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«Planning the New Model Society: London's post-War urban and architectural evolution 1945-1980»

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Author:
Dr Jonathan Vickery is Associate Professor and Director of the masters in Arts, Enterprise and Development in the Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies, University of Warwick, UK. He is also the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Law, Social Justice and Global Development*. He is involved in the management of a number of arts organisations, and has published in the areas of urban culture, development and cultural policies for cities.

Dr Jonathan Vickery
Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies
Millburn House
University Science Park
Coventry, West Midlands, UK
CV4 7AL
Tel: +44 (0)24 765 23523
Office tel: +44 (0)24 7652 3459
Fax: +44 (0)24 765 24446
J.P.Vickery@warwick.ac.uk

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Abstract:
Out of the devastation of the Second World War, London was subject of significant investment in re-planning and urban development. Post-War Britain situated urban planning at the centre of an ethically-charged political discourse on national reconstruction and the building of an equitable post-War society. The "post-War settlement" was an attempt at creating a just society, where central major policy fields were new state funded housing and the re-design of major cities. The first and second sections of this paper construct an historical narrative of post-War political development, and the second and third sections argue that a central achievement and central failure of the "post-War settlement" was the emergence of international modernism and architecture-led public planning.

Introduction

Modern London's historical evolution was heavily punctuated by the Second World War, which remains a principle reference point for understanding the evolution of policy frameworks on the future evolution of the city. The common historical periodisation of "post-War" extends into the early 1960s, as the planned reconstruction was painfully slow due to the lack of finance and raw materials. National "re-building", while principally involved civil engineering and the reconstruction of city centres, was also profoundly political and intellectual. Successive governments since Clement Atlee's first post-War Labour government (1945-1951), employed urban planning as politically symbolic of social transformation and, literally, of re-building British society itself. While no Government statute or Act of Parliament (law) ever designated London as the official capital of the the country, it evidently remained in an indisputable category of leadership in all public policy fields, but on which scholarly research remains slight. (1)

Research on London has tended to concentrate, for obvious reasons, on political authority and monarchy, London's diverse social life, and its architecture. While London's post-War urban development is extensive and complex, this paper will identify only the significant policy innovations that positioned "planning" as central to the political project of building an equitable society. These the significant policy innovations will generate research questions that will be instrumental in a fuller comparative analysis of London and its European counterparts, including the cultural implications of urban development. They will also serve as the basis of further research on the evolution of London's globalisation and popular recognition as a principal "global city". The first two sections will construct an historical narrative, from which the second two sections can account for the success yet national rejection of an architecture-led public planning of a new model society.

Section One: *Planning and governance post-War*

London's governance has never been strong, and never entirely separate from national government and parliamentary interests based in the City of Westminster. Provisions for a central mayoralty for the whole city were only made with the Greater London Authority Act 1999. While the City of London (host to only 9,000 residents) has maintained a stable political system since Anglo-Saxon times, the amorphous urban expanse of Greater London has only recently been subject to a single strategic authority. This fact is one of many that support the political myth that London is "unplannable", the seminal reference point being the aftermath of the Great Fire of London in 1666. In 1667, Sir Christopher Wren's new Plan for London (the first of its kind, and highly inspired by Paris) failed, largely as a mass of private landowners rebuilt the city faster than public authorities could enforce a plan. (2) Since then, the varied jurisdictions of London's territorial expanse have asserted themselves with their own local particularities, and London has become characterised by, in the words of Reyner Banham, the ambitions of private citizens. (3) And while all of London is now securely bounded and subject to the strategic office of the current Mayor of London, this office is "only" strategic: the Mayoralty's political power is limited in such a way as to demand the partnership and agreement of the city's many powerful interests and interest groups, the principle of which as the 32 "boroughs" or districts of London, who all retain significant political jurisdiction over planning and urban development. (4)

While London was partially divested by World War Two, it is historically erroneous to consider planning and urban development since 1945 principally as a response to the devastation wrought by German aerial bombardment. The immediate post-War planning effort was indeed revolutionary, but also animated by planning ideas and movements that had emerged from the nineteenth century. The rejection of War victor Winston Churchill as post-War Prime Minister, and the public's choice of the Labour Party's Clement Atlee, was a surprise but only in retrospect. As part of a War-time coalition, both had offered the public appealing visions of a post-War Britain, both had appealed to already established national discourses on housing and planning, whose most immediate source was Liberal Prime Minister Lloyd George post-World War One "Homes for Heroes" campaign (1919). Subsequent innovations in state (in English, "council" or local authority) housing became the political fulcrum for all planning and broader aspirations to modernise and re-design Britain's cities. The Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 had initially provided the seminal legal basis of state intervention in the sacred relation between the land and private individual, but conceived of housing as "public health" not a building or urban development policy. (5) Nonetheless, what following was a range of public (political) inquiries into the living conditions of the labouring classes, and the interrelation of "urban" and "social" was forever wedded in the discourse on planning. Peabody, Guinness, Cadbury and other industrial pioneers had already taken up an interest in new mass housing design and the potential for social transformation. But where the Lloyd George campaign largely failed, the reduction of large parts of British cities to rubble under German aerial bombing (from September 1940) urban planning was infused with an indisputable moral imperative. (6)

London's first governing entity was the Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW) from 1855, an appointed committee, which pioneered among other things the London sewerage system and other infrastructural projects. The London County Council (LCC) of 1889 was London's first elected body. As part of the Local Government Act 1888, it evolved urban planning competencies, pioneered council housing and egalitarian education policies, and after the War its Department of Architecture and Civic Design (and Town Planning Committee) generated seminal ideas for new urban development. With some political power over the new 28 metropolitan boroughs, with the LCC, London was still only a "county" (with no greater powers than any other county of England). It was the London Government Act 1963 that provided for a Greater London Council (the GLC), 32 new London boroughs and significant political jurisdiction. The GLC resided in the now famous County Hall obliquely opposite the Houses of Parliament; designed by architect Ralph Knott and opened in 1933, like the LCC it became a pioneer in urban planning as well radical Leftist social aspirations, to be closed by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher using a new Local Government Act in 1985. The GLC's radicalism was born in the conflict between the social demands of a growing and diverse populace, and the increasing value of land as the site and resource of urban industrialisation. They grappled with the essential dilemma of the 1980s -- London was losing its heavy industry in the face of a social expansion (and need for housing).

Of the many political-legal frameworks (Acts of parliament) on planning passed by Government, The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 was the pivotal post-War moment as it established the principles of modern urban planning in London: property ownership was to be subject to state planning, and local development to broader regional strategies (localised planning and the 1400 national planning offices around the country were abolished in favour of strategic approaches of competent local government); compulsory purchase of private land could be made by public authorities for development; public authorities could trade, lease or loan land; and lastly, the outer London boroughs could begin to enforce a "green belt" or city limit, a

notion that had been around since the 1930s but consolidated in the Act and ensured London's boundary and consequently internal urban density since that time. (7)

The significance of these principles is that planning was defined in terms of autonomous professional local authority competency in design as much as the social principles that animated the effective design of cities -- where social welfare and economic production were assumed to be interrelated.

This was registered in how, by 1947, city planning was a major issue of public interest. As early as 1940 saw Thomas Sharp's humble Penguin publication, *Town Planning*, sell a quarter of a million copies during the remaining years of the war. From the early 1940s, numerous popular publications can be found such as the Picture Post issue of January 1941, "A Plan for Britain", and the Signpost magazine special issue, "Why Planning?" (1944). (8) The latter was in part inspired by the new *County of London Plan* of 1943, commissioned by the London County Council and written by University of London professor Patrick Abercrombie (1879–1957) and John Henry Forshaw (1895–1973) chief architect of the LCC. *The County of London Plan* sold 10,000 copies in 1943, and abridged versions were distributed to public employees, schoolchildren and armed forces. It was also subject to scrutiny by other architects (Cf. Carter and Goldfinger's *The County of London Plan* of 1945). It was quickly followed in 1944 by Patrick Abercrombie's new concept of *The Greater London Plan*. Neither of which were implemented, they informed the public and intellectual interest in the re-design and re-conception of the city. *The County of London Plan* was promoted by an exhibition at Westminster Hall in July 1943, receiving over 10,000 visitors including George VI and Queen Elizabeth; a further 50,000 saw the following exhibition at the Royal Society of Arts (near the Strand). (9) *The Greater London Plan* itself was promoted by a nationally broadcast film "The Proud City - A plan for London", produced for the Government's then Ministry of Information. (10)

Both plans had advanced the priority of high density public housing whose scale was proportionate to open spaces and to transportation (to open space); it advocated the re-design of the whole of London (not just the bombed and cleared areas); it advocated an urban design around existing social communities, responsive to both the pattern of community life and also historical culture. Most of all, both plans advocated a planning governance and what Abercrombie, in both reports, referred to as "control" over size, the location of industry, and its subsequent expansion.

The history of London's urban development since 1947 is the history of an effort to control, forge governing mechanisms of control, and failing to control the unintended consequences of planning itself. The early Post-War period nonetheless defined a conception of urban planning through which a critical comprehension of London's post-War evolution can be constructed. (11)

Section Two: *The emergence of the public architect*

While there have been many research projects that have attempted to "map" the extent of London's World War Two bomb damage (and hence the physical basis and partial rationale for the form of urban development that followed). (12) Indeed, at the time, the Ministry of Home Security conducted two bomb census maps between October 1940 and June 1941, there have been no precise surveys of the final destruction. That may be as the final destruction would include all the buildings deemed unsafe and thus where public authorities opportunistically engaged in wholesale "slum clearance". The Slum Clearance Act had passed in 1930, and the vision of London's Victorian social squalor had become notorious since Gustav

Doré's commercially successful book, *London: A Pilgrimage*, made it was across Europe in the 1870s. The East of London and City of London district saw the most intense concentration of bombing, and being near to the docklands were the site of the largest slum areas. Lack of precision technology resulted in very random bomb damage -- and more so where the Luftwaffe experimented with a range of incendiary and explosive gas. It was the prospect of the eradication of the London of the slums that probably motivated, at least in part, LCC leader Lord Latham in stating (in his Foreword to *The County of London Plan*): "The war has given us a great opportunity, and by the bitter destruction of so many acres of buildings it has made easier the realisation of some of our dreams." (13)

Slum clearance became an almost incontestable political economy internal to London's development -- where even up to the 1960s, local authorities were designating entire areas under public planning control and so de facto beyond legitimate objection. The 1949 Housing Act further supported local authority obligation to properly house all local people, and not just previously designated "workers". The now famous 1942 Beverage Report, which became the basis of a range of crucial nationalisation policies, aimed at a universal social service order, not a welfare state for the lower classes. What Minister of Health, Aneurin Bevin, called " the biggest single experiment in social service that the world has ever seen undertaken", also animated planning (14). Importantly it provoked each party Left and Right a response: Winston Churchill's now famous 1943 "After the War" speeches we find examples of competing national welfare projections, where state housing provision became a central promise. (15)

Even after the re-election of Conservative Churchill in 1951, the "post-War settlement", as it has been known to historians, remained. The Conservative dominated 1950s may have halted the putative march to a socialist republic, but entrenched the assumption on public ownership of land, vital economic infrastructure and social services. As executive manager of the new social service state, government gained an incontestable moral authority over urban planning, not least as the private patronage of building virtually disappeared. The Beverage priorities were social (the "giant evils" of squalor, ignorance, want, idleness, and disease), each of which were met with planned responses. Planning became a virtual ideology, where the architectural rhetoric of public works were understood to articulate the concerted war of the state against Beveridge's giant evils. (16)

Throughout the post-War period, therefore, the political dilemma emerged, that the new post-War social service state was established at the cost of an authoritarian assertion of the public interest over private, equating state with "public", and assuming the state catered for the interest of citizens who were also private. The 1950s and the poor performance of the newly nationalised industries of transport and energy, witnessed an interminable tension between the necessity of public ownership and the efficiency of public management. And the role of the market -- in London, and with the decline of Empire, a growing international market -- what role the does the "private" citizen play in the formation of the emerging metropolitan city?

The new housing estates were so named "estates" after the grounds of landed aristocracy, symbolic of a egalitarian democratic state that had replaced a heavily stratified Empire. Each new housing estate was greeted by public fanfare, media news, members of Parliament and occasionally the Royal family. Even by 1940, there remained 250,000 registered homeless in London's central boroughs, and the hundreds of thousands of destroyed houses were still lying in rubble. New housing estates were proclamations of the new model society, with particular examples being The Sandringham Road Housing Scheme, Hackney (1948), and the Lansbury Estate

in Tower Hamlets (1949-51). Such estates, while notionally for the homeless or dispossessed by the bombing, admitted people only on application with conditions both moral and economic (only those of good repute in regular employment); they were managed by a janitor (often ex-military), who had powers to enforce social behavioural norms that today would seem puritanical.

A central dimension of the post-War settlement was cultural -- the architectural values and innovations of international modernism became a central mechanism for the construction of a new urban realm. The Festival of Britain, 1951, was a critical moment. Held on the anniversary of the Great Exhibition of 1851 (the pioneering World Fair) the festival did not feature Empire or industrial might but new design, architecture and planning, the new rhetoric of the model society. (17) Its location on the ugly industrial wasteland of Lambeth Marsh on the south of the Thames river (with satellite events around the country), the festival exemplified the processes of social transformation the nation was promised. Driven by London County Council architects and planners, over eight million visitors people enjoyed the iconic "Skylon" sculptural tower, the huge and innovative exhibition dome, the Town Planning Pavilion, various house building exhibits, the Telekinema cinema and the new Royal Festival Hall (the only structure still remaining). (18)

Of significance in the festival is its promotion of a coherent set of aesthetic values, and whose modernist design-based rhetoric was later referred to in the press and media as the "festival style" or the "contemporary style". The Royal Festival Hall goes some way to exemplify this, even if the current building differs from the festival's (less austere) design.

The rhetorical assertiveness of the Festival Hall is unmistakable -- with no symbolic content or expression of history and tradition, and at once accessible from all sides, its open-planned interior reveals a rationale and self-explanatory organisation of space; the building is functional and an evident response to its relation between the site (location) and anticipated social activity both within and without its walls. Its values are openness and transparency, a non-hierarchical and multi-directional facility, able to adapt its internal partition walls to changing social requirements. The building is designed along an horizontal not vertical axis, is bounded on all sides by planes of untextured surfaces, like a non-descript industrial facility; its value is invested in its social function. It articulates both a new democratic order, but does so with an uncompromising solution to social organisation.

The contemporary rhetoric of the new post-War model society was displayed in another London County Council project, the Alton Housing Estate in Roehampton (1952-8). On the Western edge of the city, bordering Richmond Park, it accentuated both built form and the natural environment through their physical contrast. Each exemplified the emerging modernist demand for an integration of social, aesthetic and economic dynamics within an entirely egalitarian, functional and rationally ordered space. Scandinavian modernism was the principle influence for the Alton East part of the estate (1952), with Le Corbusier's *Unité d'habitation* in Marseilles (completed around 1952) the essential point of reference for the Alton West six years later, with its five 11-storey "slab" blocks. Alton cultivates social community and affirmative response and remains popular with its 13,000 inhabitants.

Le Corbusier-influenced independent architect and Hungarian émigré, Ernő Goldfinger (1902-1987), is an indicative figure in the growing international intellectual culture emerging around public planning. A commentator on the County of London Plan in the early 1940s, Goldfinger offered the new Greater London Council, an advance on modernist approaches to housing. (19) While Alton Estate and its

Richmond Park setting was ideally suited to Le Corbusier's modern ideal of a *Ville Radieuse* (1924) or city park unity of built form and nature, a more urgent problem was lack of space, and lack of nature. Inner London's East End, where slum clearance was continuing into the 1970s, was a social challenge and a test as to whether the LCC architect-led model of urban planning was credible. Commissioned by the LCC in 1963 for the Tower Hamlet's borough, he designed this and two other houses for the Brownfield Estate. Balfron is 26-storey block accommodating 146 dwellings, and while imposing, the scale of the apartments maximise room for social life as well as day to day living, and the natural light and the advantage of views admit "nature" to the concrete construct. His concept was perfected five years later in his commission for Trellick Tower (1970-72) in West London.

Goldfinger had temporarily resided in the Balfron tower himself as a means of researching the resident experience. The term "Brutalism" was already being used in the media as a way of referring to the modernist public buildings that followed the Royal Festival Hall (Denys Lasdun's Royal National Theatre being exemplary). As a term used by visionary modernists, Peter and Alison Smithson with reference to Le Corbusier's *béton brut*, Brutalism was made somewhat famous by critic Reyner Banham's 1966 book, *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* (20) Brutalism was not an official movement, but designated a British approach to international modernism and its use of concrete, steel and glass. White thinly-clad planes, hard surfaces and open vistas (of Le Corbusier's Unité d'habitation in Marseilles) functioned well in a Mediterranean climate, whereas Britain required a more robust insulation. Moreover, Balfron was provocative, icon and a statement demanding a shift in understanding. It also met the acute demand for fast yet well-built and relatively low-cost mass housing, and in a stylistic vernacular that articulated a hope for a better future.

Section Three *International modernism and a new public realm*

A new generation of "high risers" emerged, and for boroughs were often a strategic replacement of tenements (Victorian apartment blocks) and slum areas now cleared; and this high-density housing option dominated state housing provision for two decades or more. While the "vertical street" -- a term used by London modernist pioneer Denys Lasdun with his 1957 16-storey Keeling House in Bethnal Green, East London -- was a central modernist innovation, the exclusive association of the high rise with modernism per se is not accurate. Camden Borough Council and north London architects were at the time pioneering horizontal low-rise estates, such as the Dunboyne Estate in Gospel Oak (1967), and Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate in St John's Wood (1968), both led by Neave Brown and the Camden Architects Department, and presented equally effective ways of creating a new public realm of housing and social life. (21)

Like Lasdun, Goldfinger understood the social requirements of modernism and innovated a range of internal features similar to Lasdun's Keeling House, including communal areas, internal partitions and sliding doors, as well as fitted amenities like kitchens. Goldfinger's innovation was a visually striking adjacent service tower (insulating apartments from noise as well as providing collective washing machines, a refuse chute and a room for plants). The tower did not isolate residents from vital amenities: it was serviced by shops, an office, and a youth center. Structurally, the building remains 31 floors high, with internal stairwells and external corridors every third floor. Of its 217 apartments, two higher floors feature split level maisonettes. Privacy and access are balanced, and the balconies, large fenestration, maximum natural light and views of London offer aesthetic rewards few occupants of wealthier houses could enjoy.

While most mass housing was associated with the labouring class, The City of London's prestige cultural complex, the Barbican Centre, began as a housing estate for the professional worker. The history of the entire complex is extensive, but the initial high density residential designs were a coherent and considerable advance on British Brutalism and its concentration on single or co-extensive units. The Barbican was a hybrid and luxurious estate, where refined design values extended to the shape of internal doorways and tap fittings. With the initial construction phase opening in 1969 (and construction continuing until 1976), it was not until 1982 that an innovative multidisciplinary arts center was founded. The attraction to the initial generation of professional tenants, was not the amenities or late prestige. (22)

Commissioned by the City of London (its Court of Common Council), and situated within a 1947, Greater London Plan-inspired Barbican Area Reconstruction Plan, the main architects were three young university lecturers Peter Chamberlin, Geoffrey Powell and Christof Bon. The credibility of the three emerged from designing nearby Golden Lane Estate, which opened in 1957. Over 500 dwellings, the Golden estate was a series of housing blocks, planar geometry, undecorated materials of brick, concrete and surface painted primary colours, balconies, open stairwells and contiguous internal spaces as well as external communal areas emphasised its Le Corbusian influences. Hand-chiseled concrete provided rusticated texture to two horizontal blocks of four apartments, obliquely linked by rows of maisonettes and a long artificial lake; an adjoining horseshoe block crowned the site, which was overlooked by three seemingly randomly placed 44-floor towers (the highest in Europe at the time). All of these areas were interconnected by ramps and elevated walkways.

The achievements of the Barbican Estate is primarily its exemplification of a non-dogmatic methodology of international modernism. The Barbican was irregular and echoed the eccentric characteristics of old London -- what Reyner Banham referred to as the "sudden glimpse", the "unusual angle", the "surprise", and how the clustering and density of London's buildings can be suddenly relieved by an open vista, a garden or public walkway (23). The Barbican is not strict geometry, but where geometric rationality is use to define the shapes, materials and inflections that aesthetically express London's historic streets and its panoply of historical narratives (not least London's pretentions to Rome or Babylon). The gradual growth of plants and window boxes on the horizontal blocks exemplify the estates adaptability -- over three decades and increasing demands it has extended a network of underground services and transportation routes, incorporating a college, expansive cultural facilities as well as civic facilities (public library, trade exhibition halls), and facilitates multi-directional accessibility, movement and minimal noise disturbance for large numbers of residents and visitors alike. Its spatial organisation allows for further architectural development, as the architects envisaged the water features and walkways to be ultimately extended from the estate around the City of London.

The modernist challenge to British post-War planning, which culminated in the 1970s, was essential political: firstly, its conception of housing was as a composite social category where architectural design shaped sociological knowledge on lifestyle in relation to resources; secondly, the social conditions of housing were grounded in specific place-based aspirations to assert human values within pressing economic demands (i.e. labour and its expression in both leisure and culture). Housing was paradigmatic for place-based design, as it necessitated an architectural mediation of essential needs along with cooperative co-existence. Housing was also a laboratory for design innovation, building technique, new materials and technologies, and moreover the building and rebuilding of housing could be central to local economy,

and was never envisaged as a static entity. The integration of new settlement patterns with industrial growth, new cultural centers, and new sources of communal or collective belonging, was internal to the intellectual commitments of international modernism, in the UK represented by CIAM (Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne) adherents The Modern Architects' Research Society (MARS). (24)

Between 1933-42, MARS had published a modernist version of the London Plan (designed largely by Arthur Korn and Felix Samuely), and despite their revolutionary intentions was never quite able to play the professionally assertive role of the Union des Artistes Modernes in France. (25) Nonetheless, the influence of international modernism in post-War British architecture formed a set of values that could be articulated under conditions of scarcity and economic austerity. Modernist construction, using concrete, steel and glass, were swift and open to technical innovation as well as modulation by other materials (Goldfinger used to soften the hard surfaces of Trellick Tower apartments). Committed to CIAMs seminal Charte d'Athènes of 1933 (by Le Corbusier, whose full expression was his 1935 *Ville Radieuse* publication), architects are defined principally as organisers of social space. For CIAM, all social activity is most effectively organised by an aesthetics of design, where design is continually be informed by the latest technology and evolution in materials. Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* was an explicit means of social reform, but unlike earlier industrial aesthetes -- the influence of William Morris and the "truth to materials" tradition in British architecture, craft and sculpture since the 1860s -- CIAM's " functional city" approach was an aesthetics of a fast-changing labour and production. The "functional" dimension was the way architecture provided space and framework for dynamic, productive, working life -- rapid social change and environmental adaptation.

The modernist approach was much caricatured by the media and by politicians, whose cliché's are well known. What was more disturbing was the wholesale association of modernism with the putative failure of post-War settlement and the urban planning so heavily invested in innovative high-density housing and a social vision of collective change. And while it is true, that the public authority architect-dominated approach to urban planning did fail to manage the day-to-day difficulties in housing, such as maintenance and social order (only in the late 1970s did London boroughs form "housing management" offices) the demise of modernism in London and nationally was more paradoxical. For all its modularity and use of a universal lexicon of geometry, international modernism was a bespoke designer's response to a specific place-based phenomenology of social modernity (life under conditions of industrialisation). It suffered the fate of industrialisation itself -- for from the 1960s, the demand of local authorities for mass housing grew so strong, factory-made building design units began to supply a massively expanding house building and town construction industry. These "systems" buildings, looked, in terms of their design vocabulary and their materials, authentic modernist designs, but were "building design" as distinct from architecture. There was no research, innovation, specific place-based design, but only prefabricated solutions to mass accommodation on increasingly small and poorly serviced land plots. The impact was physically, as much as culturally, disastrous. (26)

Ronan Point, Newham in East London, was a pivotal moment. The partial collapse of this 21-storey systems-built tower in May 1968 (two months after opening), killed four people and injured seventeen. The media reporting fomented a generalised national ridicule of the high-riser and genuine icons of modernist achievement. While provoking major changes in UK building regulations (an Amendment in 1970), and the public inquiry into the inadequate systems-build, systems-building continued --

obviating the need for a public reinvestment in architecture and local planning authorities.

The short-term benefits of systems-building was evident to local commissioning authorities: it was fast, cheap and made-to-order, it obviated the need for architects, surveyors, civil engineers and even skilled builders. Building involved only panels on a crane to be lifted and bolted into place around a central core block of concrete. The Bison Wall Frame System was a prime example, and there were as many as building contractors willing to enroll a small army of cheap unskilled labourers to build them. In 1964, the Conservative Government's official house-building target was 350,000 new houses a year; the Labour Government was competing on a political commitment to 500,000 a year. From 1956, Government awarded local authorities with special subsidies for high-rise dwellings (which increased the higher the building). Targets meant that traditional competitive tendering was discarded in favour of building contractor promises: by 1970s the Government was aiming for 40% of all house building to be industrialised in this way, in part because of the regular employment for unskilled labour the industry could offer.

The Government Ministry of Housing and Local Government, responsible throughout the decades of the 1960s and 70s never released essential files on the inspection or evaluation of these housing units; the independent National Building Agency was similarly neglectful. The triangular relationship between the public architects, the contractors and the politicians, became a close one of a tacit acceptance of corruption, low standards and public finances -- with the integrity of modernist architecture being the ultimate victim.

The consequences were many, one of which being a convenient assumption on the part of increasingly under-funded local boroughs that mass housing units had a short lifespan; demolition was always on the horizon. Investment in maintenance was relaxed if not abandoned. This critically effected some modernist exemplars. While it is factually correct to say that even modernist exemplars were built under tight financial conditions and thus with materials whose quality was often wanting. Their longevity testifies to the supremacy of design. Peter and Alison Smithsons' Robin Hood Gardens is one example.

Under a protracted demolition order, fought off by supporters, Robin Hood Gardens finally succumbed to local authority demolition (in favour of corporate property development) in August 2017. Designed in 1968 and completed in 1972, it was a mass block housing estate that exemplified an extended vertical street, albeit in a shape and form that responds to the coordinates of the awkwardly situated piece of land. Originally a Greater London Council commission, the designated was allotted a land plot entirely compromised by badly planned roads, offering up to six thousand residents the prospect of being marooned on an urban wasteland unwanted for any other function. Robin Hood Gardens was conceived as in essence a space for green vegetation, nurtured and protected by two blocks figuratively forming praying hands. The urban wasteland became an oasis of quiet and nature, or at least could have been.

The Smithson's began as London County Council architects in the early 1950s, members of CIAM and other progressive groups, then became less architect builders than architect theorists, whose plans and publications were far more influential than their (few) actual builds. (28) Robin Hood Gardens exemplifies the ideas-based intellectual rigor of their approach, their non-doctrinaire commitment to CIAM, as much as the fate of international modernism in London. The facades of each of the two blocks are not dissimilar to a Mondrian painting -- a seeming regularity and

predictability so ridiculed in modernist architecture reveals infinite variation and framed the expected open interactive social movement of its thousands of residents. The two housing blocks — ten storey (east) and seven storey (west) — facilitated total mobility through elevated walkways, and interconnections outside all 2013 apartments cultivated social community. The blocks shielded the residents from major roads on either side without blocking natural light, but also contained structural variation with single and multi-storey maisonettes. Balconies and, by each entrance door, "pause spaces" or alcoves that articulate the design as well as providing spaces for group conversation and children's play. What was more significant, was that Robin Hood Gardens as a design was not just a building, but a manifestation of a growing historical discourse: it was an intellectually reflexive instantiation of a fully researched and growing historical discourse on equitable forms of social habitation.

Section Four: *The dissolution of public planning*

The collapse of London's first serious attempt at Mayoral governance in the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1986, was also the demise of the rule of public planning, however compromised that had become. Since 1947, urban planning had been predicated on industrial and social growth, where planning facilitated cohesion as much as coherence in the relation between society and the operations of economy. Few planners anticipated the challenges of the urban contraction affected by de-industrialisation, which adversely effected London in the 1970s and early 1980s. The de-industrialisation of London in the 1970s has been subject to scholarly scrutiny. (29)

London between 1985-2000 was the only city in the Western world without a municipal government. Powers were devolved to the boroughs, or (like sanitation or fire) awarded to new "boards" or public committees. Tony Blair's Labour government, elected in 1997, used the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to hold elections, to which a directly elected Mayor and a separately elected London Assembly emerged — both together forming the Greater London Authority. Reminiscent of the old GLC, but with its powers reduced enough to secure Westminster dominance, former leader MP Ken Livingstone defied the Labour Government's wishes, ran and won the election, being duly expelled from the party for doing so. One major implication of the rise of the GLC was urban planning. Between 1985 and 2000, London had become a very international city, without a grand strategic plan for a form of urban development that might facilitate this or redirect its potential adverse effects. The postwar "patchwork" (Banham's term) of housing, industry, retail, transportation, services and leisure, had become incoherent, and moreover, amassed a range of interested agencies. By the time the first Mayor of London had drafted a new "London Plan" in 2004 (an integrated development plan for the whole of the city), each segment of the city's many centers were subject to the interests of investors, banks, boroughs and local authority housing or planning departments, government agencies (or QANGOs, as was the acronym), consultants and any number of NGO or social institutions, from churches to major educational charities. (30)

The multitude of vested interests in urban development that had emerged before the new mayoral authority was a tense combination of increased rights for communities and civil society consultation during the planning process, and economic globalisation facilitated by market liberalisation. The first example of this was in East London docklands area, blighted in the 1970s by the decline of shipping. The government Inner Urban Areas act 1978 was a policy innovation that defined for the first time the 'inner city' as a unique urban phenomenon, albeit a well of social problems. (31) The sources of social problems were identified principally as

unemployment and lack of family income. It was, however, defined largely by social problems to which market liberalism and increased employment were, in advance, the main solution. To mediate the new solution (and its tacit "free market" ideology), equally innovative delivery mechanisms for urban change were established. These were so powerful, it required another act of Parliament -- the Planning and Land Act of 1980 – which in turn saw the creation of Urban Development Corporations (UCDs: under Section 136 of the Act).

The UCDs, of which the London Docklands Development Corporation was the most renown, operated on a "public-private partnership" principle. This entailed a UCD to use powers in trading public land and assets with private contractors, and managing investment and returns in a way that was mutually profitable for private investors, local government and, ostensibly, the public. Before its powers were revoked by the incoming Labour government of 1997, the London Docklands Development Corporation had amassed powers of planning, land re-allocation and compulsory purchasing, only previously used by politically elected public authorities. It had also built Canary Wharf, and other innovations, to huge acclaim. The visual spectacle of the new Wharf alone is testament to its extraordinary paradox where financial success and unprecedented planning freedoms come at the cost of a highly specialised, socially stratified, island of capital, where the immediate environs (either natural or social) remain unaffected (except where their views of the city are blocked). (32)

A seminal moment was Margaret Thatcher's Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, the basis of the now-famous "right to buy" of council housing. What is historically significant is the way the Act effectively collapsed central post-War principles, that housing was a political obligation, and its design was central to the urban planning of cities. Thatcher and her housing minister (minister for Environment, Michael Heseltine) promoted the notion that "right to buy" was a transfer of capital from the State to the people. The practical impact of a mass purchase (at reduced cost) of private individuals (council tenants) resulted, in one generation, in a mass transfer of property from public ownership to the broader market. The 1980 Act obviously anticipated this transfer, with its concomitant legislation allowing for private developers to engage in urban planning, attract foreign direct investment and use public land for private speculative and retail use. It also heralded a new discipline in urban planning, that of masterplanning.

The new "masterplan" became a central mechanism of British urban planning throughout the 1990s and remains today: the masterplan is a combination of site plan and strategic plan (with detailed specification on design of specific buildings and places, but with strategic reference to urban policy of both local and national government). The masterplan undercut local town planners, as it could design, manage and resource the construction process; it was a project management framework that within a generation had reduced public planners to contract and permissions clerks. A range of increasingly international private contractors evolved significant professional competencies in planning and design, along with sophisticated staged funding through complex third and fourth party investment. The 1980 Act also saw a disinvestment of public funds in local authority planning, disincentivising local authorities for undertaking any large projects themselves; risk (and thus innovation) was virtually prohibited. Right-to-Buy continues to this day and serves to continually reduce the provision of council housing, and with it the fundamental intellectual interest in housing as a design fulcrum for the planning and renewal of cities.

There were two notable aspects to Thatcher's attack on the public priority in housing.

The first was the echoes of England's profound and deep "anti-city" intellectual movements, such as the garden city or garden suburb, and later "new town" movements, representing a rejection of inner city habitation and the social intensities it represented. The enduring influence of Raymond Unwin, Barry Parker, Frederick Osborn and Patrick Geddes, William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement, is part of England's intellectual heritage. Whatever effect this did have, a more significant factor was the lack of political defense of public planning on the part of the noble and pioneering professional associations -- Royal Institute of British Architects (1834); Royal Town Planning Institute (1914); Town and Country Planning Association (1899); Architectural Association (1847), and others. The professions recognised internal problems with the architect-dominated public monopoly on planning, and indeed many of their members were now working for private contractors and skeptical of the post-War settlement's legacy.

By way of illustration, the one minor episode in the ill-fated Greater London Council epitomises the political complexity of the situation. The GLC was, as noted, situated on the south bank of the river Thames. South and north were, even until the 1980s, distinct urban spaces insofar as almost all of the city's institutions and businesses are north of the river. The eighteenth and nineteenth century saw the south bank develop as a series of wharfs and small docks, warehouses, power stations and services for the rest of the city. The geo-politics of planning in the 1970s and 1980s was, in part at least, animated by the attempt to enfranchise the south and integrate its urban development into the finance, commerce and industrialisation of the north. This actual began with the founding of County Hall itself in 1919, then again with Festival of Britain after the War. With a decreasing population, the south bank opposite Westminster and the City became vulnerable for cooption and exploitation. (33)

A community group emerged in the early 1970s in initial protests against encroachments on their local area, and then a proposed commercial property expansion of offices, threatening to colonise the south and push up prices. This protest morphed into an organised attempt at community-based urban planning, and survives today as the Coin Street Community Builders. While their planning victories are small in the context of London's urban history, the Coin Street area was, for a brief period, an epicenter of a political crisis. The 1971 Town and Country Planning Act allowed for legitimate community consultation, and the 1970s saw developers looking to extend the north bank office dominated landscape into the south. The community group composed their own competitor plan, so as to be represented as a credible party, and this resulting in "one of the longest, costliest, most important and most confused" public planning inquiries, reaching the highest levels of the then Conservative government (Baeten, 2009: 240). The Minister for Environment, Michael Heseltine personally assumed a role as adjudicator, rejecting both plans, despite the commercial plan receiving the full support of the then Conservative dominated GLC. While it seems that Heseltine hoped for a political compromised between both parties, they in fact polarised; the commercial developer (who in the meantime had expanded its company and its capital) had hired the services of architect Richard Rogers who had designed an already acclaimed, office-based concept on the riverside. A second inquiry was inevitable.

Central to the battle was land ownership: the commercial developer owned half the proposed site, the GLC the other. In 1981, the Labour Party assumed dominance of the GLC, and as a second inquiry ensued, they supported the community group with professional services and funding. While Heseltine approved the plans of both commercial and community parties (no doubt expecting the latter to fail through lack of resources and finance), he did not countenance how the Coin Street community party could, through protest and legal delays in their opponents planning permits,

make the commercial investment in time unviable. The ensuing 1980s was a deepening recession, the intensity of commercial demand declined, and by 1984 the commercial developer agreed to sell their share of the land to the GLC. In a stunning political maneuver, the GLC imposed planning restrictions on the site (in harmony with the community plan) devalued the land commercially, then sold a significant part thereof to the community group at a price far lower than the value, themselves providing loans to make the sale possible.

The GLC's actions were one of a panoply of Left vanguard approaches incompatible with the new Conservative private enterprise ideology. Margaret Thatcher personally oversaw the closure of the central London government, and with it, obligations to fund community involvement. From 1985 the Coin Street Community Builders had to proceed on the terms of private developers, and to this day operate as a development non-profit, albeit with large commercial interests (and, since the early 1990s, have forged partnerships with north of the river banking, commerce and finance agencies). The Coin street development now sits on prime real estate between the South Bank Centre and Tate Modern and Shakespeare's globe downriver, symbolic of social division. (34)

Conclusion
The vast and complex political terrain of London's urban governance since 1945 has been distilled in this paper in order to highlight the centrality of urban planning, along with its rhetorical significance in the politics of post-War reconstruction, its imaginative role in a new national enterprise of "society-building", and the production of leadership in the form of the modernist architect. Yet, while an architect-led new public realm seemed politically possible, the political conditions for public planning shifted in adverse ways. The purpose of this paper was to extrapolate from the available historical narratives a line of inquiry that would generate further inquiry. This further inquiry is how the year 1980 marks the collapse of the public monopoly on planning and the rise of "urban regeneration" agencies, many of which have transmuted into sophisticated international property development corporations and partners with public authorities in London's new "global city" landscape. How one of the world's leading global cities has emerged without a signicant strategy of globalisation, and how did urban regeneration since 1980 provide the conditions for new entrepreneurial partnership-based approaches to planning that so facilitated this globalisation? How did this translate into shifts in architectural vernacular and stylistic preferences after the dismissal of international modernism? How did urban, social and cultural policies intersect in ways that facilitated the globalisation of London's capital city?

Notes:
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Hebbert, M. *London: more by fortune than design* Wiley, 1998: "London's is a history of multiplications" (p. 7).
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The many Acts of Parliament cited are available from two acessible online sources: the National Archives (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/) and Hansard (archives of both Commons and Lords, including speeches and amendments (http://hansard.parliament.uk/).

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«The Proud City -- A plan for London» (public broadcast film written by Ralph Keene, 1946: Minstry of Information, British Government Archives]

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For context, see Hall, P. *Abercrombie's Plan for London: 50 years on,* Vision for London, London, 1994. Other public exhibitions of unofficial proposals for London include Lindy, K. and Winton Lewis, B.A.P. «Drawings illustrating a suggestion for the replanning of the City of London» exhibition at the Incorporated Association of Architects and Surveyors, London, 1944; and G.H. Grimaldi and J. Emberton «Reconstruction in the City of London» exhibition at the Royal Exchange, London, 1944.

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