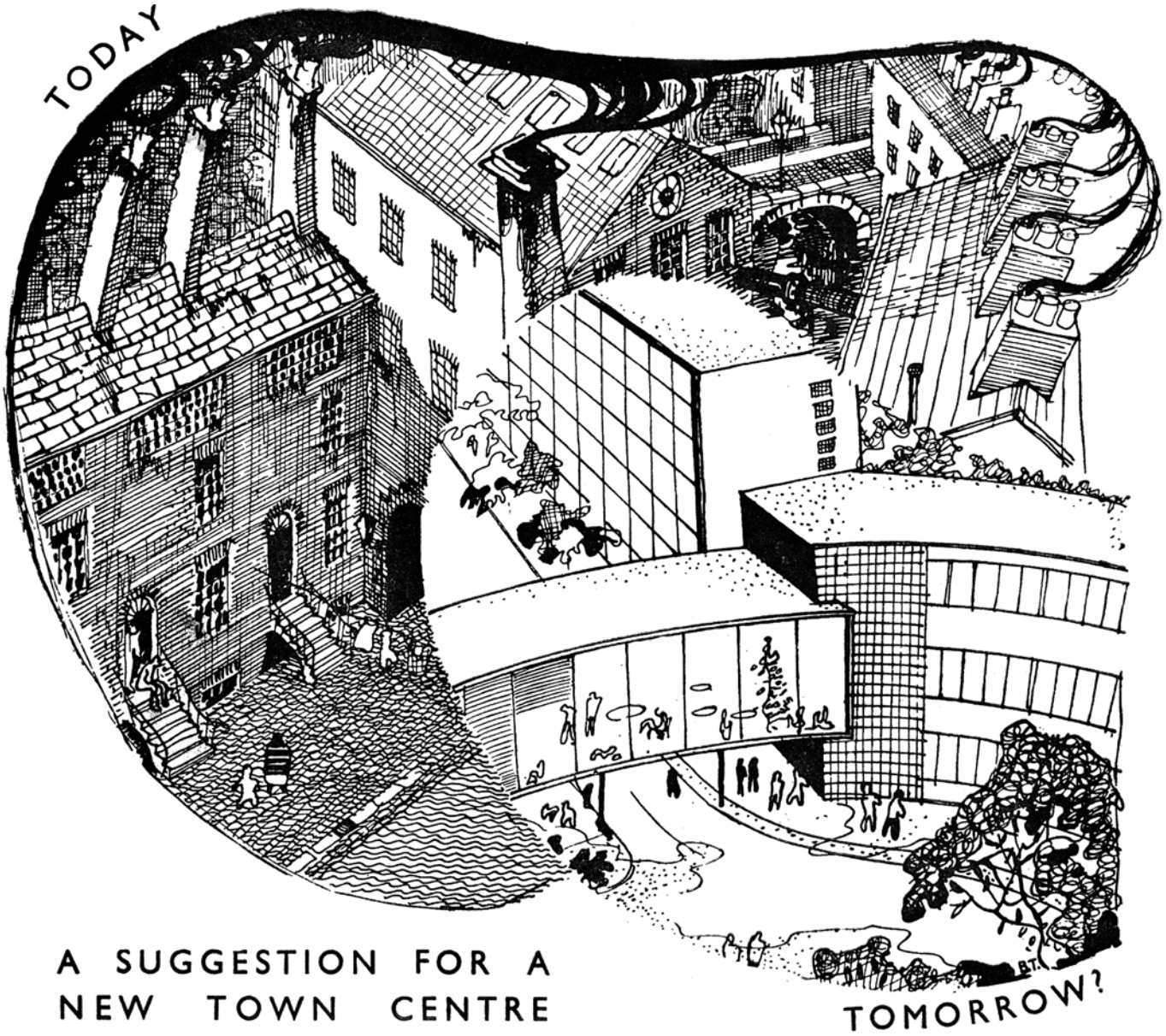
A&U

ARCHITEKTÚRA & URBANIZMUS

ČASOPIS PRE TEÓRIU
ARCHITEKTÚRY A URBANIZMU
JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL
AND TOWN-PLANNING THEORY
Ročník Volume **LIV**
Číslo Number **1 – 2 / 2020**

[UN]PLANNED CITY

Obsah
Content



RADICAL VISION OF THE NEW DISPLACING THE OLD: COVER ILLUSTRATION FOR W. DOBSON CHAPMAN'S 1944 PLAN FOR MACCLESFIELD

RADIKÁLNA VÍZIA NOVÉHO NAHRÁDZAJÚCEHO STARÉ: ILUSTRÁCIA NA OBÁLKE PLÁNU W. DOBSONA CHAPMANA PRE MACCLEFIELD, 1944

Source Zdroj: Dobson Chapman, 1944, Plan for Macclesfield

British Urban Reconstruction after the Second World War: the Rise of Planning and the Issue of "Non-planning"

Britská obnova miest po druhej svetovej vojne: vzostup plánovania a otázka „neplánovania"

Peter J. Larkham

Príspevok skúma stovky známych plánov povojnovej obnovy v Spojenom kráľovstve. Zameriava sa na obdobie bezprecedentnej aktivity v britskom plánovaní, kedy boli revidované koncepcie plánovania etablované v predvojnovom období a zameriavajúce sa na verejné zdravie či idey záhradného mesta a ktorých prehodnotenie tak bolo oneskorené. Pozornosť sa doteraz sústredila na idey a aktivity „plánovania", pričom, ako ukazuje výskum súčasných publikácií, išlo o spornú a nejednoznačnú aktivitu. V tomto ohľade si zaiste zaslúži pozornosť idea „ne-plánu", formulovaná v šesťdesiatych rokoch 20. storočia. Koncept „ne-plánu" môže byť vnímaný aj ako produkt prílišného či neefektívneho plánovania, alebo nedostatočnej realizácie.

Množstvo plánov a ich verejné prezentácie, publikácie a výstavy, ako aj nová legislatíva, podnietili vznik novej profesie mestského plánovania. Rozšíril sa tiež názor, že ide o rozhodujúce obdobie pre plánovanie a pre premenu miest. Autorstvo plánov bolo pritom rozmanité, zahŕňajúc konzultantov, zamestnancov miestnych úradov, a dokonca i zástupcov verejnosti. Podobne, rozsah plánov sa pohyboval od najväčších mestských aglomerácií zničených bombardovaním po malé, vojnou nepoškodené obce, usilujúce o to, aby popri vojnovej rekonštrukcii neostali pozadu.

Napriek tomu, že o plánovaní panovala široká zhoda, množstvo týchto rekonštrukčných plánov bolo významne orientovaných na dáta a, ako naznačujú výskumy, často boli nezrozumiteľné, obzvlášť pre širšiu verejnosť. Pôvodné plány napríklad často obsahovali vrstvy modifikácií, najmä keď sa realizácia pretiahla na desaťročia. Miera možného nepochopenia či konfliktov tak bola veľká, čím dochádzalo k závažnému problému: množstvo rozdielnych vízií o budúcnosti pobáda užívateľov k vyjednávaniu o tom, ktorý plán je „skutočný". Často vágny obraz lokalít v plánoch mohol viesť užívateľov k tomu, že spochybňovali to, čo plány navrhovali. Takéto spochybňovanie môže narušiť legitimitu plánu ako takého, či dokonca spochybniť legitimitu samotného procesu plánovania.

Zbombardované centrá miest sa menili, vznikali nové ulice usporiadané do nových vzorcov s detailnejším funkčným zónovaním využitia územia. Kľúčovým problémom bol nárast dopravy a jej manažment, pričom navrhovanými riešeniami boli zvyčajne početnejšie, širšie a priamejšie cesty s kontrolovanejšími či viacúrovňovými križovatkami. Išlo o „technokratický" prístup. Len pár starších budov zostalo zachovaných a nevhodné pozostatky predchádzajúcej zástavby boli asanované či fyzicky odstránené. Niekedy boli dokonca technokratické samotné nové budovy: nákupné centrá a parkoviská s „divoko futuristickými a nerealistickými" štruktúrami a službami. Väčšina z nich pritom predstavovala nevýrazný modernizmus bez špecifického charakteru. Avšak prevažná časť týchto návrhov nikdy nebola realizovaná, aspoň nie v pôvodne navrhovanej forme. Ako na lokálnej, tak aj na národnej úrovni vyvstávalo množstvo problémov, súvisiacich okrem iného s neochotou využívať nové plánovacie právomoci a požičať si potrebný vysoký kapitál. Po roku 1947 sa už britské plánovanie vzdalo vízií a produkovalo menej zrozumiteľné štatistické dokumenty. Plánovanie sa ako činnosť v neskoršom povojnovom období napokon devalvovalo.

Hoci pôvodne panoval všeobecný konsenzus v prospech plánovania, jestvoval tu aj menej známy prúd odporu. V tejto súvislosti sú dôležité tri momenty. Po prvé, celková komplexnosť procesov, množstvo plánov (niekedy si dokonca vzájomne protirečiacich) a nedostatočný záujem o prístup verejnosti dovedna spôsobovali zmätok a istý druh odporu. Po druhé, napriek vojnovému étosu centralizovaného dohľadu (alebo práve v reakcii naň), plánovanie ako také nebolo vždy úspešné či akceptované, čo malo za následok istý nezáujem či apatiu verejnosti. Po tretie, odpor k plánovaniu vzišiel zo strany zástancov voľného trhu či anti-autoritarizmu a jeho výsledkom bolo viacero publikácií a protestov.

Aj keď toto obdobie masívnej plánovacej aktivity vojnovej a povojnovej Británie býva označované ako zásadné pre vznik a etablovanie sa „plánovania", je rovnako zásadné aj z hľadiska overovania samotných konceptov a limitov plánovania – v skúmaní toho, čo by mohlo, malo alebo, naopak, nemalo byť plánované. Vznik radikálneho konceptu „ne-plánu" o dve desaťročia neskôr je teda viac dôsledkom zlyhania plnenia týchto rekonštrukčných plánov, čo je však už celkom iná problematika.

Introduction

Throughout urban history, settlements have been subject to a range of catastrophes, both natural and human. The manner in which settlements recover – if they do at all – is of considerable academic and practical interest. Much of the research carried out has been more focused on the socio-economic consequences of the catastrophe, or on the socio-economic, political and even bureaucratic processes of reconstruction.[1] In almost all cases, the reconstruction is 'planned' in one form or another. Nevertheless, it is instructive to consider one such period of intensive planning, during and shortly after the Second World War, as the context to the concept of 'non-plan' which originated in the late 1960s, towards the end of the 'reconstruction era'. For 'non-plan' could be seen as a product of too much planning, ineffective planning, or inappropriate delivery of plans.

Aspects of post-Second World War reconstruction planning are now commonly covered in a number of disciplines including planning history, urban design and geography, and there has been a particular burst of activity from the 1990s.[2] The number, type and authorship of the large number of post-war reconstruction plans in the UK has been a particular and systematic focus, with over 250 plans of various types identified; and studies made of individual towns, different types of towns, specific factors such as housing and conservation, and the contribution of individual plan authors (Larkham and Lilley, 2001, as updated).[3] It has become evident that the dynamics of UK reconstruction planning differ significantly from other countries at the same period; and the nature of plans changed between the early 1940s and the early 1950s. A substantial number of these plans were prepared not for those towns and cities suffering most from wartime damage; nor were the majority prepared by eminent professional planners. Instead, many were prepared for little- or un-damaged towns by the professional planning officers of those towns. Much of the critical literature has focused on the 'great planners' and their 'great plans', or on major cities, at the expense of the more numerous, more minor plans and places, and -one-off' plan authors.

Likewise, little has been done to understand the detailed nature of the changes proposed by such plans, with the significant exception of Nasr's work comparing French and German towns.[4] This paper extends this consideration to a wider range of UK reconstruction plans and considers how such large-scale urban change was conceptualised. Since this was a period of unparalleled activity in the replanning of UK cities, and ideas of planning were being revised from the public health origins and garden city applications common before the Second World War, some reassessment is overdue. An important point is that attention has focused on the ideas and activity of 'planning' whereas an exploration of contemporary publications demonstrates that this was a contentious and contested activity; and the idea of 'non-plan' (as later articulated by Banham and colleagues in 1969[5]) merits consideration in this context.

First, however, it should be understood that bomb damage across UK towns was relatively light. Many studies of post-catastrophe reconstruction assume, albeit sometimes implicitly, that the catastrophe produces a *tabula rasa*: "disasters are … *always* perceived by *some* people as an occasion for bringing about changes in the city as an opportunity for correcting its defects".[6] This opportunity thus leads to radical rebuilding and 'progress' in city development.[7] Yet, in UK towns and despite the London, Plymouth and Coventry Blitzes and the 'Baedeker raids' on historic towns such as Exeter, there was far from a *tabula rasa*: a morphological framework of streets, spaces and plots, and infrastructure, generally remained even in those cases where much building fabric did not. And it should be recalled that UK damage, with the exception of that caused by the V-weapons in the south-east, was suffered mostly in 194 – 1941 and, therefore, reconstruction planning began early, despite the continuation of the war.

Plans and Plan Authors

There were eventually several hundred of these reconstruction plans – far more than the number of badly (or even slightly) damaged towns. They ranged from authoritative overviews of extensive districts, commercially published with full-colour illustration, to plans whose existence is known only from the rare survival of typescripts marked "strictly private and confidential". Some were commissioned from eminent consultants who made their post-war reputations from reconsteruction plan preparation (eg Patrick Abercrombie, Thomas Sharp) – at least 100 such are known. The literature focuses primarily on these 'master planners', many of whom were prominent, including several Presidents of the Town Planning Institute; and there was a strong link in the education (and ways of thinking) of many, with the universities of Liverpool and London (and the key factor of

VIEW OF REPLANNED EXETER SHOWING THE "INSIPID BOXES WHICH HAD NO TOWNSCAPE QUALITIES"

POHĽAD NA NOVO PLÁNOVANÝ EXETER UKAZUJÚCI „FÁDNE KRABICE BEZ MESTOTVORNÝCH KVALÍT"

Source Zdroj: Sharp's 1946 plan for Exeter

Professor Sir Patrick Abercrombie) being common.[8] Others, indeed the majority, were prepared by local authority officers or committees (121 known).

Sharp and Abercrombie were the most prolific plan producers, despite the expense of employing them. For example Sharp's fees ranged from 500 guineas for his plan for Todmorden (in 1945) to 2500 guineas for Oxford and Stockport (1948, 1949);[9] Abercrombie was often cheaper: 800 guineas for Plymouth (1941). Their plans were widely reviewed in the professional and lay press. However the majority of named consultants were involved with only a single plan. Yet it is becoming clear that reconstruction planning in 1940s Britain involved much more than technocratic master-planners imposing expert 'views from above'. Evidence to support this revisionist view is to be found in the wide range of reconstruction plans and popular planning texts *c.* 1941 – 1952.

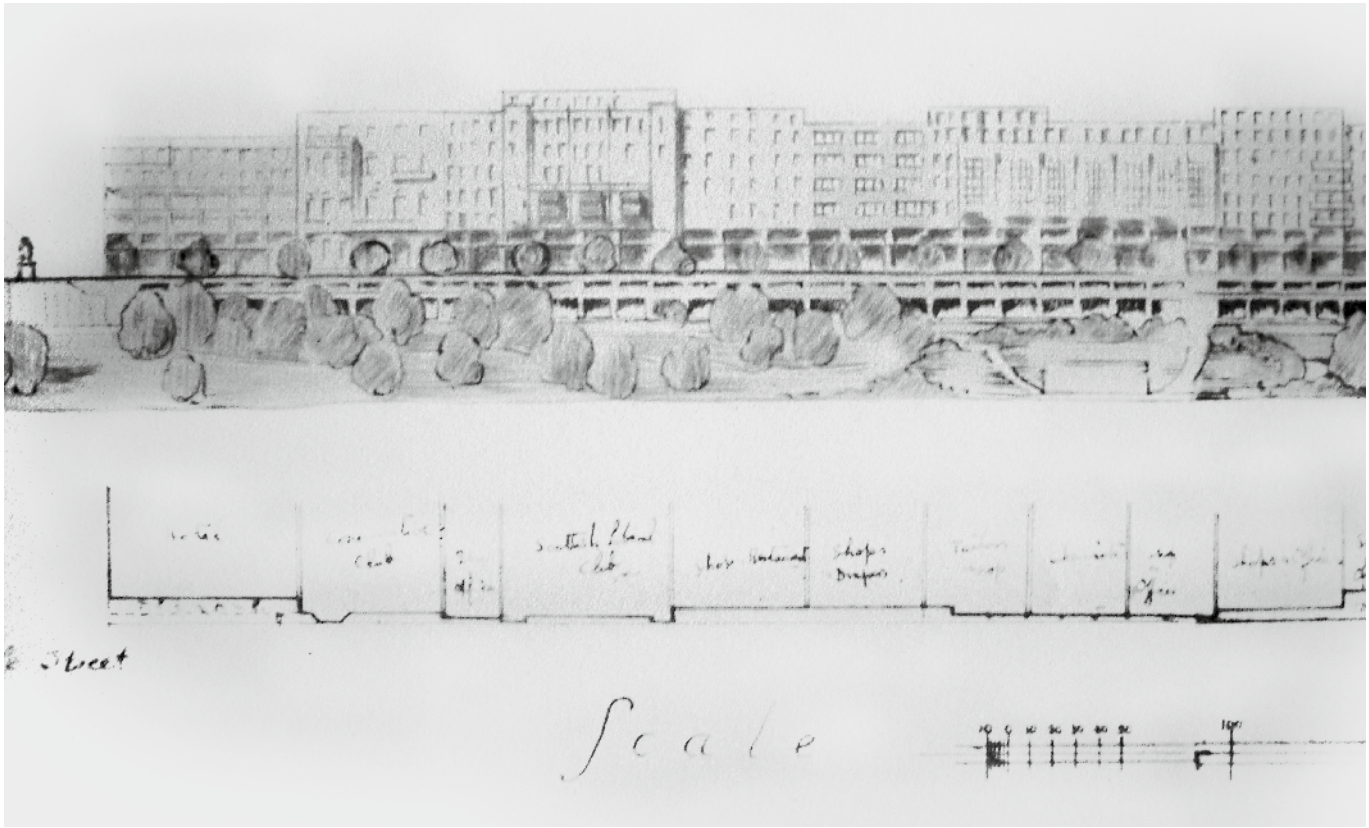
The majority of the earlier plans were wide-ranging in concepts and in district-wide principles, although they tended to focus detailed proposals on smaller areas of the town centre, often with new 'civic centres'. The bulk of such plans were produced between 1943 and 1946. By the early 1950s the flood had become a trickle, and the nature of plans had changed because of the introduction of 'Development Plans' as specified by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act.

Planning – or Non-planning?

It is the volume of these plans, with their associated public promotion, publications and exhibitions, together with the development of new processes and legislation, that spurred the rise of the new profession of town planning, and the historians' view that this was a critical period for planning and urban change. But, if the immediate post-war years were a peak of planning, there has subsequently been a view that "planning is a diffuse and ineffectual field, and that it has largely been unsuccessful over the last half century at … bringing about more just, sustainable, healthful, efficient and beautiful cities and regions".[10]

These plans were the product of a widespread mindset, one inevitably influenced by the necessarily top-down control of society in wartime. This contemporary view of professional expertise and governance process held that, in London at least, "the assumption of the rightness of the power to carry out these proposals in the common good is never questioned".[11] The contemporary view "seems to have been that of the planner as omniscient ruler, who should create new settlement form, and perhaps also destroy the old without interference or question".[12] There was, in many respects, a widespread form of consensus about planning.[13]

Although many of these reconstruction plans were heavily data-driven, and indeed Abercrombie often referred to planners as "technicians", even contemporary reviews suggest that they were often difficult to understand, especially for a lay public readership. A review of Max Lock's 1952 Bedford plan, for example, stated that "The report is beautifully produced – a lesson to many – and it is a splendid record of their town for all Bedford people. The maps, however, appear to be rather too complicated for lay-people to understand and perhaps a little insufficient for the use of technicians. Simpler and clearer maps are called for in a book of this kind".[14] In some places there were unofficial plans, developed by individuals, local interest groups or even via media-led public competition. In others, even the formal plans often had layers of modification, especially when implementation was



THE INTERESTING THREE LEVEL ROAD SCHEME PARTLY UNDERNEATH PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH

POZORUHODNÁ SCHÉMA TROJÚROVŇOVEJ CESTY ČIASTOČNE ZAPUSTENÁ POD PRINCES STREET, EDINBURG

Source Zdroj: Abercrombie and Plumstead's 1949 plan for Edinburgh

spread over decades. Hence the scope for confusion and contestation was large, producing a significant problem that had to be confronted: having so many different visions of the future (that is, having so many different 'plans' within one plan) might have prompted a reader to inquire which was the 'real' plan. Such questioning might destabilize the legitimacy of the plan itself, and thus even threaten the legitimacy of the planning process.

A particular element arose when the communication of plans is considered; in particular when the earlier reconstruction plans used artistic images of the future townscape. The evident wish of planners not to accurately represent architectural design led to confusion: Sharp's biographer suggested that "unfortunately the sketches which appeared in Sharp's plans failed to convey his ideas on townscape and his proposals for enriching the quality of urban surroundings ... Exeter in particular was a disaster; the new buildings were insipid boxes which had no townscape qualities".[15] Yet the authors of the 1945 Norwich plan were careful to state that buildings in their illustrations "are made as non-committal in design as possible" serving only "to indicate height and size".

Nature and Extent of Proposed Urban Changes

Examination of the author's extensive collection of UK city-scale reconstruction plans allows some conclusions to be drawn about the nature and extent of the changes posed, and their relationship to the type of town, its damage status, and the means of plan production. It is clear that the earliest plans, initiated by the most severe damage (Plymouth, London, Coventry) were radical and that radical imagery was used to promote them. The form of much of the bombed city centres was to change, with new streets in new patterns and more of a zoning of land uses. Although some surviving buildings were retained, and some bombed shells kept as war monuments (Plymouth; Coventry Cathedral), many remnants were demolished. In Coventry's case some surviving timber-framed buildings were bodily removed to line a street outside the new ring road. Yet the radical reconstructions were in a minority, and the radical nature of proposals became more and more diluted through the late 1940s and into the 1950s.[16] Fashion was clearly changing.

Changes to Streets and Spaces

There are several characteristics of street patterns common to the majority of plans inspected. Traffic growth and management were key problems, and the proposed solutions were, almost without exception, the provision of more, wider, straighter roads, with more controlled junctions, grade-separated interchanges, and so on. This is what has been termed a 'technocentric' approach.[17] This is carried to extremes in the 1945 Norwich plan, which proposed a river viaduct to be carried largely on the roofs of a row of factory/warehouse buildings, and the 1949 Edinburgh plan which proposed what it termed "an interesting three level road scheme" partly underneath Princes Street, and a by-pass "thrusting its arched concrete structure of mellow colour across the valley".

Indeed, many plans proposed by-passes or ring roads; that for Tunbridge Wells (1945) located far from the town centre, while that for Wolverhampton (1945) was extremely tightly drawn around the new civic centre and retail core. A ring road changed the pattern of road use and traffic circulation, and opened up new possibilities of access into the core area. This led to suggestions for the inner road network to be adjusted. Many roads were to be straightened and/or widened, to improve the free flow of vehicular traffic. Bristol was criticised for proposing "the pointless destruction of valuable buildings merely to produce 100 foot wide streets".[18] The current practice of pedestrianising these areas is not mentioned, although Wolverhampton did propose to prohibit large public service vehicles from the central area, forcing people to walk from bus stops on the ring road. In some cases the existing street pattern would largely remain, albeit with these modifications (Worcester, 1946). In others, the historic pattern was substantially altered by both major widenings and what have been termed 'breakthrough' streets, as suggested by Sharp in his 1949 plan for the mediaeval planned grid of Salisbury.

While there are traces of formal, *beaux-arts* layouts in some new street patterns – the original axial plan for Plymouth could be placed into this formal category – these were relatively rare. The majority of new streets and patterns were purely functional. And the functionalism tended to ignore existing forms. Worcester, the consultants felt, needed an additional east-west road; so one was proposed in a straight line from the bridge to the railway station, seeming to ignore all other issues of design or indeed how it would interact with traffic on other existing and proposed roads.

On occasion, new streets were highlighted as opening up important new vistas: Sharp wrote in Exeter's plan that "while it would be wrong to try to 'open-up' monumental vistas of [the cathedral], new views should be provided". In Salisbury's plan he proposed "one new direct view … far wider than any at present in the city: but with the curve of the streets and the river flowing beside the roadway, it will still be entirely informal and in character with the rest of the city". Yet the mediaeval grid street pattern of the city is anything but informal.

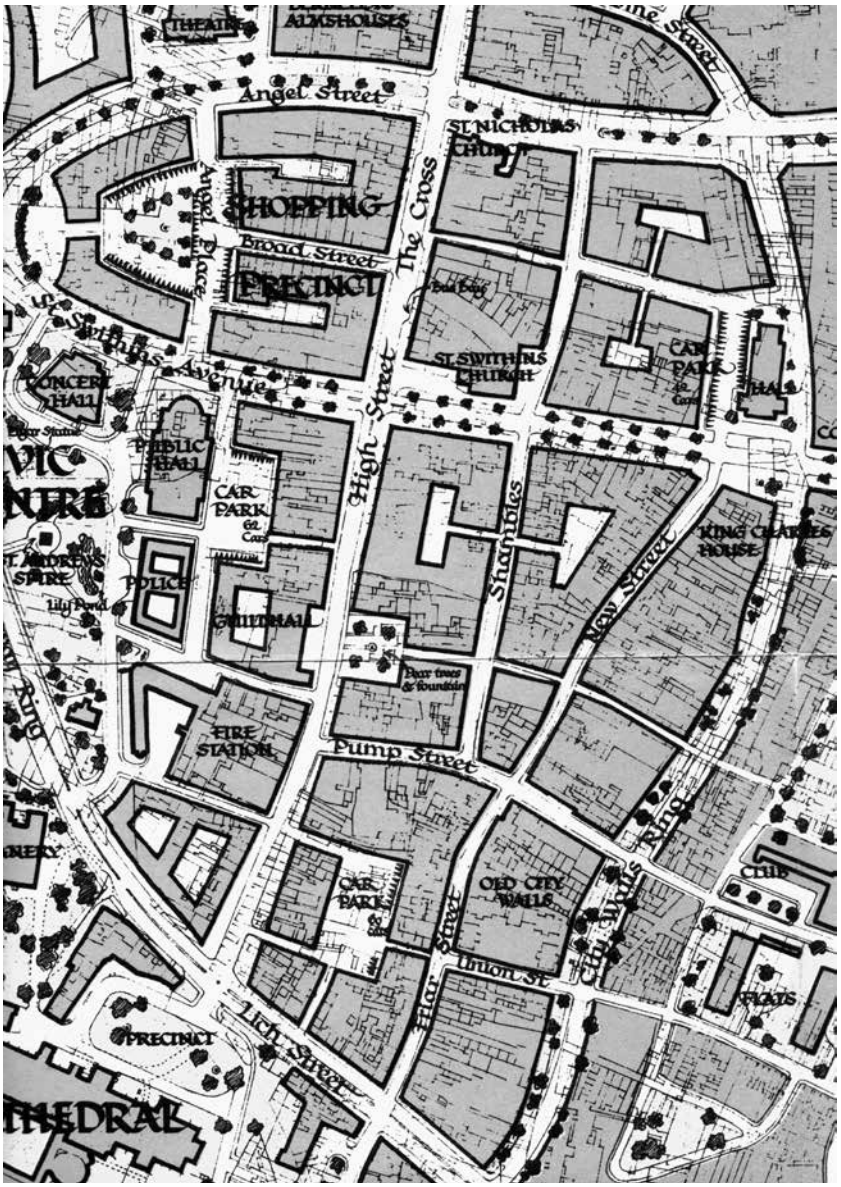
Relatively few plans proposed new public open spaces. When such spaces are proposed, as with Worcester's square outside the Guildhall, it is far from clear what its purpose would be; and the small square in Tunbridge Wells facing new public buildings in the Pantiles seems more useful owing to the car park underneath it.

Changes to Blocks and Plots

Street blocks and plots in these plans are significantly altered more because of the road widening and straightening proposals than for any other single reason. The 1946 central area proposals for Worcester, for example, identified some 24 buildings as worthy of retention; all of the remainder and their historic plot patterns would be redeveloped. In most of the proposals particularly for central areas, no attention is paid to plot patterns, and the depictions show what became termed 'perimeter blocks'. There is no hint at any function for the interior spaces within these blocks. Nasr suggests that, in East Germany in particular, component standardisation led to standard widths for the similar perimeter blocks developing; but it is not possible to ascertain whether this was so in the UK plans.[19]

Changes to Buildings

Here we may consider both those buildings remaining, which could constitute part of a morphological frame and constrain the reconstruction plan, and those proposed. As we have seen, few structures were retained in many cases. Inconvenient ones were demolished or, as in Coventry, physically removed. The number identified as important, despite the beginnings of the Listing of historic buildings from 1944, was low, as was seen in Worcester. Even Sharp, whose texts were full



THE NEW STREET LAYOUT OVERLAIN ON THE PRE-WAR MAP SHOWING THE EXTENT OF PLANNED CHANGE

NOVÁ ULIČNÁ ŠTRUKTÚRA NA MAPE Z PREDVOJNOVÉHO OBDOBIA NAZNAČUJÚCA ROZSAH PLÁNOVANÝCH ZMIEN

Source Zdroj: Minoprio and Spencely's 1946 plan for Worcester

of historic context and sensitivity to place and character, proposed little conservation (and had heated exchanges with preservationists, as in Oxford).

Sometimes even the buildings were technocentric. In Bristol, an unofficial proposal for retail redevelopment proposed a "multi level shopping development with small shops of lower terraces and two levels of ramps and bridges giving access to departments stores. The plans were wildly futuristic and unrealistic...".[20]

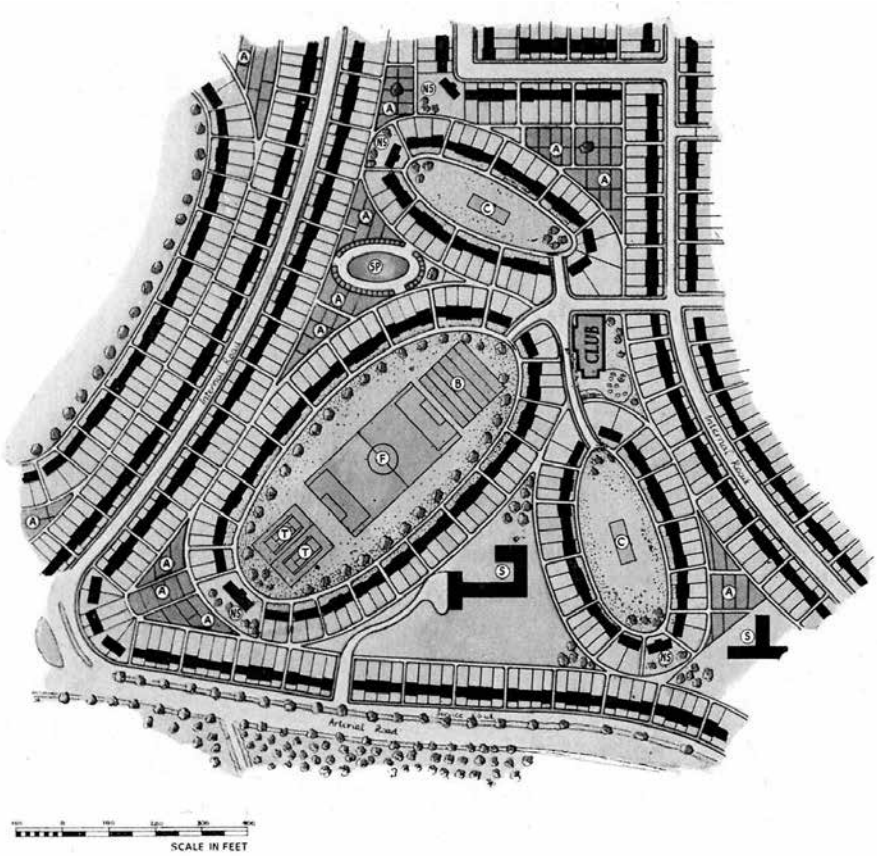
In some cases, the extent of the suggested demolition provoked early public protest. One person – interestingly not a local resident – wrote to the local Worcester newspaper that "I read ... with horror, of the proposed pulling-down of Worcester brick by brick. To think of College Street going! ... The idea is nothing short of a scandal and I hope people will be loud in their complaints".[21]

The nature of proposed buildings, and their representation, is interesting. Those in Worcester are clearly Modern in positioning, but are depicted as being clad in reassuring traditional red brick.[22] Others demonstrated innovations, as in the canopies projecting over the pavements in Exeter's 1946 plan (and indeed built in Birmingham). Many, however, are bland and characterless – In the 1945 Manchester plan, the extensions for Manchester University, for example, spread serried standard flat-roofed blocks around the iceberg of Alfred Waterhouse's 1880s original Victorian quadrangle: apparently "the newer University buildings reflect the changing outlook of

THE RADICAL RESIDENTIAL LAYOUT WITH COMMUNAL SPACES PROPOSED IN BIRKENHEAD

RADIKÁLNE USPORIADANIE OBYTNEJ ZÓNY S NAVRHOVANÝMI KOMUNÁLNYMI PRIESTRANSTVAMI V MESTE BIRKENHEAD

Source Zdroj: Reilly and Aslan's 1947 plan for Birkenhead



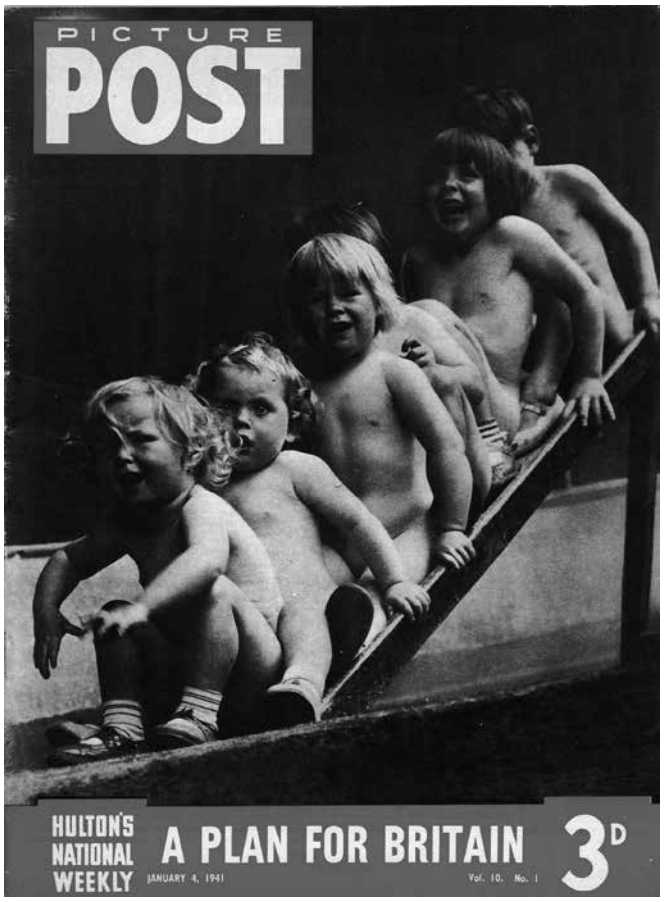
the educational world" (one wonders how). Many plans depict, often in great detail, elevations or models of new civic centres, using either a Classical form, or a rather spare modernism, clearly with classical inspirations (Wolverhampton, Manchester). Some such as Bristol have been strongly criticised, for the "blandness and monotony of its 'Stalinist' architecture".[23] Yet few of these plans, even when written by architects, go so far as to design buildings.

It should be remembered that, although much emphasis is placed on town centres, a number of the plans make very detailed suggestions for the replacement of "outworn" residential areas with new housing. None propose what actually became the ubiquitous solution, the tower block. The 1947 Birkenhead plan gave a particularly innovative new residential layout, featuring in the national press and not implemented because it caused a significant party political split! The 1945 Tunbridge Wells plan illustrated a sample replacement of some 150 Victorian terrace houses with 60 houses and 20 flats in small blocks, illustrating the key point that all proposed new residential areas were at considerably lower densities – implying considerably more land used. Today's concerns with suburban sprawl, suburban services and commuting are absent.

Comparisons of form and style between the UK and the European mainland and instructive. While much of the UK was replanned in a functional style, a mixture of modernism and a stripped classical, many places in western Europe were reconstructed in close facsimile. The Old Town of Warsaw is a well-known example. In other places, particularly eastern Europe, monolithic modernism was employed, as in Dresden. However, where rebuilding was significantly delayed, style is different. In Eblag (Poland), for example, "after forming a public park for 20 years, the buildings of the old town are now being reconstructed on their old foundations, approximately to their new heights, but in a rather frenetic post-modern style. This whole rebuilding process has been dubbed 'retroversion' ...".[24]

Planning: a New Paradigm or Fashion?

Some historians have implied that these plans form a 'new paradigm' in conceptions of planning and urban form. They were certainly being produced at a point when the profession of town planning was young and seeking to establish itself more firmly in the brave new post-war era of



COVER OF *PICTURE POST* (4 JANUARY 1941), PROMOTING THE NEED FOR "A PLAN FOR BRITAIN"

OBÁLKA MAGAZÍNU PICTURE POST Z DŇA 4. JANUÁRA 1941 PROPAGUJÚCA POTREBU „PLÁNU PRE BRITÁNIU"

Source Zdroj: Picture post, 4. 1. 1941

professionalism[25] and when the design fashion of modernism was becoming the mainstream in the built environment professions.[26] Certainly 'expert views' were often sought by, and in the case of London forced by central government upon, the municipal authorities.[27]

Yet closer examination of individual plans suggests that there are significant similarities in post-war and pre-war plans by some of the key consultants, especially Abercrombie (who had already prepared similar plans for Dublin (1923) and Bristol and Bath (1930)), and Adshead (Scarborough, 1938). As an example of a relatively little-damaged town, Wolverhampton's 1944 plan can clearly be traced to moves in the mid-1930s to review road infrastructure and provide a civic centre. A consultant was engaged in mid-1939 to produce a plan (curtailed by the outbreak of war) but the Borough Surveyor's detailed papers led the actual plan and published brochure.[28]

As the contexts of more examples come under scrutiny it seems less defensible to describe this phase of planning as a new paradigm. The concerns were those of 5 or 10 years earlier. The plan approach, and often the physical designs, were likewise. What did change, in cases such as Worcester, Dudley and Wolverhampton, was the commissioning of detailed socio-economic surveys to provide hard data underpinning the main themes of the reconstruction plan. This, rather than any new thinking about physical form, was the new paradigm enshrined in the 1947 Act's Development Plans. Nevertheless, the dominant paradigm was emphatically that of 'planning'.

However, these plans and the thinking they put forward was certainly a fashion: not only is there evidence of civic boosterism in producing plans and sometimes in employing prominent consultants, but the publications and exhibitions communicating the plan concepts were taken up, reviewed and compared as with any other design fashion.[29]

Were the Proposed Changes Ever Carried Out?

The bulk of these proposals were never carried out, at least in the form originally proposed. Hasegawa (1992) suggests that there were a range of problems at both local and national political levels, including a reluctance to use new planning powers and to borrow the large sums necessary.[30] The

changing planning context after the 1947 Act also rendered the earlier plans obsolete. The rationing of construction materials and the poor national economic position led to a slow start to any development until the mid-1950s; and the Middle East conflict from 1973 virtually stopped major projects, and ended the era of post-war reconstruction.

Yet these plans had a persistence; an influence lasting in many cases for decades. In particular, roads and other major infrastructure envisaged here was usually built, albeit decades later and in different forms. Even Abercrombie's iconic new geometrical street pattern for Plymouth was built to a rather different form.[31] In some cases, as with Worcester, only a small number of the new buildings were constructed on new street alignments; when the old streets were not re-aligned the new buildings sit very oddly in the urban landscape.

These plans have, therefore, been discussed as failures, since their details were so rarely implemented. For example Barker and Hyde note that "Heavy with statistics, graphs and diagrams, most of these impressive volumes are now only likely to interest somebody curious to study how far achievement fell short of intention. The way well-argued propositions came to nothing makes melancholy reading".[32] This is too harsh a judgement. If one reads many of these texts closely they are littered with caveats: these were proposals for between 20 and 50 years to come. Their influence has persisted, as can be seen in Worcester, Wolverhampton and Chichester.[33] Of those actually constructed, Plymouth has been judged a qualified success;[34] and parts of the Plymouth and Coventry schemes have been formally conserved. The plans themselves should be seen as textbook examples of the contemporary approaches to urban form.

The Scale of Planning and the Idea of 'Non-plan' in Early Post-war Britain

It is clear from the story retold here that Britain planned extensively in the 1940s. More plans, at city or regional scale, were produced than ever before. Some of the city-scale plans were radical or ambitious, but in many cases, replanning and reconstruction are extended activities and lead to prolonged uncertainty. This, and the fear of radical change, can lead to public and sometimes political opposition.

The development plans as specified by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, and which thus superseded these reconstruction plans, moved far away from the landscape representation towards the professional mystique of the map to the extent that "by the 1960s, post-war reconstruction planning had become no more than totalitarian, authoritative and statistical".[35] British planning moved away from 'paper cities' and produced dry, statistical documents much less comprehensible to a lay readership. Planning as an activity became devalued in the later post-war period.

Notwithstanding this push to, and general consensus in favour of, planning there was an undercurrent of resistance. This has been little acknowledged, but is worth highlighting as part of the story of British urban change at this time. The first key point to consider is the complexity of the process, the multiplicity of plans (sometimes conflicting) and the lack of attention to public input. The extensive publication and exhibition of plans was merely to inform the public, not to solicit ideas or responses.[36] This caused confusion and some resistance.

The second point is to consider that, despite (or perhaps in reaction against) the wartime ethos of centralized control, 'planning' as an activity was not always successful nor accepted. This relates to a wider theme of changing concepts of citizenship and ideology at the time.[37] The large number of city and regional plans has been noted, but there was also some heavy pressure to produce a 'national plan', with as much promotion as many city plans;[38] but, in the end, this initiative failed to gain public, professional or political support. In some cases there was public apathy or disinterest: responses in the local newspaper to Wolverhampton's 1944 plan were minimal, with much more attention paid to national plans to compulsorily introduce rear lights for bicycles; and in neighbouring Walsall, the low-level exhibition of a plan in a shop window led to such lack of interest that the plan vanished virtually without trace.[39]

The third point is that a resistance to 'planning' on the part of a free market, anti-authority emerged, resulting in a number of publications and protests. One 1944 booklet, for example, protested that "so vague, diffuse and ill-defined has the concept of planning become that an inquiry in to its nature and significance can only proceed by antitheses. What is planning meant to replace? What deficiencies is it supposed to remedy? What evils is it supposed to cure?".[40] The underlying political ideology was plain, presented a statement not open for debate: "In a free democracy the task of the State is not to plan free enterprise, but to establish and maintain such conditions that

COVER OF SCHWARTZ'S ANTI-PLANNING POLEMIC

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Source Zdroj: Peter Larkham's collection

free enterprise is synonymous with planning to meet the freely expressed demands of the community".[41] Some of this protest was, perhaps, more rational and sought to establish the appropriate *limits* to planning. Another booklet, of 1943 and authored under the pseudonym "Libertas", concluded that its protagonist was "all out for fair play. He refuses to be labelled as *for* planning or as *against* planning. He believes that, given a necessary Government control of the use of land, and of building materials ... the rest can be left to the enterprise of the private owner and the private builder".[42]

It is as well to remember here that, while some of the city plans were indeed very prescriptive and all-encompassing, others left some things intentionally vague, for future decision makers and decision-making processes. This relates very much to the founding concepts of 'non-plan' in the 1960s, which began as a response against heavy-handed imposition of *aesthetic* choices.[43] The original 'non-plan' publication was deliberately provocative, envisioning what might happen in the absence of 'planning' regulation; and this was scarcely thinkable at the time of the 1940s plans, in the face of disaster and destruction, economic crisis and material shortages. It is also interesting that the 'non-plan' authors commented that "the notion that the planner has the right to say what is 'right' is really an extraordinary hangover from the day of collectivism in left-wing thought, which has long ago been abandoned elsewhere'.[44] While left-wing ideas were certainly an influence in 1940s planning and architecture – indeed some significant British professionals either visited the USSR or were card-carrying members of the Communist party[45] – the reconstruction planning was dominated by Establishment figures and values, albeit of the middle class rather than the aristocracy. Nevertheless the 'hangover' idea is probably over-stated.

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My contention, therefore, is that although this period of immense plan-making activity in wartime and early post-war Britain is widely seen as a critical point in the emergence and acceptance of 'town and country planning', it is also critical in the testing of the concepts and limits of planning; of setting out what could and should be planned, and what not planned. The full emergence of the radical 'non-plan' concept two decades later is more a result of the failure to deliver on these reconstruction plans: a wholly different issue.

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ARCHITEKTÚRA & URBANIZMUS

ČASOPIS PRE TEÓRIU ARCHITEKTÚRY A URBANIZMU

JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL AND TOWN-PLANNING THEORY

Ročník Volume **LIV**
Číslo Number **1 – 2 / 2020**

ADRESA REDAKCIE EDITORIAL ADDRESS
ARCHITEKTÚRA & URBANIZMUS
Historický ústav SAV,
P. O. Box 198, Klemensova 19, 814 99 Bratislava, SK
IČO 166944
www.architektura-urbanizmus.sk
e-mail: architektura-urbanizmus@savba.sk

REGISTROVANÉ V INDEXED AND ABSTRACTED IN
Thomson Reuters Arts and Humanities Citation Index,
Current Contents – Arts & Humanities, SCOPUS,
RIBA journal index, CEOL, EBSCO

VYDÁVA PUBLISHED BY

TLAČ PRINTED BY
VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV
Centrum spoločných činností SAV, Bratislava

ROZŠIRUJE DISTRIBUTED BY
o.z. reflektor
Šancová 17, 811 05 Bratislava
Mediaprint-Kapa Pressegrosso, a.s.
Stará Vajnorská 9, 831 04 Bratislava

VYCHÁDZA POLROČNE PUBLISHED SEMIANNUALLY
EV 3179/09, ISSN 0044 8680

REDAKCIA EDITOR
Dagmar Slámová

JAZYKOVÁ REDAKCIA EDITTING
Katarina Jostičova

PREKLADY TRANSLATIONS
Martin Tharp (ENG), Eliška Mazalanová (SK),
Pavlina Zelničková, Martina Mojzesová (CZ),

GRAFICKÁ ÚPRAVA LAYOUT
Juraj Blaško

OBÁLKA COVER
Juraj Blaško

ROČNÉ PREDPLATNÉ
SUBSCRIBTION RATE
18 € + **poštovné** postage 13,80 € / EU,
25 € / **mimo EU** outside EU
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SINGLE ISSUE PRICE
9 €
Objednávky SR a ČR
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ISSN 0044-8680