

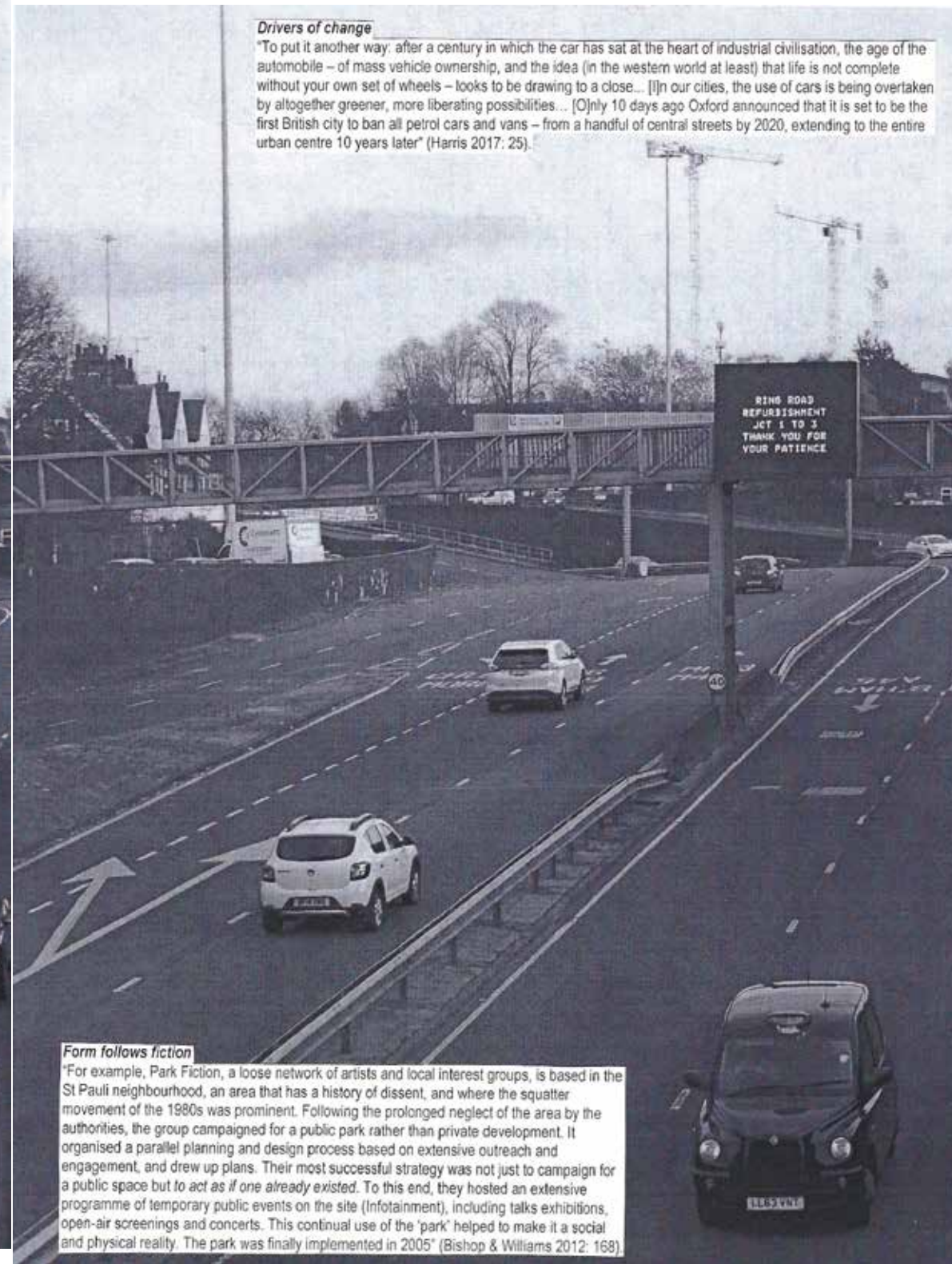
Bare City: 'We'll Live and Die in These Towns'



"When I visited the CCTV control room in Coventry, which is part of CV One, the city's BID (Business Improvement District), I was told that the camera network would be expanding to 700 cameras, even though Coventry is a small city, with a comparatively low crime rate. While I was there a security guard radioed in a concern to the CCTV operator, his voice crackling over the radio, to say that a photographer had been spotted carrying a tripod. I watched as a number of cameras were trained on the photographer, monitoring his progress as he walked down the street..." (Minton 2012: 46).

Drivers of change

"To put it another way, after a century in which the car has sat at the heart of industrial civilisation, the age of the automobile – of mass vehicle ownership, and the idea (in the western world at least) that life is not complete without your own set of wheels – looks to be drawing to a close... [I]n our cities, the use of cars is being overtaken by altogether greener, more liberating possibilities... [O]nly 10 days ago Oxford announced that it is set to be the first British city to ban all petrol cars and vans – from a handful of central streets by 2020, extending to the entire urban centre 10 years later" (Harris 2017: 25).

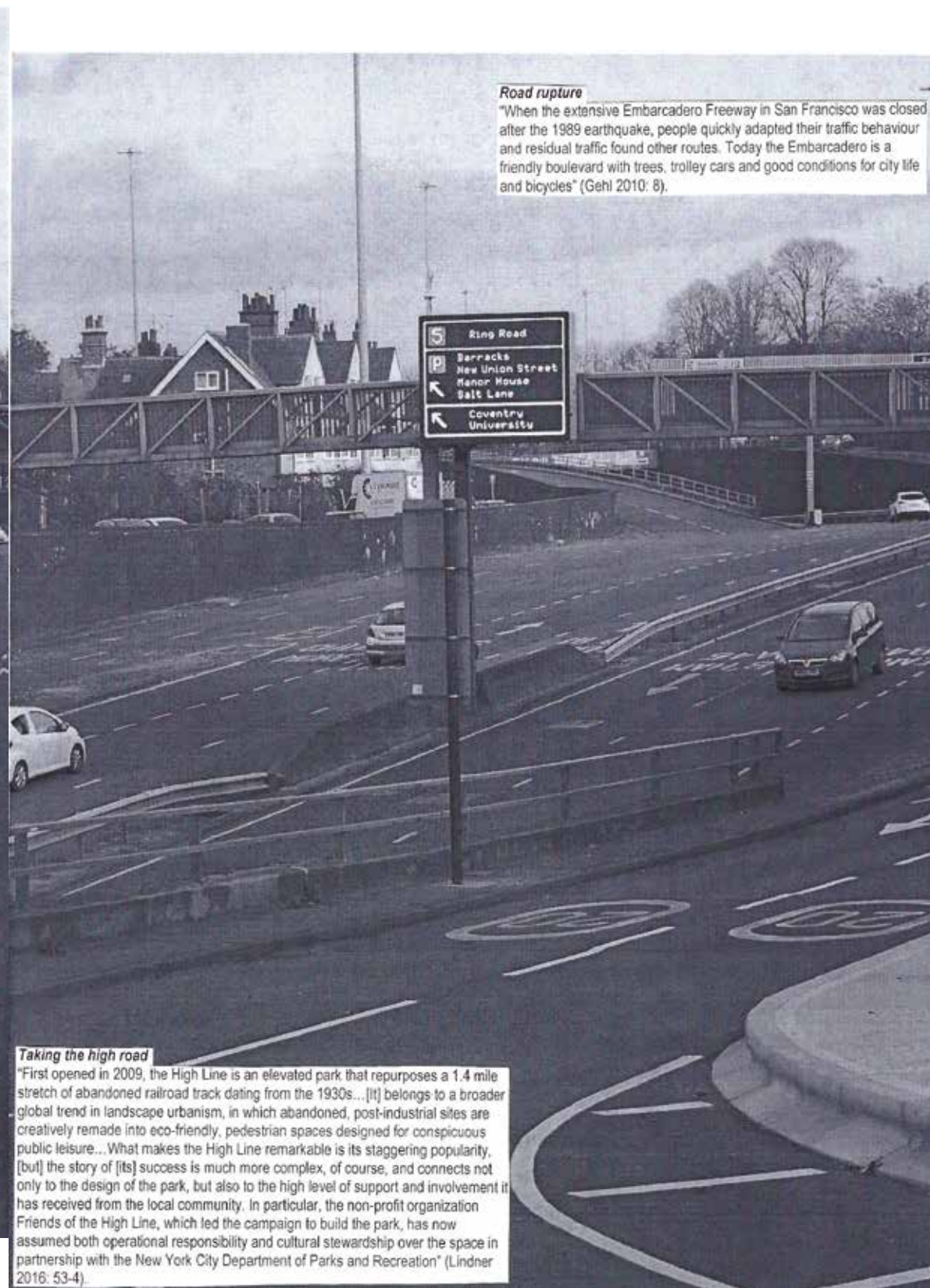


Form follows fiction

"For example, Park Fiction, a loose network of artists and local interest groups, is based in the St Pauli neighbourhood, an area that has a history of dissent, and where the squatter movement of the 1980s was prominent. Following the prolonged neglect of the area by the authorities, the group campaigned for a public park rather than private development. It organised a parallel planning and design process based on extensive outreach and engagement, and drew up plans. Their most successful strategy was not just to campaign for a public space but to act as if one already existed. To this end, they hosted an extensive programme of temporary public events on the site (Infotainment), including talks exhibitions, open-air screenings and concerts. This continual use of the 'park' helped to make it a social and physical reality. The park was finally implemented in 2005" (Bishop & Williams 2012: 168).

Road rupture

"When the extensive Embarcadero Freeway in San Francisco was closed after the 1989 earthquake, people quickly adapted their traffic behaviour and residual traffic found other routes. Today the Embarcadero is a friendly boulevard with trees, trolley cars and good conditions for city life and bicycles" (Gehl 2010: 8).

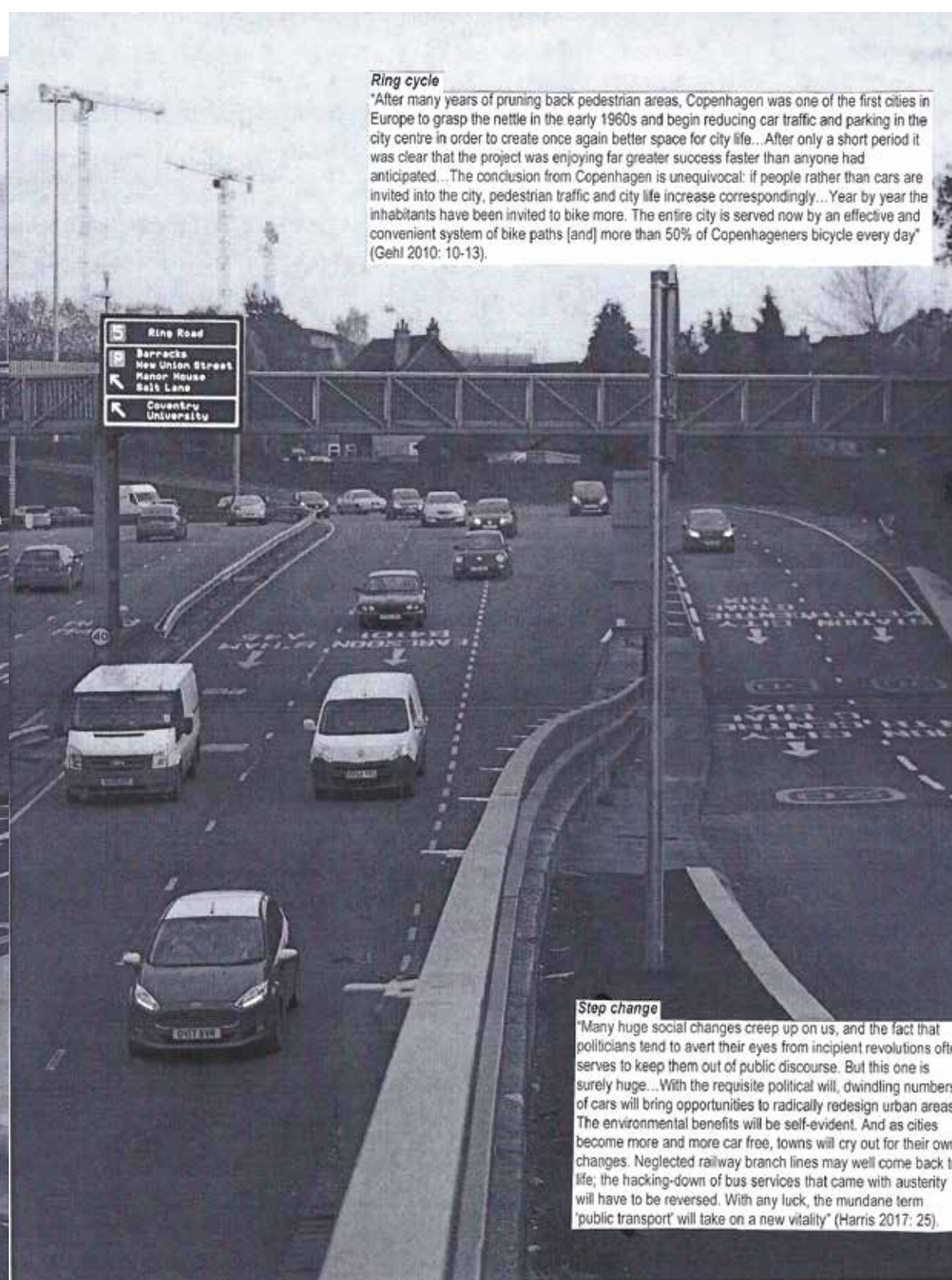


Taking the high road

"First opened in 2009, the High Line is an elevated park that repurposes a 1.4 mile stretch of abandoned railroad track dating from the 1930s... [I]t belongs to a broader global trend in landscape urbanism, in which abandoned, post-industrial sites are creatively remade into eco-friendly, pedestrian spaces designed for conspicuous public leisure... What makes the High Line remarkable is its staggering popularity. [but] the story of [its] success is much more complex, of course, and connects not only to the design of the park, but also to the high level of support and involvement it has received from the local community. In particular, the non-profit organization Friends of the High Line, which led the campaign to build the park, has now assumed both operational responsibility and cultural stewardship over the space in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation" (Lindner 2016: 53-4).

Ring cycle

"After many years of pruning back pedestrian areas, Copenhagen was one of the first cities in Europe to grasp the nettle in the early 1960s and begin reducing car traffic and parking in the city centre in order to create once again better space for city life... After only a short period it was clear that the project was enjoying far greater success faster than anyone had anticipated... The conclusion from Copenhagen is unequivocal: if people rather than cars are invited into the city, pedestrian traffic and city life increase correspondingly... Year by year the inhabitants have been invited to bike more. The entire city is served now by an effective and convenient system of bike paths [and] more than 50% of Copenhageners bicycle every day" (Gehl 2010: 10-13).



Step change

"Many huge social changes creep up on us, and the fact that politicians tend to avert their eyes from incipient revolutions often serves to keep them out of public discourse. But this one is surely huge... With the requisite political will, dwindling numbers of cars will bring opportunities to radically redesign urban areas. The environmental benefits will be self-evident. And as cities become more and more car free, towns will cry out for their own changes. Neglected railway branch lines may well come back to life; the hacking-down of bus services that came with austerity will have to be reversed. With any luck, the mundane term 'public transport' will take on a new vitality" (Harris 2017: 25).