entirely accept that developments must be commercially viable - and elevated above arrogant, professional individualism - and when I say that I am not denying that we don't need very good people with very good ideas. I've said it lots of time this year, I will say it another time: what is required is an inclusive collaborative approach, whereby different professionals work together with respect for each other and for the community that they serve.

I think it can be done. Let me now make humble amends to Docklands. I think they have learned quite a lot from the Isle of Dogs' *laissez faire*, free-for-all let-it-all-rip experience and they are actually applying an altogether different approach in the next big area, in the Royal Docks area. Now I have to declare a prejudice, and an interest, because my firm has just been appointed to help with some of that work. I believe it will be better, if it isn't you now know who to blame!

Commercial property consultants Jones Lang Wootton in a report about de-centralisation which has just been published, suggest that the number of jobs which are relocating outside central London is likely to increase very sharply in the next few years. They are expecting something like 36,000 to leave central London. The overwhelming reason for that

exodus is probably upwardly spiralling property prices, but I think a deteriorating environment and a terminally-ill transport system are also important contributory causes. So let's look at another facet of the capital city. Let's look at its transport system. As President of the RTPI this year I have undertaken already something like 250 engagements, many of them in London. For a lot of them I cannot risk being late, if the host is a Minister, a Lord Mayor, the Prince of Wales, all manner of other distinguished and intimidating personalities, I have somehow to get there on time. The only safe way I have found of travelling has been to work out exactly where it is that I am going, to estimate how long it will take to walk there, and if the bus, the taxi, the tube train doesn't come by that time, then I set off on foot.

"The Independent", in a recent leader, reported that currently "900,000 people enter central London by rail each working day between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. in the morning and 160,000 come in by car. Fifteen sections of the Underground have been identified as critically congested and the entire system cries out for new rolling stock with a much more frequent service. New cross-city railway lines are needed. The Canary Wharf development in Docklands is expected to generate an estimated 100,000 per hour into the area and the light railway can now cope with 4,000 an hour. Bus routes of ridiculous length evolved in the free-flowing days before the First World War have become unmanageable and they need to be replaced by much shorter ones. The prospect looms of Channel Tunnel trains spewing thousands of extra passengers into London every day". That was a quote from The Independent not from me.

My good friend Jaquelin Robertson was here earlier this year from the States to participate in the RTPI Annual Conference. He was forcibly struck by the deterioration in London's environment in general, and its transport system in particular. What he said was this: "You haven't yet got the situation that in New York we call 'grid-lock', but you are not very far off it". And as The Independent pointed out "As the situation deteriorates, the Department of Transport maintains a profile so low as to be invisible, except on safety issues such as drinking and driving".

Now the RTPI have already taken Paul Channon to task for his somewhat inept and unsatisfactory speech to the Tory Party Conference this Summer and we will, as a result of that soon be meeting with his Minister of State, Michael Portillo, to put our views in person. But other countries invest heavily in public transport, because it is good for the economy as a whole. You have only to look at the French metro system, the new RER, France's growing network of high-speed trains.

I have just returned from that most densely populated Island - Hong Kong. I would swap Hong Kong's "MTR" (Mass Transit Railway) for what is on offer in London, anyday.

Road building is not the answer. London already has far too many roads, in my view, and they are all choked with traffic. Sometime we have got to learn the less that traffic inexorably expands to fill all the space available and as congestion, which is the Government's criteria for road building, is temporarily eased in one place, somewhere else it becomes even worse. Again I quote The Independent "It is

time the Government abandoned the short-term ad hoc approach and took the longer view, which a cost-benefit analysis of traffic in London will provide. The amount of working time lost in London under present conditions, and the wear and tear on users of public and private transport alike should be taken into account in planning investment. Only a Master Plan laying down a timetable for co-ordinated coherent investment can give the capital the public transport system it requires. Without such an approach and some judicious discouragement of the private motorist, London will surely choke to death".

So there you have another component of my overview vision of London, the transport system.

Let me turn to another, equally daunting aspect - that of homelessness. I will start with another quotation, this time from the Chartist Proclamation of 1839. "All shall have a good house to live in with a garden back or front, just as the occupier likes, good clothing to keep him warm and make him look respectable and plenty of good food and drink to make him look and feel happy". When that was published, city dwellers were starting to experience the full horror of European industrialisation. I think today we can only vainly speculate at the immense despair the Chartists would have felt had they been able to see what was happening 150 years later. Not just in the Third World, but also in the heart of the developed world in London. I can't begin to describe the feelings of profound helplessness that engulf me when I go out of my office, which is in Charing Cross Road, into Leicester Square Underground Station. Day after day one finds on the steps this sort of a scene: a man and a boy huddled under a grubby blanket with a bit of cardboard on it reading "We are homeless, please help".

Using the London Underground has become quite an expensive business for ordinary travellers. It used to be, and in some stations still is, buskers, chamber groups - many of them very good, very welcome to weary commuters - but, increasingly now, it is hungry and homeless people, often with small children, who are reduced to begging. What on earth must visitors to the UK and London make of that and how long before they stop coming? I have had numerous comments this year from overseas visitors who are visibly shocked by what they have seen in this capital city and I have to ask the question: doesn't the Government care?

Housing or shelter has been defined by the United Nations as a basic human right and earlier this year I was moved to contact the Prime Minister about what I call closing the gap between the homeless people and the rest of society. There are in the UK, particularly in London, hundreds of people, many of them quite young, who for various reasons, often not of their own direct making, have fallen through the housing and the Social Security net and as a result of that are obliged to live on our streets in cardboard boxes or huddled in subways. Unfortunate people like that exist in many countries of the world, both developed and developing, but it is, I think, a particular shame and disgrace that the phenomenon should exist in one of the world's greatest capital cities.

So, in adding my voice to such eminent ones as Mother Theresa of Calcutta and the Prince of Wales, my case to Mrs. Thatcher was that as a supposedly caring and civilised society

we must do something now to help these disadvantaged people in our midst. I am the first to admit that it is not a new problem. Nor is it helpful for anyone to make political capital out of it, though of course it is always tempting!

A journalist called Michelle Beauchamp lived for a week among young homeless people on London's streets earlier this year and she found most of them were there because they had come to the capital looking in vain for work. This is what she wrote at the end of a very harrowing article: "The one moment which touched me more than any other was when, during a chat, one young man said, with tears in his eyes, "Make sure you tell them what it is like. Make sure you tell them that this is what Thatcher's Britain has done to young people". The situation is quite simply outrageous. It is too easy to blame the present government. The inescapable fact is that successive governments have to date failed to find effective ways of dealing with it. I think we can't continue to ignore it, and I proposed that the RTPI should participate in a small 'Action Group' with the remit of quickly establishing the extent of the problem - and it's variously estimated to be between 100,000 and 250,000 people - to look at its causes and put together costed, practicable proposals for its amelioration with particular emphasis on helping those able to help themselves reverse their own downward spiral.

To my delight, the initiative was cautiously welcomed by Mrs. Thatcher and it is currently being pursued with her cabinet colleague with responsibility for housing - the Earl of Caithness. So I hope that out of that we will come up with something that can usefully be shared with cities that have this awful problem. It is a daunting matter. I would not pretend to know what the solutions are. Clearly there is an immediate need for more hostel accommodation and more bedsitter accommodation. There is also a need to increase the supply of low-cost housing for rent. The right-to-buy policy has depleted the housing stock - in my own local authority for example, which is one of the outer London boroughs, it has taken it down from 21,000 units to 14,000 - and, as you will know, re-investment of the sale proceeds into housing is not at the moment permitted.

One finds that many private landlords will not accept DHSS tenants and even if they will, how does a homeless person with no job find the deposit? There are, true, limited 'Budget Loans' which are available under the new Social Fund to applicants registered for six months on income support, but how does a single person pay back the loan out of a mere £33.40 per week or even less? So I think we have got to look at a co-ordinated attack on the problem in a situation where the existing agencies either can't cope or are obliged to shuffle off the problem from one to another.

Others much more learned than me have researched this issue. I received earlier this year a rather sober tone called "Landscapes of Despair". It turned out to have been written by a friend of mine who is now at the University of California. But closer to home, the Institute of Housing published a very good report recently entitled "Who will house the homeless?". Amongst other things it recommends that Government must accept responsibility for meeting the needs of homeless people instead of expecting local authorities who now have quite severely diminishing resources, to bear the brunt. They also

recommend that something like 75,000 extra homes need to be built each year. They also say that now is not the right time to dismantle the provisions which relate to homelessness in Part III of the Housing Act 1985.

I sometimes get into trouble for making political points. I am actually at present completely apolitical in both my public and my private life. I am no longer a member of any political party. Having said that, I don't think it is overstating the case to predict that the judgement that history and future generations will make on this Government will be exceedingly harsh. I say that for this reason: whether you look at the quality of the environment, whether you look at transport, or housing provision, (they are the three things that I am homing in on), I think they will be seen to have been ruined beyond belief and that all that was good in this country and in this city is disappearing and is being replaced with a somewhat uncaring, selfish culture which is becoming obsessed with private gain, security, privacy, consumption and a public environment which is characterised by abundant litter, rotting rubbish, graffiti-sprayed trains, polluted traffic-choked streets and general squalor.

There are times when I actually feel thoroughly ashamed to be a Londoner. Now I reserve my most severe condemnation for the greatest folly of all which was the abolition of London's Metropolitan Government and Planning Authority. We all had lots of grumbles about the GLC, but when the chips were down, all of us, - the RIBA, the RTPI, the Urban Design Group, and countless other bodies - lobbied very hard indeed for its survival in an improved form. A lot of people are now realising, too late, that its disbandment was a serious error of judgement by the Government.

As I have travelled around this year, particularly overseas, I have seen time and time again the sheer incomprehension on the faces of those I have met that one of the greatest world cities has no co-ordinated system of government, planning and management. London is quite simply out of control. It's piecemeal future is lying in the hands of 32 London boroughs, the City of London Corporation, five government departments, a number of quangos and countless committees and advisory bodies. Mrs. Thatcher, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Channon, London is simply falling to bits in your hands and the sooner you realise this, concede the mistakes, and do something about it, the better for the city.

Now let's look at the way forward. I see little alternative to massive investment in the public environment of London and its transport system. I think that a new, effective metropolitan authority is urgently required to co-ordinate that investment and to manage the city for the benefit of all who work here, who live here or just visit here. There is an urgent need for the Government to take an interest in the design and the management of the public realm of the capital city.

You are probably completely fed up with my outpourings about planning and design, so you will have to hear me on another occasion if you want to about urban design principles, Prince Charles and all of that. I should need another hour at least. Let me just stress that good design is important. I am, however, concerned that in the UK we are not training enough people with the synoptic, inter-disciplinary skills which are required for a very daunting task - the task of saving our towns

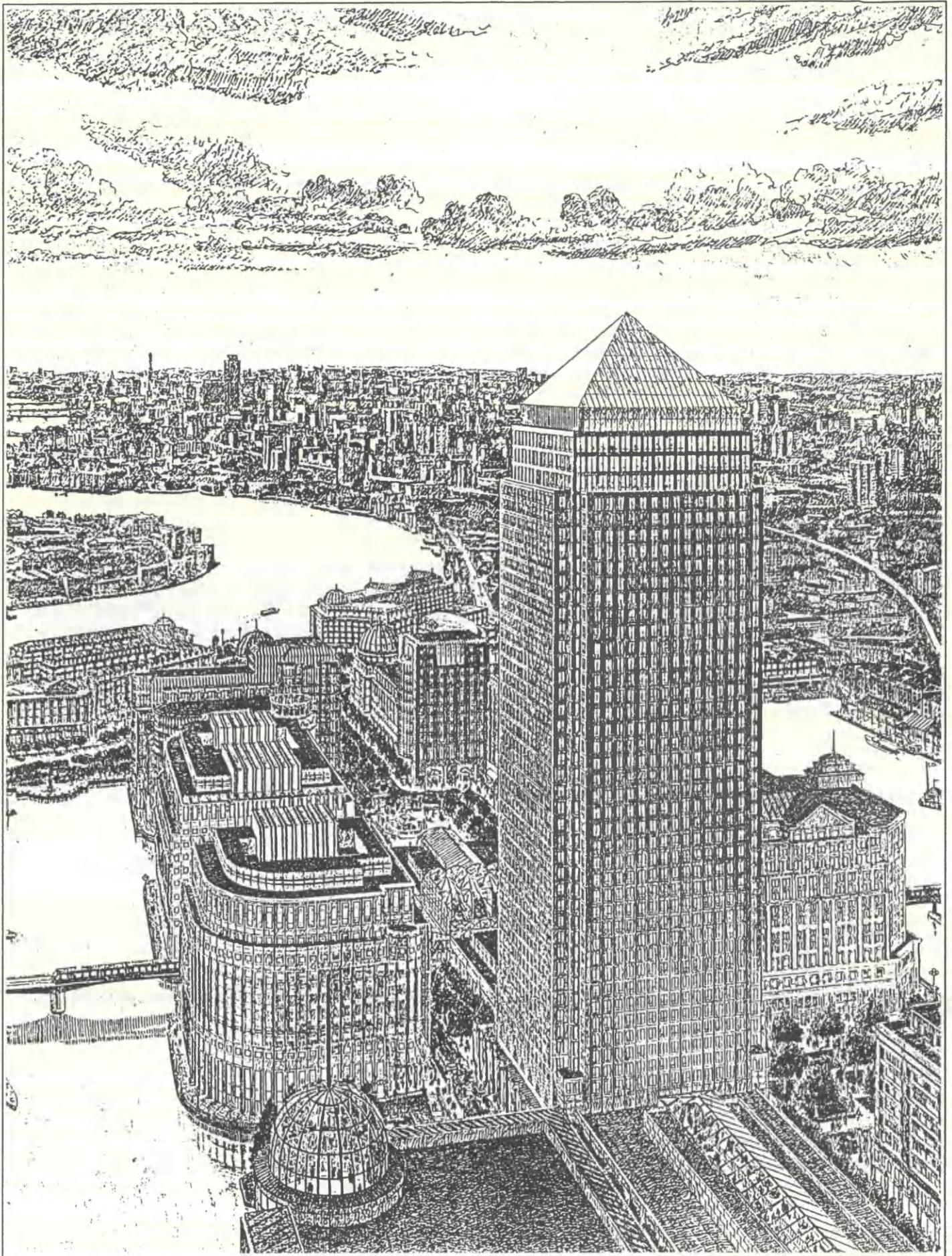
and cities and repairing the damage wreaked on them by politicians, developers, inept professionals and what I call selfish society.

Some radical changes are going to be needed in the educational system and that will take time, but meanwhile I think we have all got to do our bit. My own practice, for example, has recently sponsored a post to which David Chapman has been appointed of Principal Lecturer in Urban Design at Birmingham Polytechnic. It is a small step - that appointment will be a small, but hopefully a valuable contribution, to strengthening further the links between professional practice and the training of students. But what I do hope is this will not only enhance the development of urban design skills at that Polytechnic, but also prove a model which other practices and academic institutions could follow in the future.

I think that urban design has got to be properly recognised within local planning authority structures and it does concern me that often it amounts to little more than a tame architect giving, on a part-time basis, "design observations" on never-ending piles of somewhat mediocre planning applications. It is much more than that. It is about caring for the physical quality of the area as a whole. It is about looking after its past. It is about designing its future. It is really about making good things happen and at the same time stopping the bad ones. To do that urban designers have got to be rather special people. They have got to be able to operate at a pretty high level. They have got to be a force to be reckoned with by not only fellow officers, but also politicians and developers. They have got to be imaginative, they have got to be outward looking, and they have got to be able to argue for the resources that they need to do their job. They have got to be astutely financially aware, idealistic, but at the same time realistic and I think they need a very strong commitment to quality and to finishing the job.

Now, I ask what can the professional institutions do about all this? Well, I think they should be seeking to make sure that we do have enough people to understand the problems and are trained to do something about them. Design skills are important, but equally important is a sensitive approach to the aftercare and the management of places - and that is one of the problems I think with London at the moment. They need an understanding of the economic and social dynamics of change. They need the ability to seize opportunities as they are presented and one of the things the RTPI is doing at the moment is to take a lead in what it calls "broadening the membership". And it is, in my view, absolutely vital that the Institute does this because I think it is the only way we can remain relevant to society's needs, through to the end of the century and beyond.

Sorting out London's problems is going to be extremely difficult, daunting and frustrating. I think good results can be achieved and I think those good results are most likely to be achieved through collective patience, through stamina, through mediation, through compromise, rather than the sort of pig-headed and dictatorial approaches that we sometimes see. But it does need, and it deserves, vigorous Government legislative interest and financial support. So I think the future of London, which is what this Conference has been looking at, depends on everyone - starting with the present Government. 



KEVIN LYNCH LECTURE 1988

'RUS IN URBE' by SIR ROY STRONG

'Could we have the houselights down please?' So this was to be a rather more standard presentation than St John Stevas' of the previous year. Roy Strong's second words were a rather hyperbolic appreciation of the interior of the Institution of Civil Engineers. Then a brief rehearsal of the doubts he had to contend with before accepting Terry Farrell's request that he give this lecture - the remoteness of his previous career as museum director and specialist in 'art in England before the year 1642', the vast number of unqualified opinions flying around, and the ideas fixes which seem to inform media views of art and architecture. In twenty years of the museum world these had been only four: 'admission charges, treasures mouldering in the stores, export of works to the USA, and anything designated as shock modern art such as the famous Tate Gallery bricks'. (Thanks for not calling them a pile.) Architecture, in entering the public domain, had also acquired its own unwanted repertory. Tall buildings and 'virtually everything built before 1914 and since 1945' are bad things. 'Anything put up in the 1960s is a very bad thing. All developers are suspect'. Architects are cast as responsible for the mess and are a bad thing. 'Practically everything built before 1914 is sacrosanct so that even the most deplorable Victorian hovels have obtained a beatified status.' He was won over by respect for Terry Farrell's work and the inevitable interest in his own appointment as consultant to Olympia and York for the Canary Wharf Development.

Now the first slide and a brief history of his involvement in Canary Wharf. A letter out of the blue, a meeting at which Strong first saw a reproduction of the schematic model. 'My initial reaction was yes, this could be wonderful', but the American-drawn visualisations looked 'strangely un-English. It seemed to me that, yes I could occupy a role here, although exactly what role could only emerge as the project proceeds.' Four months after taking a fully active role Strong was now obsessed, seeing 'enormous opportunities to achieve some of the things which need to be essayed if we are to have any inner city urban renaissance,' and focussing on revising the art of street decoration, 'a reinstatement perhaps of the figurative. Much of it might be categorised as attempting to neutralise into urban planning and design the fruits of the crafts renaissance in this country'. This had, of course, been a major commitment at the V & A and Strong hoped such craft contributions might eventually invade the interiors of buildings. He was not surprised the impetus came from abroad nor cowed by British gloom over new projects, seeing it as a hangover from the 1970s crisis of the historic environment, resolved, he thought, 'but at the cost of stultifying confidence in new architectural creativity'. And now a brief description of the scheme, its location, orientation, changing ownership and the ambition to equal the City and West End as a business centre. And the first visualisation 'of which only about three buildings represent any reality, and the rest is a wonderful fairy-tale vision'. Its scale, Olympia and York's track record, the statistics: Cesar Pelli's 800 ft tower 1.7M sq ft of office space, six 200 ft towers 3.22M sq ft, 90,000 sq ft of retail shopping by 1992, Phase II 7.39M sq ft by 1996. 'In the long run, when it is all built, it will provide more than 12M sq ft of office and retail space in 22 separate buildings'. Buildings so far designed were by SOM, Cesar Pelli, and Kohn, Pederson

Report by Peter Luck

Fox, open spaces the province of Laurie Olin of Hanna Olin of Philadelphia. Open spaces - 'the rus part as against the urbe'. The plan disposition: the river steps leading to West Ferry Circus, the boulevard leading to Founders' Court with its central fountain, two further roads flanking the central tower leading to a last, as yet undesignated space, Docklands Square. 'This is the model as it is now and everything that is white has not been designed and you can see that what has been designed has been fully worked up.'

And so to a long attack on the press and professional spokesman, their utterances and attitudes, in which Strong took the opportunity to display some attitudes of his own to questions of architectural and urban history and practice. His poised delivery made much of this amusing at the time.

The first object of attack was the 'often very cursory and low level of the aesthetic debate in this country'. Francis Tibbalds and Lord St John of Fawsley were singled out for (respectively) 'crude invective' and superficiality. Stephen Gardiner's comments were attacked as an example of a trend of anti-Americanism. Gardiner had attacked a medley of transatlantic styles as 'a piece-meal vision of the American city built over the old docks'. Strong chose to combat this on the ground of imagined history: would Gardiner, had he been around at the time, have slammed Inigo Jones 'for being too Italian, with a bit from Serlio, a bit from Palladio, with a bit lifted from French town planning in Paris under Henri IV and advocated more black and white Tudor housing?' Colin Amery was criticised on two grounds, first for calling for an axial alignment to Greenwich while failing to note that the scheme was on axis with St Paul's Cathedral and then for apparently backtracking violently on his earlier invocation of 'the powerful beauty of New York' of the pleasures of well sited high buildings, of the sad lack of scale and grand gesture in London's Docklands only to dub Canary Wharf 'the greatest carbuncle of them all', and find only banality in the skyscraper. 'Not one (critic) considered the scheme in extensor and each building individually and there were after all several in more than one style. (They) played on the crudest instincts of readers: blatant anti-Americanism, a mania about any form of high building and (despite their belief that) the scheme is Manhattan come to the Isle of Dogs, a condemnation or denial of anything which might re-echo the London past.'

Such illogicality he felt derived from a general British ignorance of our own past and a specifically professional ignorance or architectural history before the modern movement. This he felt was not true of the American design team who had worked from respect and knowledge of the London fabric. He showed a plan of Canary Wharf with Bloomsbury and Grosvenor Squares and the Mall superimposed to support his contention that this scheme was 'more truly in the idiom of this metropolis than any for a very long time', and looking to a 'revival of the use of street decoration in the form of railings, iron grilles, great torches, lanterns, fountains and the use of statuary'. The historicist-inclined approach to marrying 'time-honoured components of the London scene in a contemporary idiom with the demands for size and space of a new technology business centre' reminded him strongly of J Mordaunt Crook's 'The Dilemma of Style'. This traces the evolution of

the concept of style. In Strong's summary, from the point when Pugin made the choice of Gothic a matter of morality rather than of association or the picturesque, the Victorian age became a stylistic battleground leading at the turn of the century to 'the situation with which we find ourselves today. Only in our case it is after the dominance for over half a century of a single style. That is the dilemma of how we all go forward.'

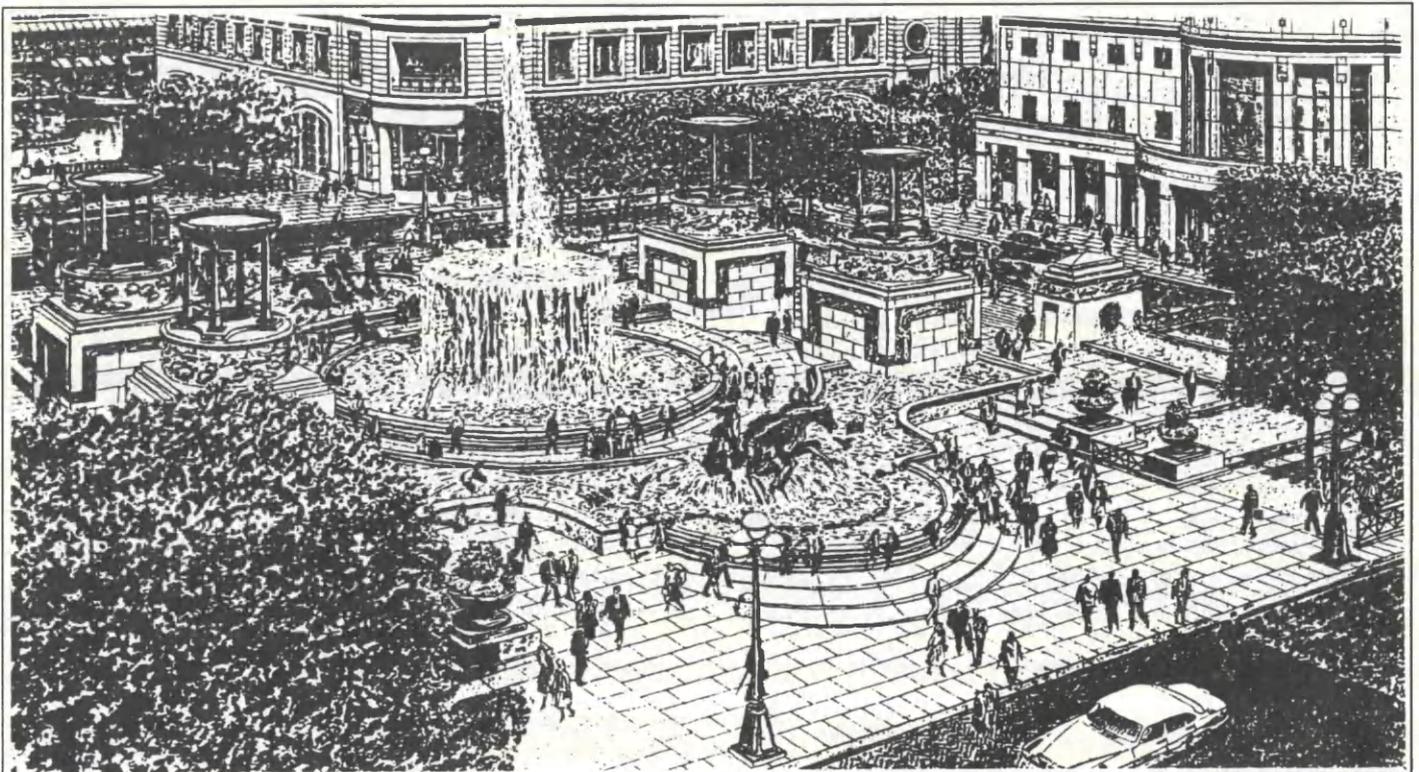
The eclecticism of Canary Wharf, then, results from the designers' concern with 'symbol, metaphor, memory and association' and their readiness to 'take on board what was tragically thrown out by the modernist movement'. Pelli's obelisk skyscraper, said Strong, characterising it as both modernist and primeval, had found the greatest degree of acceptance, perhaps, he thought, because its style was recognisable by critics and public alike. The mid-rise buildings had been more difficult to pin down: classical, yes, but perhaps turn of the century American beaux-arts classicism as Martin Spring had claimed. Despite a British 'cult of the eighteenth century' this classicism had not been welcomed, because, Strong believed, it was outside the recognisable 'stream which runs from William Kent and Adam down to Raymond Erith and Quinlan Terry. We have forgotten that huge repertory of classicism which makes up a large part of London, the Edwardian.' The Americans were reminding us of our neglected, taken for granted heritage of buildings such as the Ritz Hotel, Norman Shaw's Piccadilly Hotel, Debenham's shop or Selfridges 'by American Frank Sales'. Strong traced elements of Ritz in rustication and arcading on an SOM building and reminiscences of the Piccadilly Hotel or Selfridges in something 'almost like a series of great classical columns going up across the front' of a Pederson building. 'It is as though they had decided in their concept to ignore the modernist move-

ment which followed and instead develop that Edwardian style in the direction in which it might have gone in response to the new technology which permitted every increasing height.' This, he termed, 'neo-Edwardian classical revival'.

Several architects had been asked for proposals for West Ferry Circus, which brought him back to eclecticism and the thought that only now have architects 'bound themselves to being exponents of a single style' Wren, Vanbrugh, Kent, Adam and so on, had no such inhibitions. This multiplicity of styles bound by common guidelines at Canary Wharf seemed to mirror a common (and pleasurable) fact about any city, that is that within a single glance in any one street there would be several styles'.

At this halfway point Strong's attention was turned to focus more on details and on his own role as consultant on the open spaces, working particularly in close concert with the landscape architect Laurie Olin. 'Such a role embraces the concept and details ranging from street furniture and decoration to public art works. All those elements which orchestrate public space so that it fulfills its true role both of holding the buildings together in unity, in space, and in giving the users the delight it should.' He remarked that few critics had written on this, and felt this was symptomatic of the 'divorce between the study of the history of architecture and gardens' and the lack of interest in gardens displayed by most architectural practitioners, historians and critics. This he deplored.

Canary Wharf, at an earlier stage, had been criticised for being too French, but he saw it as the first significant revival of the London Square as an articulating principle for over a century. 'The approach from the river is conceived as a set tableau along the lines of Greenwich with the Pelli tower as its climax.' The three open spaces were contrasted in shape (circle, square, elongated rectangle) and treatment (grass



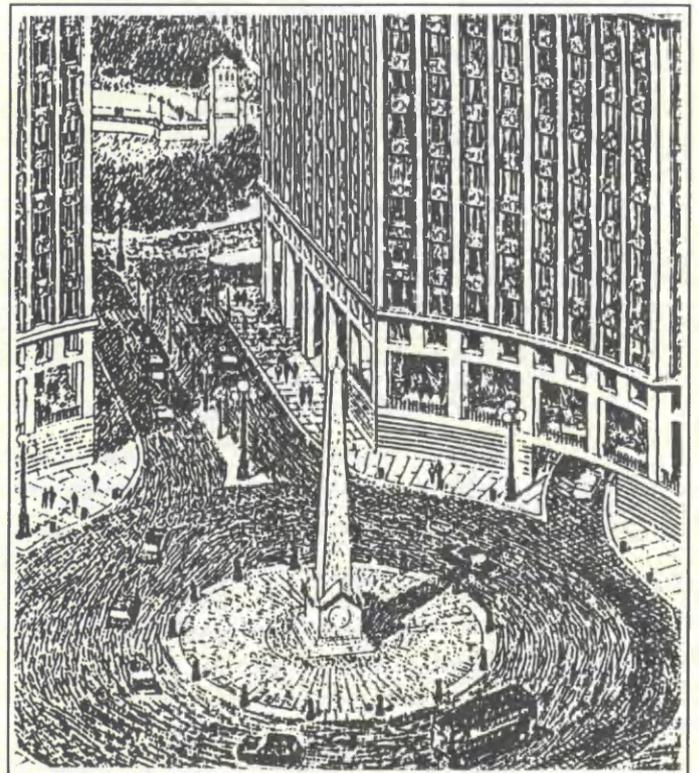
centre with trees around, hard surface pedestrian area - 'Trafalgar Square type of thing' - and the other 'like a bit of St James' Park'), and connected by tree lined avenues. London has lacked a Haussmann but 'amidst all the muddle, which is very typical of London, there has always been room here and there for a grand set piece'. Such tableaux 'inevitably go straight onto the list of what people want to see when they come to London'. His chosen example from the past was the Mall, from Palace through Admiralty Arch to Trafalgar Square 'and the creation of that at the beginning of this century fully mirrored the desire for a ceremonial way for splendid processions for the monarchy still in the glory of Empire'.

Taking on this job had prompted Strong to go out into London and look at 'what the average person observes as he walks through its streets day by day. I wanted to note what gave me particular pleasure and delight as my eye travelled over its surfaces'. From close up, the heights of buildings mattered little unless causing wind tunnels or obsessive shade. One's gaze rarely rose above fifty feet, mostly staying on the ground and first floor. This was not much modified from the top deck of a bus. He concluded that architects had given little thought to this fact although it explained the appeal of 'gorgeous entrances'. For the rest he was astonished how much pleasure was given by ground surface, signing and fittings, by street furniture from litter bins to torcheres, by fountains, sculptures, urns, by trees, shrubs, flowers and water, and he was also astonished at 'how little thought had been given to the design of them for the last fifty years other than in a purely utilitarian way'.

A brief historical interlude illustrated by Leicester Square and St James Square served to remind us of the use of renaissance optics and perspective as rules for the disposition of these elements, and he called for a new renaissance in the

arts of street decoration. There followed a quick survey of detailed design examples from central London. First, the 'nadir of the use of public space': Waterloo roundabout with a mutilated tree and 'appalling benches', bins in a 'dreadful shade of red'. 'Today all we have as lamp posts are concrete gallows topped by an orange blob'. Then a series of far more likable survivals from the Victorian and Edwardian eras: lamp posts from the Mall, Embankment and Northumberland Avenue, and the good old Dolphin torcheres from the Embankment prompting the comment 'at Canary Wharf we need something new and marvellous', a suspended lamp from the Royal Opera Arcade, a bollard, a bench, a tree grille could one derive a pattern from 'interpreting a Bridget Riley painting?' and everywhere fine gates and railings, but 'as they progress from 1920 to the present day they just get thinner and thinner and meaner and meaner and very badly designed'. Modernism had been the nemesis of the crafts. Strong remembered Tom Wolfe in 'From Bauhaus to our house' describing 'the Bronzeurs, those New York craftsmen who produced so much in the way of decoration, shaking their fist in rage at the Museum of Modern Art'.

One element in Strong's wishes for renaissance was perhaps beginning to come into place. Eight years ago the Victoria and Albert Museum had shown 'what had been achieved in metal working on a large scale since the war 'in an exhibition entitled 'toward a new iron age''. Most of the work had come from abroad, but now Strong could show us a selection of achieved British work and tell us of an information meeting he had arranged between Laurie Olin and Robert Turner of SOM, and five British metal workers. The difficulties had been recognised: Turner had said to the craftsmen 'How are we going to have a relationship with you? A century ago, I would have known how!'. To Strong that was the



Left: View of Founder's Square, Canary Wharf, showing clipped limes, water cascades and fountains.

Right: Preliminary proposals for the east end of Canary Wharf development.

'preface to what could prove to be one of the most fruitful and influential dialogues of the entire scheme. One which could have a very great influence elsewhere within inner city renewal right the way through the country.'

A sequence of slides showed metal work from Giuseppe Lunt, Alan Evans, Jim Horrobin, Stuart Hill and Tony Robertson. Hill's work was based on deformations of standard sections, the others' more traditionally wrought one off pieces, mostly gates. Wherever the work was shown in association with recent buildings, it far outstripped the buildings in interest.

Other work shown to illustrate his hope that he could influence the Canary Wharf scheme included Radford and Hall's great engraved glass screen at Liverpool's Lime Street Station and a mosaic fountain basin by Jan Vevers.

The last part of Strong's talk was devoted to a resume of the potential offered by Canary Wharf for the realisation of such a renaissance of street decoration. He showed slides derived from a volume of Arts Programme Commissions, showing the landscape drawings focussing attention on the works required. At West Ferry Circus, these included torches and railings to the embankment and steps, park gates, possibly based on a theme of the four seasons, this theme shared with four statues, and improbably, perhaps 'huge iron work screens, like great triumphal arches linking the whole of the buildings around into a great circus'. These last might be 100 ft high. There would also be, apart from the metal work, benches, fine pavings, ventilator housings, all requiring design for pleasure, 'and of course, garden sculpture'.

This prompted a short interlude on the history of garden sculpture, emerging in the Renaissance, achieving mass production in the 19th century and then dying out. It had been a little rough and quite subordinate to natural forms. In the present day its place had been taken by fine art placed in gardens. Strong sought a revival of true garden sculpture.

Returning now to the central square at Canary Wharf, we were shown a fountain as large as one from Trafalgar Square with clipped limes and water cascades 'like the Villa d'Este'. Obviously it had attracted adverse comment: 'I don't know why everybody is so down on it', perhaps because the original American visualiser had produced an image of 'an enormous fountain with horses prancing around like Mussolini's Rome.'

But to Strong 'these spaces reflect exactly well-known types of urban space within London. The contrast between inward looking garden squares like one of those in Bloomsbury and a hard surface piazza such as Piccadilly Circus'. They pointed towards 'a new direction in recovering an earlier tradition of landscape design within London. They certainly freely draw on memory and metaphor and symbol as part of the cityscape. And what is wrong with that? One wants people to come with a delight of recognition; but not recognising pastiche, recognising what I call the bones and the intellect of the place reinterpreted in terms of the last decade of the 20th century'. These spaces also, he said, reflected 'the fact that London is essentially an accumulation of villages'.

Those involved on the project were working on the premise that 'an aesthetically pleasing environment is good business sense, if the environment created in the public spaces

is spectacular enough, people will come just to look at it'. This was 'in a way, a revival of the city as theatre', and Strong hoped that early in the next century they would be able to prove to the critics 'just how wrong they have been'.

The questions from the floor that followed showed the audience to be pretty much on the side of the critics. No tape or transcript exists but my memory of them is of people in an 'all-very-well-but' mood, questioning the mix of offices, residential and leisure or retail accommodation, the known-to-be-inadequate transport linkages and their consequences. Strong was a little offended one felt; these questions were outside his scope and ignored his intended subject matter.

But within such tight limits there must remain doubts. The lay-out of Canary Wharf, its scale and that of the buildings, within the trappings of imperial grandeur Strong seemed to promise, all inflate the London prototypes beyond recognition. Elements of the past are distorted to the point where association probably will not occur and this is done without the Victorian's moral justification. While the reintroduction of craftwork is to be applauded, as the repertoire of form and material in detail has suffered from the pre-eminence of the ascetic/dogmatic wing of modernism, the architectural and urban context for the craftworker is not promising. To act as if modernism had not happened simply cannot work (it has, and we're all shaped by it), especially when the revivalist clothes are hung on a fast track frame. Strong was repeatedly let down by having to present the original American visualisations but the portents from SOM's work at Bishopsgate are still horribly unpromising.

One questioner prompted Strong's acknowledgement that his concept of the city as theatre had no intended basis in contemporary theatrical practice, yet it was clearly a theatre not of actors, but of scenery, and the comparisons which came to mind: Time, Starlight Express or the Earls' Court Aida suggest its inadequacy as a parallel to the richness of urbanity.

If Strong's vision appeared to be in danger of 'neutralising' craftworkers into partially legitimising an undesirable and perhaps unworkable project, had he arrived there through thinking in a too narrowly visual-aesthetic frame? Perhaps the next Lynch lecture should move decisively outside this frame. In the meantime, if revivalism is not the right road, if a craft renaissance and a closer linkage of architectural and garden design may help, the task of reinterpreting the 'bones and intellect of the place' remain the principal challenge thrown down to us by Roy Strong. 🏠

Speakers

Robin Clement is Deputy Chief Planner for the London Planning Advisory Committee.

Nigel Coates is a partner in Branson and Coates and has been a tutor at the Architectural Association over a long period of time.

Terry Farrell is President of the Urban Design Group and a principal of the Terry Farrell Company. Previously in practice with Nick Grimshaw as Farrell and Grimshaw.

John Gold is Chairman of the Geography Unit and Joint Director of the Centre for Geography in Higher Education at Oxford Polytechnic. A specialist in planning and architectural history, he is the author of six books and numerous essays on environmental themes.

David Gosling is Head of the School of Architecture at Sheffield University where he has been a professor since 1973. Prior to that he was Chief Architect/Planner at Irvine New Town from 1968 to 1973. He has acted as a consultant to London Docklands Development Corporation for a number of years. His published works include 'The Design and Planning of Retail Systems' and 'Concepts of Urban Design'.

Hermione Hobhouse is the General Editor of the Survey of London undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. Author of *Lost London* (1971) and numerous articles on the architecture of London.

Ted Hollamby was Senior Architect at LCC from 1949-62. Borough Architect, then Architect/Planner, then Director of Architecture and Planning of London Borough of Lambeth from 1963-80. Chief Architect and Planner of London Docklands Development Corporation from 1980-1985.

Geoff Holland is at present Head of Agency Services and Chief Architect to the London Residuary Body. Until 1986 he was Chief Transport Planner at the Greater London Council and previously Head of Environmental Management in the Department of Planning and Transportation. Until 1981 he headed the GLC Covent Garden Team.

Bob Jarvis lectures at the Department of Town Planning, South Bank Polytechnic and previously worked at Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County Council.

Arthur Ling worked for Fry and Gropius 1937-39. Worked on County of London Plan 1943 under Forshaw and Abercrombie. Chief Planning Officer of LCC 1945-55. City Architect and Planning Officer of Coventry 1955-64. Professor of Town

Planning Nottingham University 1964-69. Joint architect for Warwick University Development Plan. Consultant architect/planner for Runcorn New Town master plan.

Peter Low, partner in Low Somorjay and Talliss Architects and previously of Price, Low and Cullen.

Richard MacCormac, Principal of MacCormac Jamieson Prichard and Wright. He worked at London Borough of Sutton, where the perimeter housing principle based on an idea by Leslie Martin and Lionel March was first applied. Since then the practice have carried out many housing schemes such as Newport, Gwent and Milton Keynes, significant university buildings and the design for Spitalfields Market redevelopment.

Peter Wynne Rees has been City Planning Officer for the City of London since 1987 and Controller of Planning between 1985 and 1987. Previous work includes periods with the Greater London Council (Historic Buildings Division); at the Department of the Environment and as Assistant Chief Planning Officer to the London Borough of Lambeth.

Sid Sporle is Director Planning and Transportation for the City of Westminster.

Barry Shaw is Head of Urban Design at London Development Development Corporation. He joined LDDC in 1981 and subsequently was Acting Area Director for the Surrey Docks.

Kathy Stansfield is Editor of Local Government News. She has contributed widely to architectural, planning and environmental magazines and previously worked on the Architects Journal.

Francis Tibbalds is Director of Tibbalds Partnership Ltd. architects and planners. Prior to founding his present firm with four partners in 1978, he held senior appointments in both the public and private sectors - the most recent being as Deputy Chief Planning Officer with the London Borough of Lambeth and as Director of Planning with Llewelyn Davies Weeks. He was the founding Chairman of the UDG and was President of the Royal Town Planning Institute in 1988.

John Worthington is a founding partner of DEGW, architects, space planners and designers. He jointly edited *Industrial Rehabilitation - the Use of Redundant Buildings for Small Enterprises* (Architectural Press) and has pioneered research into the premises requirements of the new knowledge based industries.

Delegates

Barry Arden	Arnold Linden
Robert Ayton	Sebastian Loew
Ken Baker	Stephen Lyon
Rodney Beech	Chris Mascon
Simon Bevan	J. Medhurst
J K Billingham	Bruce Methven
Douglas Brown	Stuart Murphy
R P Burton	Tom Neville
Kelvin Campbell	Ruth Panter
Tim Catchpole	D W Parker
Philip Cave	Alan Parnell
David Chapman	Jennifer Pearce
Vivian Church	A A Pelling
Stewart Clark	Ken Powell
Terry Daly	Matthew Pryor
C Davis	S Rendel
Peter Dean	Lawrence Revill
Mark Dennett	Paul Richmond
R Dickens	Tony Riddell
Grahame Edwards	L Adair Roche
Jon Finney	J Rowland
Jim Grove	Richard Saxon
Adrian Gurney	Asad A Shaheed
Paul Haynes	Alan Stones
Peter Heath	Deyan Sudjic
Noel Hill	Arthur Thompson
Bryan Houchin	Kinya Toda
Bob Jarvis	Maritz Vandenberg
Graeme Johns	Jasper Vaughan
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