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Publication Date

2010

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Democracy, Technocracy and Publicity:
Public Consultation and British Planning, 1939-1951

By
Susanne Elizabeth Cowan

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Architecture
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Nezar Al Sayyad, Chair
Professor Andrew Shanken
Professor James Vernon

Fall 2010

Abstract

Democracy, Technocracy and Publicity: Public Consultation and British Planning, 1939-1951

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture

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Professor Nezar AlSayyad, Chair

This dissertation examines the way in which planning advocates sought to engage the public in democratic reconstruction planning in Britain in the 1940s. After the bombing of British cities during World War II, planners capitalized on an opportunity to expand the scale of town planning and redefine the role of the planning profession in shaping British society. As planners advocated for increased power for the government to plan, they recognized the need to embrace their role within the political system and legitimize their powers within a democracy. To address these concerns, planners created a forum through which they could inform, educate and consult the public about planning ideas and policies. They developed new techniques to engage and communicate with laypeople, including mobilizing publicity, measuring public opinion, organizing exhibitions, and experimenting with new visual strategies.

Overall, the 1940s is shown to be a period of progress in empowering of citizens to engage in the planning process. However, this empowerment remained partial and temporary, constrained by legal and professional structures that solidified the influence of technical experts. Publicity served as a tool for democratic engagement, but also as a means to promote the expansion of professional and government powers. Once planning legislation had passed, the ideological vigor and idealistic goals behind consultation faded along with their practical necessity. As planning practice shifted from prospective to statutory planning, many of the techniques developed in the 1940s fell into disuse. The phase of experimentation ended, and the malleable tools for consultation hardened in perfunctory bureaucratic hurdles.

Unearthing the roots of participatory planning within the 1940s complicates the traditional depiction of modernist planners as merely deciding, announcing and defending their work. It shows how the political conditions of war and postwar reconstruction fostered a climate in which planning could thrive, bolstering public support for large-scale redevelopment and the impetus for state control. This historical research on planning in the 1940s adds complexity to the conventional portraits of modernist planners as heroes or villains, showing the ways in which they balanced the technocratic duties of their work with their commitment to public consultation.

Planning to the People: Creating a Public Forum for Planning in Britain, 1939-1951.

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Preface

"The Architect as Oppressor," my first paper as a new undergrad student of landscape architecture at the University of California Berkeley, expressed my discomfort with the power of architects and planners to control decisions about how people use land. This paper, influenced by the ideas of my professor Randy Hester and the participatory planners of the 1970s, questioned what it would mean to challenge the power of experts and to transform the role of designers from decision makers to mediators and advocates for the public. This first passionate plea of youthful optimism served as the root of my later more academic pursuits of the subject.

In the following work I have sought to explore the idealism of planners who believed that design and planning could make the world a better place, and that experts could serve as transformative agents in undermining the undemocratic aspects of capitalist urban development. This project has grown from my interests in the history and practice of participatory democracy and utopian planning. Looking back before the well worn yarns of the post civil rights era that criticized planners for being authoritarian and technocratic, it aims to uncover the forgotten foundation of planning consultation in the early modernist planning of the 1940s. This revisionist history challenges charges that modernist planners ignored the will of the people, showing the optimism of a generation of planners who believed that town planning could serve as the foundation for a more equitable society. Nonetheless critical analysis of the politics of knowledge shows that planners struggled to meet their goals for democratic consultation, and that their idealism was short lived. While writing this history, I have aimed to balance my sympathies with these planners with my awareness of their failures and limitations.

During this project, I have been fortunate to benefit from the advice and support of my mentors, colleagues, and friends. I would like to thank all the people who have supported me not only in developing this dissertation, but also throughout the long journey from idealistic youth into a mature scholar. First I would like to thank my committee members who have helped me to shape the framework for this project: Nezar AlSayyad who allowed me as an undergrad to sneak into his graduate seminar "Cinematic Urbanism," and whose mentorship has provoked my explorations of the reflexive nature of film and urbanism; Andy Shanken, who has inspired me with his bold and intuitive interpretation of images and who introduced me to the generation of designers ready to rebuild after the war in 194X; and James Vernon, who guided my first forays into the archives and modeled a process for weaving together fragments into compelling narratives. I would also like to thank several scholars who read my initial dissertation outline, prospectus, or chapter drafts and helped me to develop my ideas, including: Richard Walker, Paul Groth, Peter Larkham, Nicholas Bulluck, Stephen Fielding, John Gold, David Mattless, François Penz, Mark Clapsom, and Davis Smiley.

Beyond my dissertation work, I have also benefited from the mentorship whose work in the field of participatory and collaborative planning has been an example as I have build my own skills in planning consultation. I would like to thank: Randy Hester, who inspired me to want to make democracy the goal and the process of design, and whose charismatic idealism and fierce pragmatism inspire everyone around him to want to join the movement; Marcia McNally whose "Neighborhood Landscapes" seminar, guided me through my first application of social survey and participant observation

techniques, and who invited me to present my work at her conference, launching my interest in academic research; Judith Innes who introduced me to collaborative planning unleashing my inner negotiator; and David Booher who enthusiastic encouragement fueled the quest to cultivate my facilitation skills.

I would like to thank all institutions that have supported and funded my work: the Department of Landscape Architecture at U.C. Berkeley, for the Geraldine Knight Scott Fellowship, which allowed me to travel for four months in Europe visiting the social housing projects in Britain which have been the subjects of this research; the Department of Architecture at U.C. Berkeley for the Spiro Kostoff Fellowship, which helped fund my studies at Berkeley; the Graduate Division at U.C. Berkeley for the Progress Award and the Summer Research Grant which financed my preliminary research and the development of my dissertation prospectus; and the Center for British Studies for the Anglo-California Exchange Fellowship and the Conference Travel Grant, which allowed me to spend a semester at University of Cambridge, conducting field work and presenting my work to the scholars in my field.

For their permission to publish the images that have been so integral to this work, I also thank the following archives: Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives; City of London, London Metropolitan Archives; Max Lock Archive/University of Westminster, and the British Cartoon Archive.

Several of my classmates at U.C. Berkeley deserve thanks: my role model Ipek Turelli, for her energetic scholarship and work ethic; Cecilia Chu, who has served as an editor and sounding board throughout this process; and those generous colleagues who helped me with the final edits, Seth Lunine, Rachel Branhinsky, Sharone Tomer, Yael Perez, Kartikeya Date, and Jieheerah Yun. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support throughout the process: my sister Emily who has reminded me to follow my passions; and my mother and father, Jackie and Spenser, who taught me to love learning, and who have enthusiastically supported my pursuit of higher education.

Prologue: The Myth of Wartime Unity and Public Consultation for Town Planning



Figures 1 and 2: These images from, *The Way We Live*, portray the demand by the public for town planning and social welfare as a antidote to the hardships of life in their blitzed city of Plymouth. Jill Craigie, Director, *The Way We Live*, Two Cities Films (1946).

Throughout the 1940s, British planning advocates endeavored to mobilize the public to support and fight for new planning legislation. They optimistically hoped that World War II had engendered a spirit of unity and progress among the people that would help ensure that planning became a central issue in peacetime politics. The 1946 propaganda film, *The Way We Live*, portrayed this idyllic idea of public support for planning in its discussion of the reconstruction of war-torn Plymouth. The film showed the experience of the war as a catalyst to town planning not only by clearing away the old parts of the city but also by galvanizing public demand for reconstruction and better living conditions. In the film, images of Plymouth depicted the extensive bombing of the city in the Blitz, and the hardships that citizens faced while waiting for homes to be rebuilt. Throughout the film, planners and city officials proposed planning as a solution both the physical and social problems of the city. The film ended as the people of Plymouth gathered in the streets to demand that their leaders “make housing as efficient as war.” (Figures 1 and 2) Against the backdrop of the rustic brick buildings and narrow dark lanes of the old city, the younger generation marched confidently with their banners promoting change. As the camera pans through the city, the citizens appeared united in their active civic engagement to ensure a ‘better Britain.’ This film was but one example of the many media representations of a united citizenry supporting planning as a solution to housing shortages and social welfare issues after the war.¹ While planning was not a new idea in Britain in the 1940s, it gained traction in political and popular culture during this period as a reaction to the destruction caused by the war, the expanding role of the government in ensuring social welfare, and the increasing use of planning publicity.

¹ Jill Craigie, Director, *The Way We Live*, Two Cities Films (1946).

War Time Destruction and The Opportunity to Build

The war provided a social and political opportunity for government planning, in part because it had created a very real and physical need for rebuilding. By 1943, the war damage had created a massive housing shortage in many cities. Even before the war, in 1939, the depression had led to a construction and repair backlog of 2.5 million units, exacerbating crowding and slum conditions.² However, during the war, housing shortages became worse as many British towns sustained damage from the Blitz in 1941 and later V-2 and V-3 German bombing raids. The bombs caused significant destruction of more than 15 square kilometers to at least twelve major towns in Britain, including London, Plymouth, Birmingham, Coventry, Liverpool, Manchester, Belfast and Glasgow. More than one million homes in London alone were destroyed or damaged. Across the United Kingdom, bombing had blighted an estimated 3.75 million houses, affecting two in seven homes in the nation. This led to crowding and massive housing shortages, especially in the poor areas of East and South London and other heavily damaged areas.³

The concentration of destruction in those cities that had been bombed left some neighborhoods and town centers as nearly open slates for rebuilding. Planners pointed to this damage, often of previously blighted slum areas, as an opportunity to plan comprehensively. With many of the most damaged housing located in the worst slum areas, they viewed the war as the chance to finally clear the slums that had persisted for many decades. Planner Max Lock commented on the devastation saying, "Hitler has brought us to our senses. We, the British public, have suddenly seen our cities as they are!...We find the cleared and cleaned-up spaces a relief...These open spaces begin to ventilate the congestion of our cities and...of our imagination." While not all planners spoke in such extreme language, planners often reflected on the destruction of the old cities of Britain as a positive opportunity for creative renewal.⁴

However, planners pointed out that this opportunity came not only from the new physical space to plan, but also from the unique social mood of the time. Many planners believed that the Blitz experience had engendered in the British people a shared experience of hardship that had fostered community. During the war, citizens faced hardships, such as food rationing and curfews, which asked the people to sacrifice their own individual desires for the well being of the nation. Conditions such as nights spent in communal shelters, evacuation of city dwellers to rural areas, and families sharing homes due to shortages, placed citizens in communal environments which led people to rely on neighbors or even strangers for help in housing and feeding their family. In addition, the enlistment of large segments of the population in the military or wartime factors meant that many citizens lived in communal housing and ate in public canteens, disrupting the usual private nature of these activities. Many commentators at the time argued that these exceptional experiences created a strong bond of neighborly community among the citizens, which transcended class, regional and political differences. The Blitz took on a mythical quality, depicted as an "informal lesson in

² Jacob Crane and Edward Paxton, "The World Wide Housing Problem," *Town Planning Review*, 21:1 (1951). 19-20.

³ Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo, "England Arise!" 21, 24. Calder, Angus. *The Myth of the Blitz*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991) 37.

⁴ Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan 1944* (London: Her Majesties Stationary Office, 1945) 1.

civics” and cooperative spirit.⁵ Nostalgic representations of the home front in Britain portrayed the experience as a brief moment in which the shared hardship of war had promoted unity and harmony.

Planning advocates believed that the wartime spirit of community and government intervention had fostered the necessary political climate for obtaining public consent for new land-use planning legislation. Planners often expressed nostalgia for the unity of the Blitz, and an optimistic faith that this unity could be harnessed to forward their objectives. While many historians have challenged the existence of this wartime unity, the Blitz served as a powerful social trope, which mobilized the social memory of the shared experience of hardships of war. Planners and politicians, called forth the imagery of the communal shelters and neighborly assistance as a model for the type of selfless citizenship that should carry into the peacetime policies for social welfare. During and after the war, planners also promoted the positive role that the government could play in protecting the collective good of the public.

The war, by necessitating an emergency extension of the state, served as a precedent for government interventions. The war led to a massive expansion of the state and its role in the lives of its citizens, including programs to organize industry for armament and allocate resources for optimum use in the war effort. Political leaders promoted bold visions of planning as a reward for the hardships of war, building morale through promises of a ‘better Britain’ in peace. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, declared that all citizens after the war would have “food, work, and homes” giving the government a new responsibility to ensure these basic aspects of welfare for their citizens.⁶ This precedent paved the way for the government to play a larger role in peacetime planning shaping social policy and physical reconstruction in peace. Since the 1930s, British policy makers had begun to embrace a broader vision for the government in ensuring public welfare, drawing on ideas of social democracy. In their visions for a ‘better Britain’ after the war, policy makers promoted a variety of social and physical reconstruction programs which would aim to improve the welfare of its citizens, including unemployment benefits, old age pensions, improvement to working conditions and salary, and better education and healthcare. These types of reform proposals culminated in the Beveridge Report, a cradle-to-grave social welfare provisions.⁷ These programs also included an increased role for the government in ensuring adequate quantity and quality housing, addressing slum clearance, and guiding new development on the edge of cities, which were viewed as part of the government’s duty to ensure the general welfare. Both parties embraced planning as a key policy in postwar reconstruction. However by the end of the war, the Labour Party, with their strong support of the Beveridge Report and their focus on building houses, had come to be seen as the party of reform that could prevent a return to the poverty and misery of the depression. Their pro-planning and social welfare platform helped them to win the 1945 election at the end of the war by a decisive margin.

Many planning advocates promoted extending the government’s emergency powers into peacetime using patriotic rhetoric to associate the duties of planning to the duties

⁵ Fielding, at al., 21, 24. Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991) 131, 196.

⁶ Winston Churchill quoted by F.J. Osborn, “Britain will Rebuild Better,” *The Rotarian*. (April, 1944) 33.

⁷ Fielding, at al., 33-35.

of national protection and democracy.⁸ However, as planning advocates worked to expand the role of the government in planning, they recognized the need to win the public's support and to consider how to engage citizens democratically in its decision making process. Planning advocates addressed the need by creating a public forum for informing, educating and consulting the public about town planning policy. However planners faced challenges as they worked both to balance their commitment to democratic policy making with their desire to promote their own professional expertise. As they sought public support for new legislation empowering the government to plan, planners emphasized the importance of public consultation and the role of citizens in giving feedback that would positively shape the goals and outcomes of reconstruction.

The Roots of Consultation

In the 1940s, planners produced a prolific output of town plans, including 195 different plans, for 131 different places.⁹ As part of this renaissance, planners developed new comprehensive methods for informing, educating, and consulting the public about the land-use and housing policies. Examination of the wartime and immediate post-war period reveals a persistent discourse about the role of planners within representative government. This philosophy of democratic public consultation led architects, town planners and government officials to encourage public discussion of planning ideas, through propaganda, citizen education, exhibitions, public opinion polling, and citizen activism. In order to increase public awareness and understanding of planning ideas, advocates produced dozens of films, exhibitions, radio shows and radio addresses. Planning publications also abounded with hundreds of printed plans, books, pamphlets, and news and journal articles. Officials such as Lewis Silken of the Minister of Town and County Planning, John Reith of the Minister of Housing, Charles Latham of the London County Council (LCC), and many others, spoke to the public in radio shows and news articles asking for their input on the plans. Agencies such as the Ministry of Town Planning and the LCC received ideas, complaints, and counter proposals. This consultation process aimed both to gain public support for the plans, as well as to better accommodate citizen wants and needs. However, after the passage of legislation in the late 1940s, and as a result of the shift from prospective planning to statutory planning, many of the techniques developed in the 1940s fell into disuse. The phase of experimentation which had flourished during the 1940s ended, and the malleable tools for consultation hardened. The need for expediency meant the steps of public consultation became perfunctory, revealing the temporary and partial nature of the democratic focus of planning practice.

⁸ J.H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *County of London Plan*. (London: McMillian and Co. Limited, 1943).

⁹ Peter J. Larkin, "The Reconstruction Plans." *The Rebuilding of British Cities: Exploring the Post-Second World War Reconstruction*. Eds. Peter J. Larkham and Joe Nasr, eds. Faculty of the Built Environment, School of Planning and Housing, UCE Birmingham Working Paper Series, no. 90. 2004. 5.

Historicizing Consultation

While histories of British reconstruction have depicted the 1940s as a time when planners embraced publicity as a means to inform and educate the public, this literature has yet to explore how this legacy of public consultation shaped the profession and practice of planning. Some histories of reconstruction planning, by Tatsuya Tsubaki, Nicolas Tiratsoo, and Peter J. Larkham have shown that planners went to great lengths to understand public opinions on planning issues.¹⁰ Nonetheless, political histories of the period, such as *England Arise* by Fielding, Thompson and Tiratsoo, have asserted that Labour Party leaders had failed in their mission to mobilize the public into engaged citizens active in local decision-making.¹¹ Planning historian, Yvonne Rydin has argued that while informing and consulting the public was a 'consistent thread' in planning practice, this 'limited participation' could not prevent conflicts about planning projects. Thus it is generally agreed that the postwar rhetoric about creating a more transparent and democratic planning process failed to be incorporated into standard planning practice. However, little research has been done on why these wartime experiments did not lead to a lasting tradition of consultation in post war planning practice. This dissertation examines the relationship between planning professionals and the public in the 1940s more broadly to understand how the contemporary political context and design culture shaped the formation of the planning profession, and its role in democratic policy making. In doing so, it makes a comprehensive examination of the ways in which planners engaged in public outreach in the 1940s, identifying the successes, challenges, and failures of consultation techniques. It also reveals how consultation was phased out during the 1950s as new planning legislation went into affect and the Conservatives took control of the government.

This analysis of wartime planning practice aims to provide a balanced evaluation of the public consultation practices in the 1940s. While the reconstruction planning literature discussed above has offered some historical analysis of this question, it has not been adequately woven into narratives of the planning professional more broadly. Most early histories of modern planning have been written by planners themselves, and thus have a congratulatory tone, listing the successes of the profession.¹² On the other hand, critical analysis after the 1960s, have portrayed the modernist planner of the postwar period as authoritarian and anti-democratic. Planning critics brought to light the inhumane scale of planning, the racial inequality of slum clearance and public housing projects, and the disempowerment of citizens within the planning process.¹³ The rise of post-modernity and anti-modernist sentiment among architects and planners led to aesthetic as well as social critiques of postwar planning. These critics attacked planners

¹⁰ Tatsuya Tsubaki, "Planners and the Public: British Popular Opinion on Housing during the Second World War." *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 14, No. 1. (Spring 2000) 81-98; Nick Tiratsoo. "The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities, 1945-55: Myths and reality." *Contemporary British History*. Vol. 14 No. 1 (2000) 27-44; Keith D. Lilley and Peter J. Larkham. "Exhibition Planning: Communication and Public Involvement in British Post-war Reconstruction." Birmingham City University: Faculty of Law, Humanities, Development and Society. Working Paper Series, no. 4, 2007.

¹¹ Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo, "*England Arise!*": *The Labour Party and Popular Politics in the 1940s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

¹² Yvonne Rydin, *The British Planning System*. Houndmills: MacMillan, 1993; J. B. Cullingworth, *Town and County Planning* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964). Gordon E. Cherry. *The Evolution of British Town Planning* (New York: Halsted Press, 1974). Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1988).

¹³ Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." *Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute*. April 1971; Eric Reade, *British Town and County Planning* (Open University Press: Milton Keynes, 1987); Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961);

for their lack of attention to the needs of citizens, and their use of token participatory methods, known as Design Announce Defend (DAD) strategies. They argued that participation did not become a deeply imbedded practice within postwar planning and reconstruction, and that lack of public input lead to unpopular and detrimental planning projects.

In both of these prevalent narratives, by planners and by social critics, the true spirit of the early modernist planners is lost, unduly praised or criticized, and often conflated with their high-modernist successors. This dissertation aims not to judge 1940s rhetoric, policies and practice by the standards of the 1960s or contemporary practice, but rather to reexamine the wartime and postwar period on its own terms in order to understand the meanings and practices of public engagement within the war time historical context. This historical research on consultation in the 1940s adds complexity to the conventional portraits of modernist planners as heroes or villains, showing the unique ways in which these planners balanced the technocratic and democratic aspects of their work with their commitment to public consultation.

The Media of Consultation

This dissertation draws from a variety of published and archival sources including: professional journals, government planning documents and publications, planning propaganda, surveys and opinion polls, and newspaper and media coverage. These media provide evidence both of how planners intended to present planning ideas to the public, as well as how the public received these ideas.

Planning Propaganda, in Print, Photographs, Film and Radio

Publicity brochures, press releases, films, and radio shows show the way in which planning professionals and officials chose to portray their ideas to the public. The imagery and rhetoric communicate both intentional political strategies as well as latent meanings arising taken-for-granted cultural symbols and norms. These media carry multiple meanings for the creators and receivers, which can only be understood within their context. In particular this dissertation uses commercial and propaganda films as a way of portraying the image of planning in the public realm during this period. The cinematic images of planners, government officials, cities, and citizens created lasting impressions which both reflected and shaped the public perception of planning at the time.¹⁴

Planning Literature and Planning Journals

In order to understand professional approaches and attitudes to planning, this research draws on evidence from professional publications, including books, reports, and journal articles. In particular, it draws from journals from professional associations such as *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, *Town Planning Review*, *Architectural Review*, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)*, *Journal of the Institution of Municipal Engineers*, *Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors*, *Public Administration*, and *Social Service Review*. These journals show the ideas of planners as a whole, but also reveal the differences between discrete ideological perspectives and professional groups.

¹⁴ For more on the synergistic relationship between film and urbanism, and the way film both reflects and creates the perception of urbanism, see Nezar AlSayyad. *Cinematic Urbanism: A History of the Modern from Reel to Real* (London: Routledge, 2006).

The Plan and Planning Administration Documents

Government publications, plans, and administrative documents reveal the ways in which particular government agencies approached the planning process, as well as the publicity for their plans. This work draws from the archives of several government agencies, including the Ministry of Town and County Planning, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Works, the London County Council, The Popular and Stepney Borough Councils, and the Middlesbrough Town Council. While plans and publications produced by teams portray the institutional culture of particular agencies, correspondence reveal internal conflicts and the individual agency of key actors in shaping planning ideas.

Citizen Comments and Planning Surveys

Various sources reveal the ways in which the public received and responded to planning ideas and techniques. Comment books, and citizen letters to government agencies offer the most direct way of hearing the voices of citizens. However these sources cannot give a complete picture of the overall public opinion, as they often come from a select portion of the population, more educated and politically active than the general public. Planning surveys offer a broader array of opinions, usually delivered to large, diverse populations. However, surveys cannot be taken as unbiased factual representations of reality, but must be interpreted with attention to who created the survey, for what purpose, how they selected their sample subjects, and how they interpreted the answers in reports.

Planning Editorials and Cartoons

Other ways to understand public attitudes include newspaper editorials and cartoons. Research for this dissertation included the perusal of *The Times*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Picture Post*, *South London Observer*, *East London Observer*, *East London Advertiser*, and *East End New and London Shipping Chronicle*. It also examined cartoons by David Low for the *Evening Standard*, Joseph Lee for *Evening News*, Ronald Niebour and Leslie Gilbert Illingworth for *Daily Mail*, and Carl Giles for *Daily Express*. While not offering any quantitative assessment of public opinion, these sources do show the range of opinions on a topic. The various newspapers, authors, and cartoons each expressed their own political leanings. The choice in topics for editorials and cartoons also reveal which issues resonated writers and readers, especially through humor. Together these various sources portray how planners conceived of public consultation, how they depicted planning ideas to the public, and how citizens perceived and responded to these media.

The Sites of Consultation

This research focuses on planning in Greater London as a case study, highlighting a diverse set of local, regional and national scale planning agencies from around the United Kingdom. In particular it examines public consultation for the *County of London Plan* (1943), the *Greater London Plan* (1944), and the plans for Stepney and Poplar between 1943 and 1951. At these sites the London County Council worked with local authorities and national ministries to develop proposals for regional plans addressing the decentralization of population and industry, modernization of housing and transportation, and the development of community amenities.

The *County of London Plan*, published and exhibited by the London County Council (LCC) in July 1943, proposed a comprehensive plan for reconstruction in the region. Developed by planning consultant Patrick Abercrombie and LCC architect J.H. Forshaw, the plan proposed developing the county as a collection of neighborhoods and burrows centered around commercial and community services, bordered by open spaces and greenbelts, and connected by arterial roads. The plan introduced several controversial policies including decentralizing population and industry and increasing density in the central districts. This plan, approved by the LCC and championed by its Leader, Charles Latham, aimed to accommodate the needs of the diverse population. The LCC encouraged local leaders and citizens to express their feedback on the plan.¹⁵

Abercrombie worked also with the Ministry of Works to develop the *Greater London Plan*, which extended these proposals into the surrounding rural boroughs. This plan focused on the methods for decentralization, proposing New Towns as centers for new housing and industry development. It aimed to control and contain the ribbon like sprawl that had been developing along roads and rail lines, and to preserve existing towns and villages. Nonetheless, some of these towns became centers for new development, opening up controversies about how New Towns would change the rural character of the region and who should decide where these towns would be located.¹⁶

Once support for the *County of London Plan* had been attained, the LCC began to work towards enacting it in those areas most affected by bomb damage. In East London, plans progressed for the construction of neighborhood units in Stepney and Poplar which would relieve the housing shortages, improve the poor quality of the existing housing stock, and add additional community amenities and open spaces. As the LCC developed documents for the construction of the first neighborhood unit at Lansbury in Poplar, they worked with the local boroughs to modify the original plan. The citizens and leaders expressed concerns, about the increase in high-rise housing and the decrease in borough populations.¹⁷

Together these plans proposed vast changes to the urban and regional development of London. As the LCC and its planners worked with national and local agencies to realize the proposals, they faced a range of issues regarding how to negotiate, fund and enact their planning proposals. These agencies also had to develop techniques for informing and consulting the public about contested policies in order to rally their support. Each of these cases offered specific political and public relations challenges for planners, highlighting the broader issues of planning consultation during this period.

¹⁵ J.H. Forshaw, and Patrick Abercrombie. *County of London Plan*. (London: McMillan and Co. Limited, 1943).

¹⁶ Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan 1944*. (London: Her Majesties Stationary Office, 1945).

¹⁷ LMA: LCC/AR/TP/1/71 Stepney Poplar Reconstruction Area.

The Themes of Consultation

This work explores the difficulties of enacting planning within a democracy by tracing the evolution of British planning consultation practices. Covering the period of 1939 to 1951 it narrates the experiences of War II, the election of the Labour government, the passage of new planning legislation, and the completion of the first large planning projects. Organized into thematic chapters, the dissertation addresses the different approaches and media that planners used to develop their role as public servants and to foster a forum for communicating about planning ideas.

The first chapter, “Mobilizing a Consenting Public,” shows the means by which planning advocates used propaganda to garner public support for new town planning legislation. Media coverage of the 1944 and 1947 Planning Acts show the conflicting views of British leaders and citizens about giving the government greater powers to purchase and redevelop land. This chapter shows the way in which propaganda aimed to manufacture consent for planning. It also challenges the myth that the war had created a unified public in support of the Labour Party’s socialist policies.

Chapter Two, “Democracy and Technocracy” explores why planning professionals in the 1940s embraced a new role in public life, addressing not only technical issues as designers and engineers, but also social and political contexts as government officials. Examining professional discourse and government reports highlight attempts to define the responsibilities of planners, which professions should plan, and what skills they would need in their work. The ways in which planners emphasized the democratic as well as technical nature of their work illustrate the impetus behind the evolution of the field of social planning and the practice of public consultation.

The third chapter, “The Word on the Streets” explores the techniques used to realize the social planning discussed in the last chapter. It examines various forms of surveys and public opinion polls applied and developed for town planning practice in the 1940s. With these surveys, planners attempted to understand the needs and wants of the working classes in order to develop better housing and neighborhood design policies. The survey results indicated that professionals and lay people held fundamentally different views about what amenities new housing should include and how social services should be approached and delivered. This chapter demonstrates the role of the survey within planning practice, and why certain forms of surveys did not become enduring tools for ensuring democratic planning.

The next chapter, “Presenting Planning to the Public” examines how planning ideas were presented to the public. It studies a variety of planning exhibitions from the 1940s in order to understand the way in which these events served as tools for communicating technical ideas to lay people. Understanding these events within the wartime context reveals how architectural exhibitions utilized modern display techniques to forward to make their ideas legible to the public.

Finally, “The Triumph of Bureaucracy” examines the results of the various media and consultation techniques discussed in the other chapters, to measure the extent to which post war planners actually applied citizen feedback in shaping the policies of their plans. It shows how in East London, planners ignored repeated citizen appeals for

changes to the plans, despite the outward appearance of a robust consultation process. Examining planning legislation passed at the end of the 1940s shows how these laws stipulated legal forms of 'notice and appeal,' which came to replace the more ideological voluntary consultation efforts by planning authorities. This chapter shows how the publicity and outreach techniques developed by planners in the 1940s lost their ideological impetus and experimental vigor as planning settled into business as usual in the 1950s. An epilogue also explores the legacy of the 1940s, showing how wartime consultation techniques shaped participatory planning practice since the 1960s.

Together these thematic chapters reveal the persist concern by planners for how to inform, educate and persuade the public about planning ideas. They show how planners utilized publicity techniques as a way to consult the public about new planning legislation and projects. This history depicts the ways in which planners struggled to define their professional expertise and develop their technocratic skills while balancing their role as public servants working within a democratic government. Overall, the 1940s is shown to be a period of great progress in encouraging citizens to engage in the planning process. However, this empowerment remained partial and temporary, constrained by the legal and professional structures that solidified the technocratic power of experts. This dissertation examines the process by which publicity served as both a tool for democratic engagement and to promote technocratic government interventions. It illuminates how the 1940s fostered progressive reform and why these reforms did not become engrained within postwar planning practice.

1 Mobilizing a Consenting Public: The Politics and Propaganda of Planning



Figure 1: Charles Latham Broadcasting on *County of London Plan*. City of London, London Metropolitan Archive.

I suppose you get bored with this word 'planning,' but really it is the most important of all the things that you have to weigh out in this election....You could go back of course to the bad old days of dull and neglectful Tory rule. But I rather fancy that your mood is our mood. That you want London to go forward, not to slip back. If that's so, then I'm confident that next Thursday you will vote for Labour to carry on with its good work for this proud city of London.¹⁸

--- Charles Latham, 1945

In this radio address, Charles Latham, Leader of the London County Council (LCC), proposed a bold vision for planning London as the political platform on which the Labour Party should be elected. He tried to mobilize public consent for expansion of government planning powers that would allow the LCC to realize their vision for a modernized city with comprehensive social services. (Figure 1)

During the 1945 election both major parties in Britain embraced planning as a necessary step to postwar reconstruction.¹⁹ However, this apparent consensus belied a disparity in beliefs of how planning would address the extent of government power and the protection of private property. The parties' planning platforms differed in the degree to which the government would intervene in land development. The Conservative party, while supporting planning to guide reconstruction, supported a market driven approach to building which would rely on private developers.²⁰ In 1945, planners cheered the decisive win by the Labour Party, with its more extensive proposals for

¹⁸ NA: BBC Sound Archive 9261: Latham, LCC Elections, 1946. LCL0005350.

¹⁹ David H. McKay and Andrew W. Cox, *The Politics of Urban Change*. (London: Crom Helm, 1979). 116.

²⁰ Peter Kemp, "From Solution to Problem? Council Housing and the development of National Housing Policy," *A New Century of Social Housing*. Stuart Lowe and David Hughes, eds. (Leicester: Leicester University Press: 1991). 51.

planning intervention, as a major step forward in their campaign to establish consent for new planning legislation. However, for several years during and after the war, planning advocates had struggled to convince the Parliament to pass new legislation to increase planning powers for local and national agencies. In order to promote their ideas, planning advocates used propaganda strategies to try to engage the public and prove the importance of planning to their everyday lives. A variety of government agencies, political parties, and professional associations used publicity such as film, radio, books, and pamphlets to try to persuade the public of the necessity of expanding planning powers. These strategies drew on wartime propaganda techniques in an attempt to persuade the public that the war to save democracy was not over until the government could realize plans for improved public services and urban infrastructure.

This chapter examines the techniques used by planning advocates to publicize planning issues and build political support for planning. Analyzing the images and text of planning publicity shows how planning advocates adopted specific techniques to try to win over the public, including: emphasizing the democratic nature of planning, diverting attention away from controversial socialistic ideas, and depicting planning as common sense. These techniques tried to combat the common criticism of planning as an intervention by the state that imposed on the rights of private landowners.

Examining public reactions to planning publicity and projects in public meetings, surveys, comment books, editorials, cartoons, and radio programs reveals the ambivalent attitude of citizens toward new planning legislation, and the ways in which they perceived the effects of planning on their lives. In the context of larger public debates, political cartoons reveal the tensions between the ingrained rights of landowners and the growing interest in insuring social welfare through government intervention. While the public seemed to support the idea of planning as a method for modernization and improvement of social services, they often balked at restrictions on private land-use and development and the slow pace of progress under government bureaucracies.

Previous scholarship on planning publicity has focused on the way government and professional agencies mobilized mass media forums²¹ and the way in which planning ideas were made memorable and comprehensible.²² While developing these themes, this research also illuminates the cross currents between the publicity materials and the political discourse to understand the political meanings and strategies of the propaganda, and how planning advocates tried to counter their critics. The propaganda is analyzed as the product of the sponsor agencies' intentions, as images with imbedded meanings and associations, and through the ways in which the public received and responded to the materials' ideas and images. The research examines planning publicity about national policies as well as materials specifically addressing planning for London in order to address both broad trends and local examples.

²¹ Nicholas Bullock, "Imagining the Post-War World: Architecture, Reconstruction and the British Documentary Film Movement," *Cinema and Architecture: Méliès, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia*, eds. Francios Penz and Maureen Thomas (London: British Film Institute, 1997) 52-61. Shundana Yusaf, "Wireless Sites: Architecture and Radio in Interwar Britain," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements* 19.2 (2008) 69-79.

²² Leo Ektinap, "Postwar Urban Development, the British Film Industry, and The Way We Live," *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, eds. Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

Prohibitive Planning and Early Planning Legislation

As government officials and planning advocates aimed to take advantage of the opportunity to plan during World War II, they recognized that the current powers of local authorities would be inadequate to achieve the town planning and housing programs they proposed. Before the war, several key pieces of legislation had opened up the possibilities of town planning and housing reform, allowing local authorities to restrict land uses and build housing for the poor. However this legislation did not provide the legal powers or financial resources to develop large scale planning projects or to enact statutory plans for towns or regions.

Housing and town planning acts had increasingly allowed local authorities to restrict private building and take an active role in ensuring that the quality and quantity of the housing stock met the needs of the populace. The 1909 Housing Act had allowed local authorities to create town-planning schemes, and to protect the quality of housing and health through building and zoning codes. This legislation had been strengthened by the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act, also known as the Addison Act, which placed a responsibility on all large towns to prepare planning schemes, including a survey of the housing needs of their districts and plans for the provision of houses to remedy shortages. The Addison Act also introduced government subsidies for council house construction, relieving the local councils of the responsibility for raising housing funds through local taxes. Later Acts such as the 1929 Local Government Act, the 1930 Slum Clearance Act, and the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act, also extended the power of local authorities to take responsibility for the social welfare of their constituents, control land-use planning, and purchase and clear slum land. While local governments had engaged in site-specific council housing projects through slum clearance or green-field construction, legislation and lack of funding restrained the scale of these projects, preventing comprehensive planning or large-scale development. Town planners had shaped the city primarily through regulatory zoning or 'planning against,' rather than through positive planning.

A Holistic Approach to Planning

In the early 1940s, planning advocates argued for a holistic approach to planning that would allow positive rather than restrictive planning, enable planning for reconstruction, and allow planning to serve as a tool for social welfare improvements. Planning advocates proposed long-term planning that would aim not only to solve immediate technical problems, but would take an expansive view of the potential benefits for the future. In 1942, Lord Chancellor John Simon spoke in favor of comprehensive planning in a radio broadcast, calling planning a 30-year task, which required resources and focus.²³ Latham made similar pleas for holistic planning, arguing that planning for London must offer an "approach to the difficult problems of planning great centers of population, of industry, and of commerce."²⁴

This broader vision for planning grew as a response to the need for planning the large-scale reconstruction of extensive areas of the cities bombed during the war. Planners

²³ BBC Sound Archive: 3990: Lord Chancellor John Simon, 1942. 9CS0017204.

²⁴ BBC Sound Archive: 5928-5929; Lord Latham- 1943-LCC Plan Speech. 9CL006809, PCL006811.

saw the catastrophic damage of the Blitz as a rare opportunity for comprehensive replanning, which if missed would not come again. They frequently compared the Blitz to the fire of 1666, which had prompted the first efforts at rational planning in London. Christopher Wren's plan for reordering the street network had never been realized due to the predominance of private interest over public good.²⁵ Latham noted, "In 1666 it was fire which gave the opportunity, today it is war. Let us not miss this second, and maybe, last chance to plan London."²⁶ Nonetheless, planners did not propose planning merely as a solution to wartime destruction, but also as a means to address the poor quality of housing in the working class districts of the city. The need for postwar reconstruction created the impetus for planning that could be applied to cities as a whole, to both damaged areas and slums.

The wartime destruction offered the political and social opportunity to push forward new planning legislation. An article in *Architectural Review* announced that the bombing had "served an invaluable purpose of directing public attention to the possibilities of replanning, and public enthusiasm is half the battle."²⁷ Planning advocates celebrated the new public attention and support for planning which the war had engendered. The article encouraged planning advocates to take advantage of the opportunity "to build up an informed body of public opinion" on the subject of planning.²⁸ Consultant for the British policy think tank Political and Economic Planning, Julian Huxley claimed, "'The blitz has been a planners' windfall. Not only did it do a certain amount of much-needed demolition for us, but—more important—it made people...realize that reconstruction was necessary...the whole temper of Britain has become positive and forward-looking.'"²⁹ Charles Latham surmised that due to the war, "public opinion might be ripe for acceptance of new methods" of planning.³⁰ Nonetheless, he warned that both the space and the support for planning may disappear with time, and planners should ensure that opportunity is not lost.³¹ This sense of preventing 'missed opportunities' spurred planners in their zealous promotion of planning and became a rallying cry in the quest for new legislation.

In conceiving of postwar physical reconstruction, both planning advocates and government agencies viewed planning as a holistic and positive act to develop public goods, rather than merely a restriction to prevent public ills. Planning advocates argued that expanded planning powers would allow planning to address physical, social and economic issues, such as reconstruction, slum clearance, and council housing. Yet, in order to pass new legislation for increased planning powers, many issues still needed to be resolved. In particular, legislation needed to determine a fair means for the government to purchase of land from owners, and tax land that gained value due to government improvements.

²⁵ Forshaw, J.H. and Patrick Abercrombie. *County of London Plan*. (London: McMillian and Co. Limited. 1943) iii; Margaret and Alexander Potter, *The Building of London* (New York: Puffin Picture Books, New York. 1945).

²⁶ NA: BBC Sound Archive 5928-5929 Lord Latham- 1943, LCC Plan Speech, 9CL006809, PCL006811

²⁷ "The End of Last Time- The First Installment of a Survey of Bomb Damage to Buildings of Architectural Importance." *Architectural Review*, 90, 535. (July 1941) 6.

²⁸ "Forward By the Editor," *Architectural Review*, 90, 535. (July 1941) 2.

²⁹ Forward by Julia Huxley in F. Stephenson and P. Pool, *A Plan for Town and Country* (London: Pilot Press, 1946) 7.

³⁰ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/33. *County of London Plan, 1943, Preliminary Papers 1940-41*. "Control of Redevelopment of War Damaged Areas." Further Notes from a Conference in Mr. Latham's Room on October 7, 1940 at 10:30 am.

³¹ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/33 *County of London Plan, 1943, Preliminary Papers 1940-41*, "Notes from a Conference." October 7, 1940

The Politics of New Planning Legislation

Several reports and commissions set out to examine what powers and policies would be necessary to enable comprehensive planning. The Barlow, Scott, and Uthwatt Reports served as the guides for the direction of planning policy and legislation. In 1940, the Barlow Commission studied the distribution of the industrial population, examining policies of decentralization versus urban containment. The Scott Committee studied rural land use in 1941. Finally the 1942 Uthwatt Committee studied the problems with compulsory purchase, and the compensation and taxation of landowners. The Uthwatt Report concluded that government ownership of all land via Land Nationalization would be the best solution, but would be politically impractical.³² These reports concluded that new planning power would need to be legislated in order to allow holistic planning of regional population distribution, rural development, and land compensation. Planning advocates hoped that by passing new legislation, local and national planning authorities would be able to develop comprehensive plans coordinating social goals for population, industry, and housing, rather than addressing individual projects ad hoc.

This vision of social and physical planning imagined expansions to the roles of the central government and local authorities in making decisions about economic growth, land prices, and urban development. Supporters aimed to portray these powers as a natural extension of the government's wartime duties into peacetime policy. During the war, government control of industry, labor, food, and many other aspects of home front life aimed to ensure that the good of the nation superseded the desires of the individual. Policy makers proposed that the government continue to intervene on behalf of the collective social welfare of its citizens. Besides physical planning, politicians debated a range of other social welfare issues, such as education, healthcare, and unemployment insurance as part of their concerns to address social and economic reconstruction after the war. Social welfare policy proposals, such as the Beveridge Report, promoted comprehensive social welfare services.³³

During the 1930s, politicians and economists across the political spectrum acknowledged the problems that had occurred in the capitalist market system during the depression and the need to mediate these types of social risks through policy reforms. In the 1930s, economic 'planning' came to describe a range of policies that could offer these reforms to capitalism, sometimes through industry planning for itself and sometimes through government planning.³⁴ As with economic 'planning' in the 1930s, physical 'planning' came to be a catch-all phrase in the 1940s. Both parties supported reconstruction planning as a means to address the physical destruction and housing shortages after the war. However, ideas of planning took on different meanings and forms. Conservatives viewed planning as a means to coordinate and guide private construction and development, while the Labour Party favored a stronger role for the government in purchasing redevelopment land.

³² H. W. E. Davies, "Continuity and Change: The Evolution of the British Planning System, 1947-97." *Town Planning Review* 69.2 (1998) 137.

³³ Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo, "England Arise!": *The Labour Party and Popular Politics in the 1940s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) 34.

³⁴ Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The Debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). 13-15.

Although in the 1930s the Labour Party in London had been upfront in their support of socialist policies which aimed to benefit workers and renters, fear of the forms of communism and authoritarian rule seen in the USSR made socialism less attractive in the 1940s.³⁵ Some Conservative critics attacked the expansion of government powers as socialism, and interference in the process of democracy and capitalism.³⁶ Planning consultant Patrick Abercrombie acknowledged the perception of the planner as interventionist, saying, "In trying to impose some discipline on that complete freedom the planner became unpopular. We have possibly been somewhat too dictatorial in our attempts to impose some discipline over that complete freedom of doing what you like."³⁷ In the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, professionals, such as W.S. Butler, Director, Northumberland & Durham Travel Association, argued for the need of educating the public about what planning is and to remove "a stigma attached to the word 'planning' which has been fostered very carefully for certain political ends..." In particular he argued for the need to emphasize the positive versus negative aspects of planning, showing the "the tremendous amount of positive help" that planners achieve, rather than focusing on the restrictions planning places on how private landowners use their land. He thus argued, "These misconceptions could largely be dispersed by a good information service at central and local government levels."³⁸ In their publicity materials, planning advocates adopted this strategy, aiming to portray the common sense and democratic nature of planning, while down playing government powers.

Publicizing the Democratic Nature of Planning

As planning advocates worked to gain public and Parliamentary consent for new planning legislation, a variety of government, political, and professional groups produced publicity emphasizing the importance of planning. The project to educate the public developed out of political expediency, in order to create public consent for new legislation. However, it also manifested from the ideal of creating a more involved and selfless citizen interested in contributing to the common good. Much of this publicity emphasized the democratic nature of planning, calling for public input and debate, and aiming to make planning accessible and comprehensible.

However, planners also explicitly tried to shape, not just measure public opinion. Government planning agencies embraced media as a means to interest the public in planning, and solicit their support. Nearly all towns that created reconstruction plans developed publicity campaigns to explain and promote their ideas to the public. The *County of London Plan*, an early and large-scale plan, had one of the most robust publicity campaigns. The officials of the LCC publicized the plan by hiring a public relations firm, releasing popular print versions of the plan, holding two exhibitions, appearing in a film, speaking in radio addresses, sending out press releases, hosting

³⁵ Herbert Morrison, *London Under Socialist Rule*, (London: Labour Party, 1935).

³⁶ For example the Conservative candidate, running against Latham for the LCC elections in 1945, BL: BBC Sound Archive 9261 Latham- 1946-LCC Elections, LCL0005350.

³⁷ Patrick Abercrombie quoted by Lionel Brett, "Second Thoughts on Planning," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 57.2. (December 1949) 46.

³⁸ W.S. Butler, "Correspondence-Town and County Planning," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 61.3. (January 1953) 113.

town hall meetings, lending out lantern shows, and creating school curriculum. They hoped that together these measures would “establish in the public mind the need for a planned London...and liberal citizenship.”³⁹ These media called upon the public to actively engage in planning and political activity, to exercise their democratic rights and help ensure a better future for themselves.

Planners saw public education as a key means for building broad support for planning. They acknowledged that informing the public was not enough, but that it was necessary to dress up their ideas to be more palatable. Abercrombie noted that planners often neglected the performative aspects of presentation, and were “too austere in making their recommendations.” He applied the metaphor of leading a horse to water, emphasizing that planners must also “make that water a little more attractive and perhaps a little stimulating, so that...the horse would drink with enthusiasm.”⁴⁰ In the journal *Adult Education*, W. J. Deacon, the Chief Educational Officer for Somerset, argued for the need for public relations for town planning, and the need to educate the public about planning policies. “‘Public relations’ is a technique essential to democratic government...It is the task of ‘public relations’ to create this informed opinion.”⁴¹ In the *Architecture Review*, American planner Jacob Crane concurred, “the value of the plan is largely educational. Yet in a democratic society the educational effect of these proposals may be of immense influence in shaping the thoughts and desires of the people who...will come to express their desires politically.”⁴² These quotes showed that planners viewed public education as an essential tactic to ensure democratic support for planning, and thus for promoting the political success of planning legislation.

This emphasis on the importance of publicity, education and public opinion to planning led its advocates to explore a variety of media types and strategies for shaping the public’s perception of planning and support for new legislation. In these media they emphasized planning as democratic and as common sense, and tried to create a public forum for debate.

Planning in the Media

Planners often used exhibitions, popular publications, brochures, films and other media to promote their vision to the public. Planning advocates and their publicists searched for media by which to engage, educate and persuade the public. The publication of plans proliferated in the 1940s, as publishers recognized the market for planning books and as towns aimed to promote both their plan and the town more generally.⁴³ These volumes, typically large format, contained detailed text and technical maps, communicating the comprehensive planning proposals, but often using language and images illegible to the layperson. Brochures and popular publications, often published

³⁹ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/41-44. County of London Plan, 1943, Exhibition-General papers. “Letter to F.C. Mitchell, London Press Exchange.” December 10, 1943.

⁴⁰ Rt. Hon. Lord Silkin, “Planning and the Public,” *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 39.2 (1953) 30.

⁴¹ W. J. Deacon, “Plan and Public,” *Adult Education*, (June 1944) 146.

⁴² Jacob Crane, “The County of London Plan—American Reactions: Planning the Democratic Metropolis,” *Architectural Review*, Vol. 96, 574. (September 1944) 77-8.

⁴³ Instances of publishers actively seeking to publish planning books appear in Middlesbrough, MLA 7.7c Middlesbrough Survey and Plan- Committees. “Reconstruction Committee-Agenda. June 9, 1944.” For more on town promotion see Peter J. Larkham and Keith Lilley, “Plans Planners and City Images: Place Promotion and Civic Boosterism in British Reconstruction Planning,” *Urban History* 30.2, (Aug 2003) 183-205.

by interest groups or political parties, served as a way to make planning more comprehensible to the public. They often contained relatable anecdotes, ordinary language, cartoons, icons, and photographs that the general public could readily understand.⁴⁴

In their use of film, planning advocates embraced mass media to serve as an educational and promotional tool for informing and persuading the public about the value of planning legislation or particular plans. These films often emphasized the affects of the plan in improving the quality of the everyday lives of ordinary people. Shown in commercial theaters, as the trailers for full-length commercial films, these film shorts portrayed the ideas, methods, and results of planning to audiences who would not usually learn about planning via other media.⁴⁵

Many planning agencies and professional organizations used exhibitions to create a more experiential means of engaging the public in the planning process. These displays set up in public buildings for several weeks or months, included drawings, photographs, and models that explained the goals, process, and outcomes of planning. Sometimes, such as at the Live Architecture Exhibit at Lansbury in 1951, these exhibitions even included before and after displays of actual completed architecture and planning projects.⁴⁶ Together these media offered a range of strategies for facilitating education and consultation with the public.

The Radio as Public Forum

Many planning advocates viewed the radio as one of the most productive media for developing discussion and debate. Throughout the interwar period the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) had taken an active role in creating a forum for public education and cultural programming. The BBC formed in 1927 as a government regulated monopoly media institution. While the organization remained free to choose its content, its faced limits to it broadcasts of political news and commentary, leading the BBC to focus on cultural programming. The BBC viewed this cultural programming as public service broadcasting which could foster the development of informed citizens more capable of democratic participation. Throughout the interwar and war periods, the BBC broadcast an average of two radio shows per month about architecture, totaling more than three hundred programs on architecture-related topics.⁴⁷

During the war, the BBC welcomed planners to use the radio as a forum for communicating planning ideas, policies, and political debates to the public. Correspondence between BBC executives showed their active interests in creating a forum for the discussion of architecture and planning. An internal memo to the Controller of the BBC Third Programme proposed, “the BBC could play a particularly important part during the next few years, in...bringing before a wide audience the discussion of contemporary architecture, so neglected by most newspapers and

⁴⁴ For more on the imagery of planning, see Chapter 4.

⁴⁵ For more on specific films see the introductions to Chapters 2, 3, and 5.

⁴⁶ For more on exhibitions, see Chapter 4.

⁴⁷ Yusaf, 69-70, 72.

magazines.”⁴⁸ In a 1942 Listener Research Report, the BBC recognized, “Post war reconstruction is ‘in the air.’ The BBC will at the appropriate time clearly have an important part to play in focusing public attention upon this by providing a platform for its discussion.”⁴⁹

Architects and planners utilized the radio as a “wireless classroom” to communicate their ideas beyond the professional and educated classes, to a broader public. The programmers at BBC aimed to create “simple and lively” shows that would interest listeners and tap into areas of their immediate concern avoiding heavy and detailed technical topics, aiming to bridge ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’ taste. The shows often included prominent experts, such as political leaders, architects, planners, and engineers. However, they often included the voices of ordinary people, such as workers, housewives, landowners, and housing managers.⁵⁰ Sometimes the BBC invited politicians and administrators to make speeches on timely topics or academic and professionals to make lectures. More often the shows were organized as narratives or debates, which the BBC considered to be more compelling to their audience.

The BBC struggled to choose engaging speakers who possessed the knowledge, the pleasant voice, and the ability to engage ordinary listeners without seeming either highbrow or condescending.⁵¹ One example from July 1943, “How to Look at a Town” introduced architecture and planning ideas through a fictional conversation between two stranded train passengers as they walked through an imaginary town voicing criticisms and advice about the towns’ aesthetic and functional design. *The Architect’s Journal* criticized the show for being “not relatable” and for depicting the characters as “cocky, ill mannered, and smug.” In addition, the subject matter seemed antiquated with its attention to architectural details of Edwardian facades. Often these types of shows, while trying to catch the public through realistic encounters, ended up feeling rehearsed.⁵² The BBC also lamented the limited success of the “Homes for All” show in 1944. Although listener surveys for the series “showed an above average appreciation index” and acceptable numbers of listeners, the BBC staff worried that too many talks in a short time, and the prepared nature of the talks may not have been effective.⁵³ Letters between the BBC staff lament how listeners of the show unanimously called it “dull, platitudinous and artificial.” Senior architect for the Northern Ireland Ministry of Home Affairs Dennis Winston advised, “at least an impression of spontaneity is essential to keep people listening,” noting that the challenge was to “combine genuine information with entertainment and wonder.” He proposed a real debate, in which planned speeches were followed by “spontaneous contributions” from the audience, and an invitation for listeners at home to mail in their opinions via postcard.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ BBC: R51/667. “Talks on Architecture. From Mr. Basil Taylor to Controller of the Third Programme. April 22, 1949.” Architecture and Design Talks 1946-1955.

⁴⁹ BBC: R9/9/6. Audience Research- Special Reports, 1942. BBC. “A listener Research Report. Public Opinion and Post-war Reconstruction, October 1942.” 655.

⁵⁰ Yusaf, 72, 74, 76, 78.

⁵¹ BBC: R51/242/4. Housing Talks 2A, 1943-1944 “Homes for All’ From Mr. Grigson, Talks Department, Bristol to Director of Talks, London, April 7, 1944.”

⁵² “How to Look at a Town,” *Architect’s Journal* (July 22, 1943) 53.

⁵³ BBC: R51/242/4. Housing Talks 2A, 1943-1944 “Homes for All- Letter From Controller (Home) to Editor in Chief, April 20, 1944.”

⁵⁴ BBC: R51/242/4. Housing Talks 2A, 1943-1944 “Letter to Miss Eason, BBC Belfast, from Dennis Winston Ministry of Home Affairs, May 10, 1944.”

The BBC continued to try to address these issues in one of their longest and most famous series of planning broadcasts, the *Making Plans* series, which aired in the winter of 1941 to 1942. This series included 24 talks, incorporating renowned and influential planning advocates such as Chairman of the Town and County Planning Association, Frederick J. Osborn; industrialist and planning enthusiast George W. Cadbury; Housing Consultant Elizabeth Denby; and architect and critic Clough Williams-Ellis. These programs tried to encapsulate all the major themes and policy debates regarding reconstruction. After airing, the talks appeared in reprinted in the BBC journal *The Listener* and were published as a book, extending their audience.⁵⁵ These shows aimed to attract popular interest by taking a non-technical approach and focusing on principles rather than details.⁵⁶ The organizers debated the best means of producing engaging and intelligent discussion, arguing whether shows should be structured as spontaneous debates or prepared comments. While they hoped to include a range of views and spontaneous discussion, they worried that too many voices would confuse laypeople unfamiliar with the issue.⁵⁷ One programmer worried that many listeners may dismiss the show saying “Here is a lot of high brows talking about what they think I ought to be interested in.”⁵⁸ The BBC struggled to develop techniques for connecting technical and political planning topics to people’s personal experiences.

In addition, the programmers weighed the pros and cons of featuring professional experts versus ordinary citizens. While the organizers hoped to include citizens, they struggled to find guests who would be lively, speak well, and have “not too marked an accent.”⁵⁹ Organizers also worried that when a layperson appeared on a show, he or she might become merely, a “ventriloquist’s doll,” participating only by asking questions to experts and responding to their answers.⁶⁰ Others expressed concern that these ordinary citizens would not be interested and engaged in the debate, saying, “his questions always seem a little forced to me.”⁶¹ The show ended up using the debate technique, and varied between using several experts with rehearsed comments, or a mix of professionals and lay people in a more conversational style. These shows, while not as popular as the programs on other BBC stations, received a steady audience of five to eight per cent of the radio listeners.⁶² This discussion shows that the BBC programmers wanted to include laypeople as part of their shows to give the appearance of democratic debate, but struggled to find ways to make them integral rather than symbolic participants in the discussion.

Some critics lauded these radio shows for effectively communicating planning ideas to the layperson. However, others expressed concern that these shows tried to dumb down complex ideas, patronizing their audiences. In 1952, architecture historian John Gloag criticized some radio shows for the use of “baby-talk...by some superior person

⁵⁵ Frederick J. Osborn, ed. *Making Plans: Based on the B.B.C. Discussions* (London: Todd Publishing Company, 1943).

⁵⁶ BBC: R51/445/1. Reconstruction- Making Plans, 1940-1941. “*Making Plans- A Series of weekly Broadcast Programmes on Rebuilding Britain, as it affects you.*” and “Preliminary Notes by F. Leslie Halliday on Talks or Discussions on Planning for Post-war Britain”.

⁵⁷ BBC: R51/445/3. Making Plans. “Making Plans. Interview with HG Vincent, GL Pepler and WG Holford, Oct 31, 1941. from Mr. Alford.”

⁵⁸ BBC: R51/445/3 Making Plans. “Letter from Miss Rowntree to Mr. Alford. November 6, 1941.”

⁵⁹ BBC: R51/445/1. Reconstruction- Making Plans, 1940-1941. “Letter to Mrs. Becket from BJTang.”

⁶⁰ BBC: R51/445/3 Making Plans. “Letter from Miss Rowntree to Mr. Alford. November 6, 1941.”

⁶¹ BBC: R51/445/3 Making Plans- “Presentation Suggestions- Feb 17 1942”

⁶² BBC: R51/445/3 Reconstruction- Making Plans 2a. “Making Plans- Oct/Dec, December 23, 1941, V. Alford,” and “Making Plans. Letter from Director of Talks, GR Barnes, to Mr. Alford. Oct 23, 1941.”

talking down (as he or she imagines) to the audience.” He praised architects for being articulate, but notes the temptation of many professionals to adopt jargon, and urged them to adopt “current English, spiced with slang, and leavened with familiar clichés.”⁶³ This problem of how to make planning accessible, and yet retain the complexity of technical ideas appeared in many other planning and publicity media.

Planning as a Household Word

Planning advocates tried to make planning accessible by showing how it affected the everyday lives of citizens, making it more familiar. The proliferation of the word ‘planning’ and its imagery and ideas in the public sphere helped to make planning a household word. In particular the *County of London Plan* received prolific media coverage, appearing prominently in the public consciousness. One manifestation of this media presence of planning was its appearance in the fashion world. Fabric designs by Hilly featured patterns inspired by the maps in the Forshaw-Abercrombie creating a “print collection dedicated to the new London theme.” In the *Architect’s Journal*, the columnist Astragal commented that this type of dispersal of planning ideas might be of use in breaking down the “highbrow” image of planning. However, he lamented that despite the movement of the images of new London from Grosvenor Street to the suburban high street stores, “Certainly neither the girl who sells it nor the girl who buys it is likely to bother her head much about the message behind the pattern.” The commercial application of planning divested it of any technical or political baggage, making it palatable for public consumption. Astragal wondered if perhaps interest in the plan could be generated by displaying the plans and the fashion together, applying these commercial approaches to planning publicity, so that these objects could be reinvested with their policy proposals.⁶⁴

Nonetheless, political brochures served as the more common method of disseminating planning information to the masses. Often these brochures aimed to depict planning as accessible, or common sense, by focused attention on everyday objects and places, such as the home. This made the socialistic implications of planning less apparent, domesticating and commercializing the ideas of planning. The Communist Party created a brochure aimed at general audience, which translated the *County of London Plan* into plain language. The brochure opened with a vignette that helped the average citizen understand the importance of the plan to their everyday life. It depicted a couple discussing the difficulties of their daily commute from home to work. It connected these personal problems with the efficiency of urban organization and transportation, criticizing the patterns of housing and work locations in the London region. The brochure explained how government planning could fix these problems, depicting planning as a common sense solution to people’s everyday problems.⁶⁵ (Figure 2) Similar techniques to domesticate planning appeared in other publicity for planning. Explaining the importance of planning, Latham argued, “plan we must, if we want a tidy city as we want a tidy home.”⁶⁶ This language equated planning with good

⁶³ John Gloag, “Planning and Ordinary People.” *Town and Country Planning* 20,103 (1952) 509-511.

⁶⁴ Astragal, “Fashion and the London Plan,” *Architect’s Journal*. (Feb 17, 1944) 131.

⁶⁵ THA: P/MUN/6 London Communist Party. *Examination of the County of London Plan*.

⁶⁶ BL: BBC Sound Archive 5928-5929; Lord Latham- 1943-LCC Plan Speech. 9CL006809, PCL006811.

housekeeping but at a larger scale, making planning, which could be considered a radical act, seem ordinary and domestic.

This type of publicity aimed to attract the interest of the public by depicting the positive affects of planning on their everyday lives, and by downplaying the interventions of new government powers. In 1943, another brochure, *Your Home Planned By Labour*, described the Labour Party's housing and planning policies. (Figures 3) The cover shows a modern home, enticing the housewife to imagine "Your home as you desire it." The early pages of the brochure focus on methods for modernizing housing, depicting amenities such as modern kitchens and bathrooms. The brochure proceeded to increase the scale, looking at how modern planning would improve the design of street, increase the number of parks, and create unified neighborhood communities. The brochure emphasized that achieving these amenities, would require "government control and purchase of land" and more controversially, the nationalization of land by the government. The brochure ended with a political call to arms, asking the people to vote for the Labour Party in order to ensure that modern housing and planning is possible.⁶⁷ The brochure aimed to shift attention away from more controversial policies toward more mainstream appeals. It sold government control of planning by promising modern houses and amenities. While the Labour party promoted a more interventionist form of planning, particularly regarding centralized land control, they hoped to avoid being criticized as socialists by their opponents. This type of publicity aimed to garner public support for planning by emphasizing the modernization aspects of planning, as disassociating government planning activities with more radical socialist policies such as land nationalization.

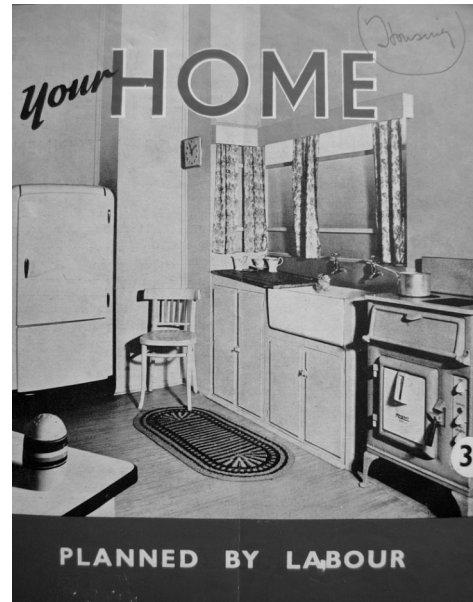
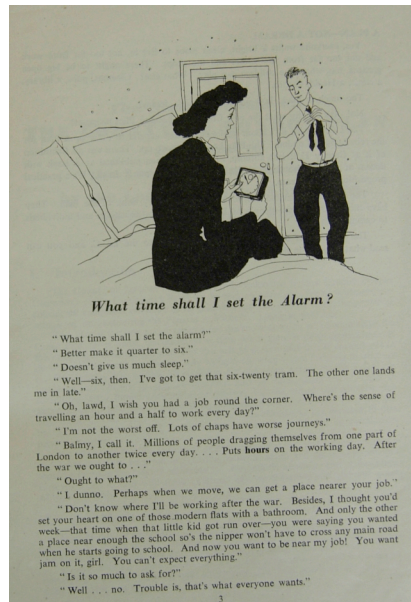


Figure 2 and 3: These brochures by the Communist and Labour Parties portrayed planning as a common sense solution to household problems. Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, London Communist Party, *Examination of the County of London Plan*. The City of London, London Metropolitan Archive, *Your Home Planned By Labour*.

⁶⁷ ACC/2417/K/1 Labour Party. *Your Home Planned by Labour*. Victoria House Printing Co., London 1943.



Figure 4: This cartoon shows characters representing segments of society, each promoting their planning ideas, including “More Planning and Less Government Interference,” “Plan to Let Nature Take its Course,” and the “Plan to get More and Do Less.” It depicts that the public as supported planning, but resented government interventions. British Cartoon Archive, David Low, *Evening Standard*, March 21, 1947. LSE4869.

Public Reactions to Planning Propaganda

As planners campaigned for new powers, concern grew over the over public’s reception of these ideas. While support for postwar reconstruction had been strong, especially for ensuring that houses would be rebuilt quickly, apprehension grew about the planning advocate’s efforts to extend government powers. A 1947 cartoon by David Low showed some of the reactions to planning, including advocates of “more planning and less government interference” and “the plan to get more and do less.” (Figure 4) The image satirized the ambivalent attitude towards planning, and particularly government action. The vast majority of the population did not embrace radical change or government intervention in planning, but instead yearned for a return to normalcy, and to promote their personal, rather than collective well-being.⁶⁸ While many advocates of private development acknowledged the importance of the government in ensuring that ‘competing claims’ for land be resolved to ensure the public good, they believed that any effort by the government to centralize land use decisions would be impractical and would conflict with popular wishes.⁶⁹ In particular, concerns about town planning addressed the new role of the government in shaping property rights, land use, land development, and construction. A series of cartoons drawn by different artists and appearing in various newspapers highlighted the debates occurring in Parliament, the media, and the public more broadly. While the different cartoonists and newspapers each championed their own political views, and thus cannot represent the ideas of the public as a whole, the cartons used humor and popular knowledge to distill controversial ideas and complex debates in an accessible media, reaching a large segment of the population.

⁶⁸ Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo. “England Arise!”: The Labour Party and Popular Politics in the 1940s Britain.

⁶⁹ Richard C. FitzGerald. “Planning and Development under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.” *The Modern Law Review*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Oct., 1948), pp. 401-428. P. 402.

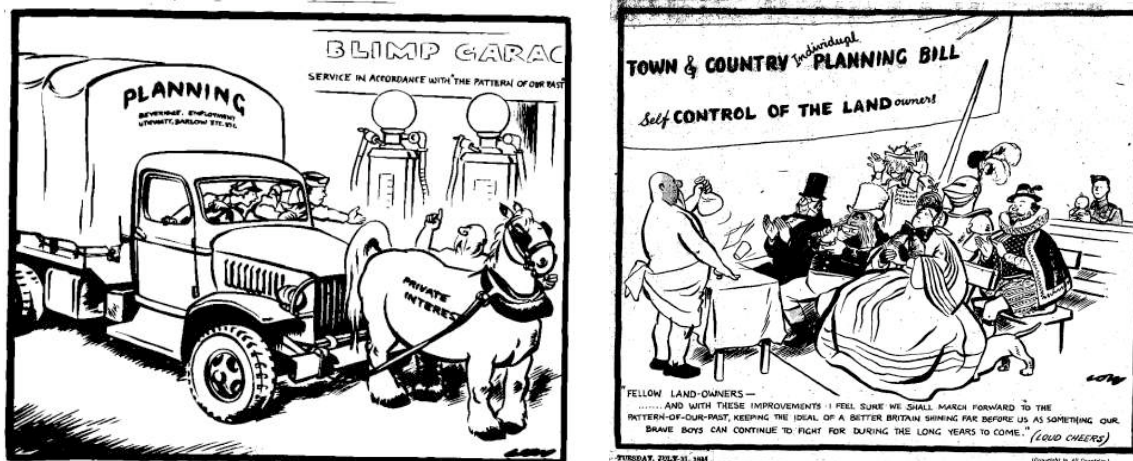


Figure 5 and 6: These cartoons argued that traditional institutions such as private land ownership, represented by the carthorse and the landed gentry in historical garb, impeded progress for a new generation, represented by the truck, the soldier and child. British Cartoon Archive, David Low, *Evening Standard*, June 26, 1944. LSE3499. British Cartoon Archive, David Low, *Evening Standard*, July 11, 1944. LSE3508.

In Defense of Property Rights

As the parliament debated what powers the government and local agencies should have to enable planning, concerns arose about how to distribute power between government agencies and private landowners. Many planning advocates viewed private landownership as a detrimental to planning. The legal and cultural traditions of Britain valued private property and protected property owners. Planning advocates worried that these traditions of property ownership would limit the ability to attain the necessary powers to plan effectively. Leftist artist David Low made poignant commentaries on the disputes about private property in his cartoons in the *Evening Standard*, generally depicting the benefits of planning and mocking the conservative opponents. In a 1944 cartoon he pictured a horse labeled "Private Interests" pulling a large truck labeled "Planning." As the drivers of the truck attempt to fill up at the Blimp Garage, the owner asserts, "Dammit, young man, we mustn't put the cart before the horse!"⁷⁰ (Figure 5) This cartoon highlighted the way in which embedded structures, such as private land ownership, represented by the old slow horse, hindered the progress of modern political structures such as Town and County Planning, symbolized by a modern truck. Low continued this theme in another 1944 cartoon illustrating a group of landowners dressed as Victorian gentry, Elizabethan capes, and Medieval Knights meeting in support of "Self Control of the Landowners" in the "Town and County Individual Planning Bill." These elitist landowners cheered as the speaker announced their goal to "March forward to the pattern of the past."⁷¹ (Figure 6) A soldier carrying a baby sat at the back of the audience, looking straight-faced as the speaker announced, "A better Britain shines far before us as something our brave boys can continue to fight for in the long years to come." This cartoon criticized landowners as trying to delay planning and social progress, cheating the soldiers of their rights.

⁷⁰ David Low. "Dammit, young man, we mustn't put the cart before the horse!" *Evening Standard*. (June 26, 1944).

⁷¹ David Low, *Evening Standard*. (July 11 1944).

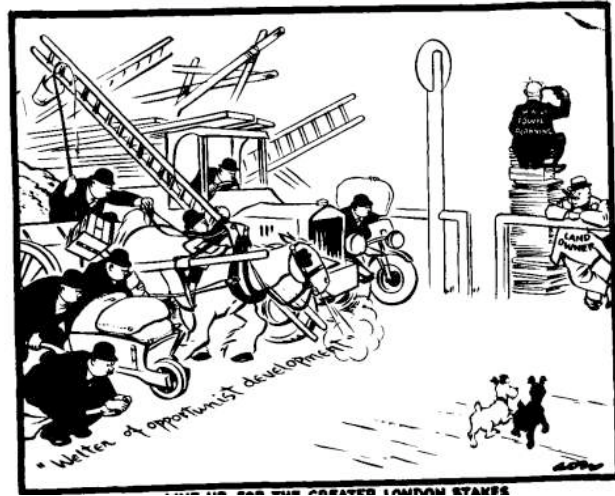


Figure 7 and 8: These cartoons show the conflict between planners and private developers. The right image shows a child crying as a planner steals his shovel to improve his sand castle. On the left, a town planner shoots himself in the head, starting the race by private developers to purchase land to profit from the Greater London Plan. British Cartoon Archive, Joseph Lee, *Evening News*, July 9, 1944. JL3345. British Cartoon Archive, David Low, *Evening Standard*, May 17, 1945. LSE1231A.

However, other cartoonists portrayed planning in a more ambivalent light. In his 1944 cartoon, left-leaning artist Joseph Lee poked fun at the fight for development control, drawing a baby throwing a temper tantrum because the planners had taken his spade and built a perfect city out of sand.⁷² (Figure 7) This cartoon illustrated the power struggled between landowners and planners as childish, and emphasized the improved quality that planners could bring to cities, over those of private development by individuals. However, it also suggests that the planners were paternalistic and did not heed the cries of the public. These cartoons show how supporters viewed planning as necessary modern progress, while opponents, especially landowners, feared challenges to their rights.

The main obstacles to increasing the power of planners grew from the need to fairly manage land values for compulsory government purchases. Policymakers put forward several proposals to address the issues of land compensation and taxation. While some planners and Labour and Communist Party politicians supported land nationalization, most policy makers deemed this solution prohibitively expensive and politically impractical. The Labour Party supported a system of "compensation and betterment" which would compensate landowners for the current value of their land, or tax them for improvements made to their land through government investment and services.⁷³ This proposal, first introduced in the Uthwatt Report in 1942, remained controversial throughout the negotiations leading up to the 1944 and 1947 planning acts. In June 1948,

⁷² Joseph Lee, "I say Shucks to the Greater London Town Planning Scheme. I want my spade," *Evening News*, July 9, 1944.

⁷³ McKay and Cox, 70-72.

the Minister of Town Planning, Lewis Silken, argued for the importance of the “Compensation and Betterment” provisions of the Town and County Planning Act as a protection against land use decisions based on indifference, greed, and helplessness that had characterized planning of private lands in the past.⁷⁴ Conservatives criticized this solution as allowing too much interference in the private land markets, and worried that bureaucrats would have far too much say in determining land values. They recommended another system based on market values, proposing that all land owners be allowed to sell their land at market value, based on what investors were willing to pay for land based on its potential use, and retain any profits they incur.

Many Labour Party members expressed concern about this policy because it would allow speculation, and the creation of a dual market, in which land had different values if sold to private investors, versus the government. A 1945 cartoon in the *Evening Standard*, Low depicted the race to purchase land that would benefit from the Greater London Plan. A mass of men in bowler hats carried ladders and building equipment representing “The Welter of Opportunistic Development.” These men stood lined up ready for a race for the “Greater London Stakes.” Nearby a Town Planner starts the race by shooting himself in the head, and the landowner looks on eagerly to see how he will profit.⁷⁵ (Figure 8) This cartoon depicted the fears of planners that their projects would be blocked by land speculation and private development, which would ‘jump the gun’ in purchasing land and price them out of the market.



Figures 9 and 10: These two cartoons show the problem of resolving “Compensation and Betterment” slowed down the process of passing planning legislation. On the right the Parliamentary leaders ran in circles, while on the left the Bill must drag extra luggage. British Cartoon Archive, David Low, *Evening Standard*, March 24, 1944. LSE3448. British Cartoon Archive, David Low. *Evening Standard*, January 9, 1947. LSE4829

⁷⁴ British Library: BBC Sound Archive 12025: Silkin, June 30, 1948. 9CL0010054.

⁷⁵ David Low, “Line-up for the Greater London Stakes.” *Evening Standard*. (May 17, 1945).

The question of how to compensate landowners became a major hindrance to developing new housing and town planning policies. Several cartoons showed how the question of compensation and betterment became a drag on creating the Town and County planning Act, which would allow for large-scale council planning and construction of housing. In a cartoon published in the *Evening Standard* in 1944, Low depicted three foolish looking policy makers pushing a cart labeled “Reconstruction” in circles around a bush titled “Compensation and betterment.” The title, “Here we go ‘round the Blimpery bush” applied word play of the in the repetitive nursery rhyme about the mulberry bush to poke fun of the useless and repetitive negotiations of the Parliament in addressing land compensation issues. The cartoon referenced the serial cartoon character Colonel Blimp, an icon of pompous leadership, here lambasted for wasting of the Parliament’s time and energy.⁷⁶ (Figure 9) Another cartoon published by Low in 1947, shows how “Compensation and Betterment” continued to be a problem for planning legislation. The cartoon, titled “Hanger’s On” depicted a trailer dragging behind the Town and County Planning Bill. The drivers of the bill state, “It won’t be such a drag after we get over the hill.”⁷⁷ (Figure 10) This cartoon highlighted the way in which the guidelines for compensation and betterment slowed down the process of passing the Town and County Planning Act.

This resistance to “compensation and betterment” connected to larger concerns about the power of the state to interfere in the rights of landowners. Many property owners expressed strong dissent to any policies that would diminish their right to control the use, sale, or lease of their land.⁷⁸ A 1948 cartoon by conservative artist Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, published in the *Daily Mail*, depicted the Town and County Planning Act and Minister Silken destroying the Englishman’s Castle during his fox hunt pursuit of speculators.⁷⁹ This imagery called upon the fears of the British people that the government would interfere in their cherished rights to land and to the sanctity of their private home. (Figure 11)



Figure 11: In this cartoon, Minister Silkin is shown riding the Town and Country Planning Act in chase of speculators, meanwhile trampling the Englishman’s Castle. British cartoon Archive, Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, *Daily Mail*, July 1, 1948. ILW1453.

⁷⁶ David Low, “Here we go ‘round the Blimpery bush.” *Evening Standard*, March 24, 1944.

⁷⁷ David Low, *Evening Standard*, January 9, 1947.

⁷⁸ St. John Irvine, *The Property Owners’ Journal*. No. 518 (November, 1948).

⁷⁹ Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, *Daily Mail*, July 1, 1948.

In 1947, lawyer Richard C. FitzGerald criticized the limitations on the rights of landowners under the new town planning legislation, saying, "At common law he had the right to use his land in anyway he pleased...the landowner is now been encircled with so many statutory restrictions that his position has become an unenviable one."⁸⁰ While he admitted the need to balance public and individual interests, FitzGerald worried, "The pendulum has possibly swung too far in the interests of the community," expressing concern at the way in which planning advocates had attacked the character of private landowners.⁸¹ The problem of how to resolve the rights of landowners, and fairly manage decisions about land use and value remained one of the most challenging issues for town planning practice.

Balancing Public and Private Interests

Another issue arose regarding how to balance the work of private developers with that of the public sector so as to ensure fast, efficient and quality reconstruction. By the late 1940s, many damaged homes had still not been properly repaired, due to repeated bombing during the war and the lack of labor and materials in the postwar recession. These shortages were exacerbated by the allocation of resources for exports, which could be sold to repay war debt. Together these problems led to housing shortages well into the 1950s. The public expressed outrage at the slow progress of building.

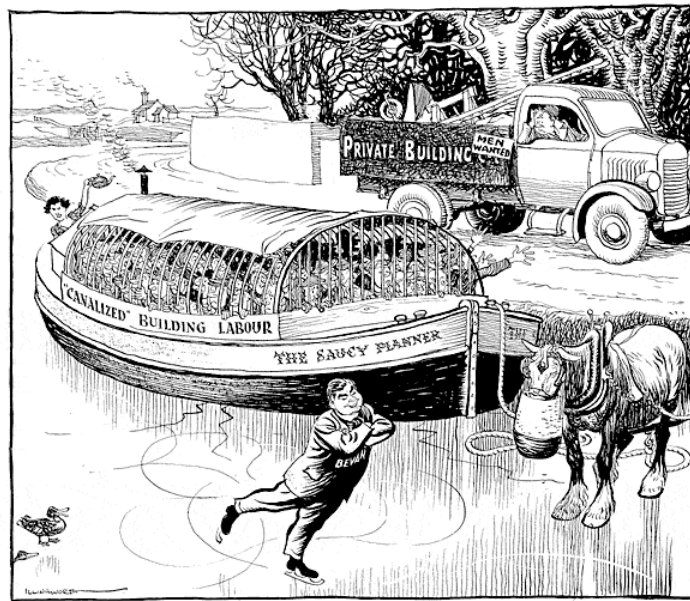


Figure 12: This cartoon illustrates the 'frozen' progress of planners, despite the their 'canalization' of labor. Private developers wait on the sidelines ready to build. British cartoon Archive. Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, January 3, 1946. ILW1038.

⁸⁰ Richard C. FitzGerald, "Planning and Development under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947," *The Modern Law Review*, 11.4 (October, 1948) 411.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

The public placed blame for the slow reconstruction on the government for focusing on planning neighborhoods rather than rebuilding houses, and for restricting the role of the private sector in redevelopment. Conservatives, in particular, refuted the right of the government to interfere in the process of rebuilding and redeveloping land, arguing that centralized planning would impede rather than improve reconstruction. In a radio address the Conservative candidate, running against Latham for the LCC elections in 1945, complained that housing had been inhibited by “prejudices against private enterprise” by “socialist ministers.” He argued, “Local authorities alone can’t do everything” and promised that if elected he would “stimulate the private builders...instead of paralyzing them.”⁸² This speech voiced the concerns of property owners and private developers, who spoke out loudly against government control of housing, saying that the government should stay out of the reconstruction process and allow the private sector to rebuild quickly.

Private developers expressed anger that building quotas and the shortages of labor and materials delayed their progress in reconstruction, further inhibited by the policies giving priority to government rather than private building projects. The criticism of the slow progress of reconstruction under the Labour Party appeared in a 1946 cartoon by conservative artist, Leslie Gilbert Illingworth. This cartoon depicted Aneurian Bevan, Minister of Health as “The Saucy Planner” halted in his progress at leading a large boat full of building laborers up the frozen canal. On the side of the canal, an empty truck labeled “Private Building—Men wanted” appears ready to move forward, but lacks any manpower and supplies.⁸³ (Figure 12) This cartoon portrayed the failure of the government planners, “frozen” in their lack of progress in reconstruction despite the “canalization” of labor. It depicted the frustration of the private sector, unable to attain the labor or materials to build. The increase in cartoons, editorials, and other expression of public concern awakened concern among planners that the public would not support their work, and might impede the progress of comprehensive planning.

Public Support For Planning?

The increasing concerns about planning which appeared in the news and in the parliamentary discussions of planning legislation worried planners, who feared they would not be able to gain public support for new planning legislation. Planner comments on the tenor of public opinion about planning across the 1940s revealed a consistent fear by planners that the public would oppose and prevent their ideals of comprehensive planning. Throughout the 1940s planners had tried to use surveys, public opinion polls, and public debates in the news, to measure public support for planning.⁸⁴ The results of these polls and the reactions of planners highlight mounting concerns of planners to make their ideas palatable to the public.

While planners had been confident in the early 1940s about public support for planning, their concern grew as the war ended and the public began to express anger at the slow rate of progress. They worried that as the memory of the Blitz experience faded, so too would social unity and public consent for planning. Planners expressed concern that

⁸² BL: BBC Sound Archive. 9261Latham- 1946-LCC Elections, LCL0005350.

⁸³ Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, Jan. 3, 1946.

⁸⁴ See Chapter 3 for more information of social surveys and public opinion polls.

once the war ended, the spirit of individualism common before the war would resurface, restraining the ability of planners to ensure positive town planning. The rise and fall of public interest in planning also caused planners concern. Immediately after the Blitz, in February 1941, Listener Research at the BBC recorded that many citizens felt that reconstruction planning should wait until after the war. They report, "While optimists looked towards a new post-war social order, most people were gloomily anticipating a post-war slump."⁸⁵ However, interest picked up after August 1941, as Churchill gave greater support to reconstruction planning in the peace aims of the Atlantic Charter.⁸⁶ In July 1942, *Architectural Review* argued, "The public interest in post-war opportunities has had its effect. Reconstruction has come to stay, and the public interest that is fighting this war both for something better and something different is reinforced by the politicians."⁸⁷

Nonetheless, as early as 1942, observers began to comment on the waning interest of the public in planning. In January, *Architects Journal*, asserted, "Popular interest in post-war reconstruction seemed to wax and wane in proportion to the severity or lightness of enemy air-raids. It was, like the Blitz, probably at its height during the early months of 1941."⁸⁸ Tom Harrison, founder of the social research group Mass Observation, concurred in March 1942, worrying that planners "talked as if they were winning over the general public when really they were only winning over each other."⁸⁹ The Mass Observation interviews on reconstruction had shown, "a striking number of people who were thinking not in terms of helping to make this country better to live in" but in ensuring their own well being. Their report identified an antipathy to planning, saying "strong feeling was growing up that people should have less planned and ordered lives."⁹⁰ Harrison warned that a gap existed between the ideals of planners and those of ordinary people, which would continue to hurt public support for planning powers.⁹¹ Planners lamented the low attendance at many exhibitions, radio shows, and films worrying that it may be a sign of "general apathy."⁹²

By 1943, many planners had become aware that the public had become tired of "empty talk of the 'new Britain.'"⁹³ Lord Latham of the LCC admitted, "Planning today is a much abused word."⁹⁴ *The East London Observer* called planning a "hackneyed and rather tiresome subject" and warned the public that in order to avoid disappointment "we should not expect too much."⁹⁵ As time passed with little progress in either planning legislation or housing construction, the public became increasingly impatient with grand promises for the future, instead calling for more modest but immediate

⁸⁵ BBC Listen Reports as quoted by Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War: The Homefront Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939-45*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996) 246. For similar surveys see BBC R9/9/6 Audience Research- Special Reports, 1942 "BBC. A listener Research Report. Public Opinion and Post-war Reconstruction, October 1942."

⁸⁶ Nicholas, 247.

⁸⁷ "The End of Reconstruction," *Architectural Review*, 92, 546 (July 1942) 3-4.

⁸⁸ "Astragal's Review of 1941- Reconstruction," *Architect's Journal*, 95, 2451 (January 15, 1942) 67.

⁸⁹ MO File Report 1162- "Report on Propaganda for Town Planning" Mar 18, 1942. (Report on talk given by TH at Housing Centre, London. Mrs. Madge Waller was in the chair.) 4.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 2.

⁹¹ Tom Harrison as quoted by Fielding, at al. 37.

⁹² Tiratsoo, 41.

⁹³ Fielding, et. al, 37.

⁹⁴ BL: BBC Sound Archive 5928-5929: Lord Latham- 1943- LCC Plan Speech, tapes, 9CL006809, PCL006811

⁹⁵ "Planning" *East London Observer*. (Nov 19, 1943) 2.

progress. In a 1948 radio address, Lewis Silken, Minister of Town Planning, also addressed the growing apathy for planning, saying, "It is all too easy to be discouraged, all too easy to think of planning as a dream. There is so much to do, and we can do it so slowly."⁹⁶ Despite this recognition of public apathy and impatience, these planners and public officials tried to emphasize the need for planning, and their progress, however slow, in realizing it. As legislation passed in the late 1940s, political leaders emphasized that reconstruction could finally begin in earnest.

Conclusion: Consent for New Legislation

After much publicity and public debate, the Parliament passed two pieces of legislation that increased the power of planners. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1944, known as the Blitz and Blight Act, created the structure for the first efforts at large-scale reconstruction planning, establishing the legal grounds for compulsory purchase of redevelopment areas including land damaged by war or blighted by years of neglect. While this legislation empowered local authorities to create comprehensive plans, it also made several strategic retreats, failing to solve the issue of land compensation and taxation. The incompleteness of this Act left many issues to be resolved in future legislation. Latham asserted that the LCC required additional powers, warning, "No plan can be carried out unless Parliament gives us the powers and the resources essential for that purpose."⁹⁷ Between 1944 and 1947, planning advocates continued to push for expanded planning powers, and the Parliament continued to debate issues such as "compensation and betterment." During this period, many local authorities exercised their power to develop plans. However they had been unable to take action to realize these plans due to the lack of legal structures empowering them to raise money, make compulsory purchases of land, and determine compensation and taxation levels for landowners in redevelopment areas.

After the war, the strong win by the Labour party in 1945 created a favorable climate in the Parliament, giving renewed the energy to efforts to pass planning legislation. In 1947, the Parliament finally passed the Town and Country Planning Act, which successfully addressed the lingering issues in planning powers. The Act redefined land ownership, asserting that it no longer conferred the right to develop land as the owner chooses, but only within the bounds stipulated by government regulations meant to ensure the public good.⁹⁸ By resolving the role of the government vis-à-vis property owners, and defining a system for compensation and taxation, this act opened the possibility for compulsory purchase and positive land use planning. In 1948, Minister Silken emphasized the importance of the act in rectifying a fifty-year restraint on the power of the government to plan, calling the passage of the Act "a landmark in all your lives" bringing "new opportunities for building a better Britain and new responsibilities."⁹⁹

This chapter has shown how the wartime context and the need for postwar reconstruction gave rise to a new impetus for expanding the powers of the government

⁹⁶ BBC Sound Archive, 12025: Silkin, 1947, 9CL0010054

⁹⁷ Lord Latham, "Plan For The New London Ready," *The Times* May 26, 1943.

⁹⁸ Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. 10 & 11 Geo. 6. Ch. 51.

⁹⁹ BL: BBC Sound Archive 12025: Silkin, June 30, 1948. 9CL0010054.

to plan. The struggles to gain new planning powers, and to ensure public and political support for planning show how planners acknowledged the fact that planning as a profession, could not be separated from the public sphere. It also revealed how planning advocates engaged in the political debate over government powers, and how they aimed to mobilize public consent for new planning powers.

2 Democracy and Technocracy: Defining the Role for Town Planning Professionals



Figure 1 and 2: The still on the left shows Abercrombie and Forshaw explaining the County of London Plan, their stiff didactic manner and office setting show their role as bureaucrats enacting a plan. On the right, Abercrombie appears with his head uplifted in optimistic thought as he daydream about his artistic vision for Plymouth. City of London, London Metropolitan Archives, Director Ralph Keene, *Proud City*, Greenpark Productions, (1945) Jill Craigie, Director. *The Way We Live*. Two Cities Films (1946).

As the planner emerged as a public figure in the 1940s he appeared in two different guises. As the artistic visionary he looked forward to imagine radical changes for a better Britain and win over public support. As the competent administrator he lead a team of researchers and designers to apply their professional expertise with careful consideration of the democratic process. These dual images of the planner appeared in two films portraying town-planning consultant Patrick Abercrombie developing and presenting his plans for London and Plymouth.

In the film *Proud City* (1945), about postwar replanning in London, Abercrombie appears as a town planning expert, introduced as a “world famous authority on town planning” and a team leader coordinating a large staff of technicians, including coauthor J.H. Forshaw, and designers such as Arthur Ling. He appears standing in an executive office, acting as an interpreter and educator, explaining planning ideas simply, if somewhat pedantically, to the public. Wearing a tweed suit, fiddling with his pipe and monocle, and speaking in a patrician accent make Abercrombie appear conspicuously upper class and awkward, giving him a benignly eccentric persona. However standing in front of a massive wood desk, fireplace, clock and bookshelves, emphasize his role as an administrator within the local government, giving weight and authority to his ideas. Overall, the film depicted the planner as an administrator of a rational process of planning, which identified the various needs of the public, resolved conflicts, and developed an appropriate plan. The planner appeared as a public servant, progressive, yet receptive to citizen feedback, both scientist and mediator.¹ (Figure 1)

¹ Ralph Keene, Director, *Proud City*, Greenpark Productions, (1945); Nicholas Bullock, “Imagining the Post-War World: Architecture, Reconstruction and the British Documentary Film Movement” *Cinema and Architecture: Melies, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia*, eds. François Penz and Maureen Thomas, (London: British Film Institute, 1997) 52-61; John R. Gold and Stephen V. Ward, “Of Plans and Planners: Documentary Film and the Challenge of the Urban Future, 1935-1952.” *The Cinematic City*, ed. David B. Clarke, (London: Routledge, 1997) 67, 74.

Another film, *The Way We Live* (1946), presented Abercrombie as an artistic visionary, emphasizing not the extensive research behind the plan, but rather the creative moment in which the planner transforms that data into a design. In the film, Abercrombie is described as mysterious, keeping to himself as he developed his plan *carte blanche* for the town of Plymouth. Abercrombie starts his process looking down over the city, taking in its history, topography and architecture in a sweeping aerial view. With a thoughtful expression on his face, he then wanders through the streets contemplating the designs of the public spaces, streets, and waterfronts. From his imagination emerge new visions of how these spaces can be recreated in their ideal forms. After developing his plan, Abercrombie appears at a town meeting, presenting his complete visions to a skeptical public, passionately explain his ideas and challenging his opponents, eventually winning over the audience. The film emphasized the planner as visionary, making dramatic improvements through his 'far-sighted' ideas. The film depicted the image of the independent consultant as master planner, both artist and advocate.² (Figure 2)

These two iconic portrayals of the Patrick Abercrombie depict two conflicting professional identities for planners, showing the tension between the diverse responsibilities of the profession. As generalists asked to bridge several fields, planners had to balance design skills with technical and administrative knowledge and their role as public figures. As a planner and a public figure, Abercrombie bridged the gap between the social scientist, the administrator, and the visionary. As one of the most prolific reconstruction planners, who mixed rhetorical flair with rational analysis, he embodied the model of the Master Planner. However, the way that Abercrombie depicted himself in film varied widely showing the unfixed identity of planners during the 1940s.

During this period, planners and their publicists searched for an identity through which to present themselves to the public. Planners became more aware of shaping their own public persona. As the planning profession increasingly appeared in public and engaged in politics, they began to broaden their professional identity, depicting themselves not merely as artists or technicians, but as public policy makers and administrators. British town planners embraced a new role as public figures, appearing in films, radio shows, photographs and cartoons. In these media, planners adopted a range of professional personas, from the team leader coordinating a diverse staff in a collective project, to the rational researcher crunching numbers at his drafting table, to the artistic visionary boldly re-imagining vast urban landscapes.

This chapter explores the changing way in which planners in Britain defined their professional identity and their social responsibilities during a period of professionalization. It highlights the way in which the expansion of planning powers by the state required planners to take a more public role in policy making and to consider their role as experts within a democracy. As planners contemplated planning as a tool for ensuring the public good, they embraced a broader set of ideas and tools for addressing issues of social planning. The shift from technical to social planning led to competition between architects, engineers, and surveyors already involved in planning, who tried to claim social and physical planning as their own professional territory. An

² Jill Craigie, Director. *The Way We Live*. Two Cities Films (1946); Gold and Ward, 70-71, 75-76.

examination of professional discourse and government reports highlights the attempts by professionals and planning agencies to define the responsibilities of planners, including which professions should plan, and what skills they would need in their work.³ This chapter builds upon existing scholarship on the rise of the architecture and planning professions to argue that the professionalization of planning in the 1940s led to an increased interest in the social skills and duties of the profession. Revealing the ways in which the planning professions embraced the public nature of their work, this research shows the evolution of the ideas of social planning and public participation as new possibilities for experts to engage democratically with the public.

Defining Professional Territory

In the 1940s, the way planners portrayed themselves and defined their skills as a profession shifted to address the new responsibilities and context of the profession. This evolution in the way planners defined their work grew from discussions about how planning experts should be held responsible to citizens. The scale of reconstruction planning, and the political necessity of large scale cooperation meant that planning was inevitably political in nature. As planners became entrenched in local government bureaucracies, they held greater accountability to local citizens and agencies.⁴ This was particularly true in those areas most damaged by the war. For example in East London local citizens played an active role in the planning process, creating associations, drawing plans, and voicing their planning recommendations. With this input, citizens aimed to provide detailed input into the development of their local town and neighborhood plans. In this climate, planners saw the necessity of embracing their role within the political process and improving their skills in working democratically with the public. Sociological and political knowledge became an increasingly important aspect of education for professional planners.

This shift from technical to social planning and its attendant skill sets led to a debate within the planning profession about which professional groups possessed the necessary social and political savvy to work with the public. This debate was effectively about deciding what type of expert should wield the power to plan. While the planning practitioner in the early 20th century had included a wide variety of professions and skills, during the 1940s associations of planners worked to professionalize the field and more clearly define who had the necessary education and skills to plan. During this shift, professional associations representing architects, engineers, surveyors and planners used publicity to promote themselves to government agencies, with each professional group claiming a monopoly on the skills and knowledge needed to plan. Certain professions, such as planning consultants, sought to assert their leading role in the planning process by claiming a monopoly in their ability to understand and work with the public. This period marked a transition away from the planning consultant (often with architectural training) and the municipal engineer or surveyor (with engineering training) toward well-rounded planning experts, trained to apply

³ For histories of the of the design professions, see Andrew Saint. *The Image of the Architect*. Yale University Press: New Haven, 1983; Agustin Rodriguez-Bachille. "British town planning Education, A comparative perspective." *Town Planning Review*, 62. 4. (1991). 431-445; David Brain, "Practical Knowledge and Occupational Control: The Professionalization of Architecture in the United States," 239-268; *Sociological Forum*, 6. 2, (1991); Stephanie Dock, "Planning Consultants and the Evolution of the Planning Profession." *Society for American City and Regional Planning History 13th Biennial Conference on Planning History*. October, 2009.

⁴ Peter J. Larkham and Keith D. Lilley, *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow' British Reconstruction Planning, 1939-1952: An Annotated Bibliography*. (Ickering, North Yorkshire: Pickering Inch's Books, 2001). 1-5.

specialized technical knowledge, conduct sociological research and administer planning projects. In order to understand this process of professionalization, it is necessary to examine the professional lineage and education of planners, the way in which various professional groups claimed the right to plan, and the way in which the government intervened to determine the qualifications of planners.

The Professional Lineage of Planners

Unlike other professions, planning professionalized rather late and incompletely, remaining porous with several other existing professions that shared similar skills and responsibilities. Throughout the 19th century architects had struggled to develop professional distinctions between themselves and builders, engineers, property managers, and surveyors.⁵ As part of this process, architects had formed professional organizations, particularly the Institute of British Architects in 1834, later gaining charter to organize the profession as the renamed Royal Institute British Architects (RIBA). While, RIBA struggled to attain a monopoly over architectural work, it held responsibility for licensing and representing architecture professionals. A survey conducted by RIBA in 1946 revealed that out of 15,000 architects, 8,240 were RIBA members, while 3,890 reported being unattached to a professional organization. RIBA aimed to promote the duties of “the qualified architect” and to act as the unified voice of the profession.⁶ The related profession of land surveyors also formed several organizations, including Surveyor’s Club founded in 1794, the Land Surveyor’s Club in 1834, and the Surveyor’s Association in 1864. These organizations combined in 1868 under the new name the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), becoming the most vocal organization in representing surveyors into the 20th century. Civil Engineers, who held a different, yet overlapping set of skills to surveyors, set up the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) in 1818, which remained active into the 20th century. The related organization of the Institution of Municipal and County Engineers (IMCE) formed in 1874 to represent engineers working in public employment.

In the early 20th century, architects, surveyors and engineers belonging to the various professional organizations engaged in town planning work. These practitioners established new journals and organizations that shaped the ideological, educational, and organizational foundations of the burgeoning profession of town planning. In 1899, Ebenezer Howard formed the first organization, the Town and County Planning Association (TCPA) and began publishing a journal in 1904 in order to promote his ideas for the Garden City. True to its organizational mission, this association served an ideological function, advocating for the importance of town planning legislation, and promoting particular design and policy ideas.

In 1909, a group of architect-planners established the Department of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool, the first school that offered courses and degrees in town planning. The new Department of Town Planning and Civic Design, admitted students from all professions, taking a generalist approach that would ensure that planners held enough knowledge of all the duties of planning to be able to coordinate and cooperate with members from other professions. It was taught by architecturally trained planners

⁵ Saint, 57.

⁶ “Organization and Work of RIBA,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 53.4 (February 1946) 129-130.

such as Charles Reilly, Stanley Davenport Adshead, and Patrick Abercrombie. The department became a leading influence in the field of town planning and founded a journal in 1910, titled *Town Planning Review*, to encourage the sharing of professional knowledge in the field of town planning.⁷

In 1914, the Town Planning Institute (TPI) was formed in order to represent and consolidate the members of the new profession, and set the standards for professional education and conduct. The TPI differed from other associations, such as the Town and County Planning Association, which granted membership to anyone with an interest in planning. Instead, the TPI only offered membership to professional town planners who already held membership in another professional association, such as the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Institute of Chartered Engineers (ICE), the Institute of Municipal and County Engineers, (IMCE), or the Surveyor's Institute (SI). The TPI began examinations in town planning in 1916, aiming to develop standards for the new profession of town planning, and to control who could work in the field. Although other fields such as health officers, sociologists, and economists, would have been logical professions to join the TPI, they expressed little interest in joining or taking the exams.⁸

The TPI aimed to coordinate the existing design professions into a new planning profession, define the required skills, and set fee scales. However, throughout the 1920s, members debated whether or not planning constituted as distinct skill. Most planners remained active in their original professions and organizations.⁹ In the 1940s, the planning profession remained less organized than other related professional such as architects, engineers, and surveyors. Although the TPI and TPCA started to solidify planning as a distinct profession, the low membership among practitioners meant that the organizations remained relatively weak in defining the educational and professional standards of planners until after World War II. Few schools issued degrees in planning, and practice did not require professional licenses. Some of planning consultants, such as Thomas Sharp, Patrick Abercrombie, William Davidge, William Holford, Stanley Adshead, and W. Dobson Chapman held qualifications from the Town Planning Institute (TPI) or the Department of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool. Although this group included some of the most prolific planners, and received the greatest publicity, they constituted only a small percentage of the town planners in practice in the 1940s. Most practicing planners learned planning on the job after being trained in architecture or engineering. The continuing overlap of professional training and membership led to porous professional boundaries between the building and planning disciplines.¹⁰

Another struggle to professional organization arose from the division between public and private employment. While large towns often hired public servants, such as the Municipal Engineer, to conduct town planning, most municipalities could not permanently hire the necessary staff to conduct a large-scale planning project. Private architecture firms often took on planning work as consultants, particularly for public works projects that involved an urban design component.¹¹ Civil servants held negative

⁷ Gordon E. Cherry, *The Evolution of British Town Planning*. (New York: Halsted Press, 1974) 56-57.

⁸ Cherry, 58, 60-61.

⁹ Cherry, 97.

¹⁰ Larkham and Lilley, 1-5.

¹¹ Cherry, 114.

attitudes toward town planning consultants, who they saw as propagandist.¹² On the other hand, architects preferred to remain in private practice rather than entering into public employment, where they suffered low status and prestige and resented interference from administrative superiors, such as the Borough Engineer or District Valuer.¹³ Architect J.E. Rhind explained that a government job “often does not suit the temperament of a man with distinct ideas. Official work is cramping in style and red tape channels have to be followed.”¹⁴ However, the trend for architects to embrace modernist urban scale design and to fashion themselves as ‘architect-planners’ meant that they increasingly engaged with these government institutions.

Friction among the professions also derived from differences in the employment and compensation levels, between salaried government engineers and surveyors, young over-worked private architect practitioners, and older gentleman architects and planning consultants with private resources.¹⁵ During interwar period, an increasing number of architects had taken employment by government agencies and local authorities. In 1940 a RIBA survey showed that 33% of architects who responded were employed by the government or were otherwise in official employment. Many of those in private practice reported suffering more severely from the building slow down during the depression and the war in the 1930s and early 40s.¹⁶ Besides allowing architects greater scope, town planning work under government employment offered more security, guaranteeing continuous work, compared to private offices which suffered from work shortages in the depression and wartime building slumps.¹⁷ Despite his distaste for government work, J.E. Rhind argued that the government had a ‘responsibility’ to utilize the unique planning skills of architects and to create employment during the building lull.¹⁸ RIBA also promoted the importance of architects in government employment, complaining that in a time when the profession was hurting for lack of work, “nearly all of the vast building works had been carried out without any proper architectural assistance.” In the *Journal of RIBA*, many articles called for restricting military enrollment of young professional architects and providing them with government work on war building projects. Architects worried that their absence from the list of Reserved Occupation meant that the government did not value their skills and that “the profession had not been visualized as a proper part of the war scheme.”¹⁹

By the 1940s, when the British government began to plan for postwar reconstruction, a diverse cast of professional groups claimed a stake to territory within the planning field. Professional organizations began to compete to prove who had the necessary skills to undertake town-planning work. However, these organizations also recognized

¹² Such as HG Vincent. In NA: HLG 86/1 Minute Sheet 95277. “May 30, 1941”

¹³ John R. Gold, *The Experience of Modernism: Modern Architects and the Future of the City, 1928-1953*. (London: E & F Spon, 1997) 96.

¹⁴ J.E. Rhind, “Letter to the Editor--The Claims of Private Architects,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 47.2 (December 1939) 45.

¹⁵ “The Desperate Position of the Profession,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 47.3 (January 15, 1940) 54.

¹⁶ “The State of the Profession,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 48.1 (November 18, 1940) 2; Ronald Bradbury, “The Architect and the Community,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 56.8. (June 1949) 366-68.

¹⁷ Gold, 96. For a similar experience by American architects, see also Andrew Shanken, *194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the American Home Front*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 2009) 4.

¹⁸ J.E. Rhind, “Letter to the Editor--The Claims of Private Architects.” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. Vol. 47 No. 2. December, 1939. P. 45.

¹⁹ “The Removal of Architects From the List of Reserved Occupations,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 47.3 (January 15, 1940) 49.

the need to cooperate effectively. Cooperation became a key term in postwar planning, as it became more and more important that various specialties work together. In 1946, President of the Institution of Municipal Engineers, Ernst Hone Ford stated his goal for the group, saying "We desire to co-operate in a friendly manner with other Institutions, and although there may have been misunderstandings in the past, these are apt to disappear...when we are able to talk things over frankly around a table."²⁰ This struggle to claim professional territory motivated organizations to engage in self-promoting propaganda. Each organization struggled to define their profession as the best suited to serve as the leader in this cooperative town planning process.

Architects Publicize their Planning Skills

During the 1940s, architects viewed the town planning specialists as the latest in a series of professions that threatened their 'professional monopoly.'²¹ As they started to compete with engineers, surveyors, and town planning consultants for government planning jobs, they aimed to assert their rightful place in leading planning activity through their unique design skills. They asserted themselves as the profession best able to lead a team of technicians, consider social factors in design, and relate to the public as clients.

However, this competition to secure planning work had begun much earlier, when the 1909 Planning Act had first legally sanctioned the new field of town planning. Architects were the first of the professional organizations to stake a claim of town planning, sending a memo in 1904 to local authorities urging them only to hire architects to oversee the design of council buildings. In 1907, The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) formed the Town Planning Committee to begin to address issues of town planning, a topic that roused the interest of the whole profession. In their 1911 report, RIBA claimed town planning as an architectural project, but admitted that some of the necessary data collection and analysis may fall to experts from other professions, such as surveyors, engineers, economists, or sociologists. While RIBA promoted the idea of inter-professional cooperation, they also emphasized that planning could not safely be left to the technical expertise of engineers and surveyors, but must also address aesthetic design issues best handled by architects.²²

These same themes arose in the postwar debates about professional qualification for planning, which often focused on the balance between artistry and technical expertise. In 1952, architectural historian John Gloag expressed concern that many so-called 'planners' have little training, and bring the profession that they claim into disrepute through their activities. He instead praised planning by architects and town planning consultants saying, "Such professional men and women are technicians... trained to think with logical lucidity, whose artistic perceptions are brightened and disciplined by their training."²³ This statement reified the logical and technical skills of architects to solve the physical design problems of town planning.

²⁰ Earnst Hone Ford, City Engineer and Surveyor of Coventry. "Presidential Address, 1946." *Journal of the Institution of Municipal Engineers*. V. 73. No. 1 (September, 1946) 15.

²¹ Gold, 97; Shanken, 3.

²² Cherry, 44-47

²³ John Gloag, "Planning and Ordinary People." *Town and Country Planning*. 20, 103 (1952) 509.

For years RIBA had lamented that the public seemed unaware of the architects skills as “anything more than a draughtsman,” and had instead attempted to emphasize “planning and coordination which is the architect’s chief asset.”²⁴ In 1940, W.H. Ansell, President of RIBA, attempted to expand the public’s perception of architects’ professional skills to include planning activities. He argued that the architectural profession could be useful in war, noting that the government did not utilize their skills, because they held a “wrong idea of profession as merely aesthetic, not practical.”²⁵ Speaking at the Town Planning Conference at Manchester in 1945, Ansell, decried the perception that the architects’ work is primarily ornamental, instead identifying their true skills in “layout, the relationship of building to one another and to their surroundings” and in the “provision of an appropriate and seemly environment for every human activity...by three dimensional design.”²⁶ He argued that reconstruction planning would benefit if the government “realized that the architectural profession is by training and experience the rightful one to be consulted.”²⁷

In letter to the editor of the *Journal of RIBA*, several architectural practitioners argued in favor of the skill of the architect as the long-range planner, over engineering professions. In 1940, Graham Dawbarn argued in the *Journal of RIBA*, “In spite of my many engineering friends I still cling to the belief that the architect is, by virtue of his training, the planner.”²⁸ The *Journal of RIBA* pointed out “the architectural and surveying professions are the design and planning services of the building industry.”²⁹ In another article, Garald Barry concurred, calling architects “Not only a designer of buildings but a planner and a coordinator...concerned not with single units only but with a neighborhood.”³⁰ This issue came to a head in during the war because there were very view buildings to design. As contractors and engineers faired better during the war, architects hoped to claim a new niche working on larger scale reconstruction planning projects, which could start immediately despite building delays.

RIBA took an active role in promoting the profession and ensuring that government departments understood and utilized the skills of architects in postwar planning. They argued, that architects’ skill set in planning qualified architects to be of great use to local authorities in coordinating their technical experts in rebuilding efforts. RIBA emphasized that the architect’s held the greatest skill in coordinating the efforts of the many building professions and specialists. They also claimed that architects took a unique “professional concern with the needs and well-being of those who will live and work within the completed buildings and its surroundings” not considered by technical experts, such as engineers.³¹ Nonetheless, RIBA acknowledged that planning work must be cooperative, saying “we must line up with the other members of the great

²⁴ “The Architect’s Task,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 47.2 (December, 1939) 27-28.

²⁵ W.H. Ansell, President of RIBA, “Correspondence-Letter to America” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 48.1. (November 18, 1940) 13-14.

²⁶ “Town Planning Conference at Manchester,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52. 12 (October 1945) 345-346.

²⁷ W.H. Ansell, President of RIBA. “Correspondence-Letter to America” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 48. 1 (November 18, 1940) 13-14.

²⁸ Graham Dawbarn, “Correspondence-Post Mortem and Reconstruction,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 47.5 (March 18, 1940) 109.

²⁹ “Architects in Post-War Building,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.8. (June 1945) 214.

³⁰ Garald Barry, “The Place of the Architect in the Post War World.” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.9. (July 1946) 373.

³¹ “Architects in Post-War Building,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.8. (June 1945) 214. “Architects and Reconstruction,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.11 (September 1945) 313-314.

building industry—engineers, surveyors, builders, operative and merchants...none can function properly without the services of all.”³²

Beyond promoting themselves for paid government positions, some architects and planners also ran for elected offices on planning committees for local councils as a way to promote their planning ideas. In the *Journal of RIBA*, architect and planner Max Lock questioned why many of the current members of these local planning and design committees who did not have any training or knowledge in design should be responsible for decisions about the shape of urban life. He entreated, “We shall never improve the deplorable level of this planning merely by the institution of Panels—or by letters to the Times...we need more architects who will themselves work on their own Town Planning and Housing Committees and who will stand for election in their own local councils...” He encouraged architects with time on their hands to fill the wartime vacancies on these committees in order to protect the design interests of the public.³³

During the slow building periods, architects also employed their spare time by embracing their role as social and cultural liaisons, reaching out to the laypeople through ‘soft’ publicity such as journals, radio shows, and news editorials. Architects also increased their public presence by redesigning their professional journals into more attractive formats to draw new middle class readers, placing journals at the heart of public discourse. As the most literate of the building and planning professions, architects harnessed their unique mastery of language to express their ideas and promote their profession to the public. In their radio shows, architects not only sought to cultivate public interest and knowledge of their field, but also to establish themselves as the profession best able to communicate design and planning ideas to the public and to demonstrate their unique qualifications to serve not only the needs of private clients, but of the community. Through these mechanisms, architects placed themselves as authorities in planning and as the profession best able to communicate this knowledge to the public.³⁴ This role as a social liaison helped architects to assert their planning skills as the field increasingly addressed social as well as technical problems.

Surveyors and Engineers Claim a Role in Planning

Meanwhile, the other professions involved in town planning, the surveyors and engineers, also fought to protect their professional territory and their positions working for local authorities. Engineers and surveyors both claimed a right to planning, emphasizing their technical skills and their ability to coordinate multiple fields. Throughout the 1940s, the professional institutions became increasingly active in promoting the reputations of their professions and protecting their professional territory.

Since its founding in the Victorian Era, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) had aimed “to secure the advancement... [of] the profession of a surveyor, to promote the general interest of the profession and to maintain and extend its usefulness

³² “The Architect’s Task,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 47.2 (December, 1939) 27-28.

³³ Max Lock, “Letter to the editor: Peaceful Penetration of Local Councils,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 47.1 (November 10, 1939) 16-17.

³⁴ Shundana Yusaf, “Wireless Sites: Architecture and Radio in Interwar Britain,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements*. 19.11. 74-75, 77-78.

for the public advantage.”³⁵ The Institution of Municipal Engineers (IME) served a similar role for that profession. While Municipal Engineers usually worked for local authorities and held strict engineering credentials, surveyors were a newer profession, with looser qualifications, usually working directly for landowners on improvement schemes. Although both professions expressed increased interest in planning during the war, each group had already tried to stake a claim to planning work. In 1907, as planning first began to be discussed as a discrete professional duty, the Institute of Municipal Civil Engineers (IMCE) formed a special committee to determine how they could take a leading role in preparing planning schemes. Although they admitted that planning would require cooperation with other professions, they claimed the work as chiefly the duty of Council engineer.³⁶

During the 1940s, the municipal engineers became increasingly active in promoting their planning credentials. In 1942, the IMCE circulated letter from local authority clerks stating that the Municipal Engineers held the best skill set for preparing planning schemes.³⁷ In 1945, the IME President Ernest Minor, argued that the Institution should not be ‘backward’ in the development of publicity, and should reform the Public Relations Committee in order “to bring to the notice of the public the work done by the members of our respective Institutions.”³⁸ Minor lamented that the Surveyor in the past has lacked the power to make positive planning decisions with “no power or authority to prevent the spoliation of our towns.” He and his successor Ernst Hone Ford, argued in favor of increasing the planning powers of surveyors and municipal engineers, and placing them as the leaders in the cooperative process of planning with other professions. Ford claimed that the surveyor possessed the greatest knowledge of the social, political, physical and environmental aspects of his town. He recommended that Municipal Engineers continue to develop their “qualities of character” and artistic knowledge through comprehensive education, in order to address the “cultural aspect of our work.” In 1948, successor President Charles Greenwood continued the focus on publicity, lamenting that the public did not fully appreciate the need for Municipal Engineers. He emphasized that the Municipal Engineers had been preparing town planning schemes for the past 30 years, and should remain an “important contributor” to planning, particularly regarding technical questions.³⁹ These attempts by the engineers, surveyors, and architects to stake a professional claim to town planning work gave rise to public discussion over who should engage in planning work, and how they should be educated.

Formalizing the Educational Curriculum for Planners

By the end of the war the demand for skilled planners, and the desire of many professions to fill this need, had led to an increasing interest in developing educational programs to provide training and credentials. While the number of town planning degree programs had increased steadily since the beginning of the century, the small number of credentialed planners remained insufficient to address the mounting

³⁵ “The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors,” *Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors*. 26.1. (July 1946.) 4.

³⁶ Cherry, 46, 48.

³⁷ Cherry, 135.

³⁸ Ernest Minor, Borough Surveyor and Water Engineer Darlington, “Presidential Address, 1945-46,” *Journal of the Institution of Municipal Engineers*. 72.1 (August 1945) 12-15.

³⁹ Charles Greenwood, City Engineer and Surveyor of Chester, “Presidential Address, 1948,” *Journal of the Institution of Municipal Engineers*. 74. 1 (July 1948) 10-13.

planning work. In order to meet the growing need for town planners, the War Office created a correspondence course teaching the basic professional skills. In 1945, nearly 200 new students had enrolled for Part I and 33 had returned to start Part II.⁴⁰

In the interest in increasing the number of professional planners credentialed by educational programs, the government began to encourage many professions to reconsider their educational curriculum. Since the establishment of planning as a field in 1909, engineers, surveyors and architects had worked cooperatively to create planning curriculum that gave preference to the skills of each established profession. This narrow curriculum encouraged the continued dominance of the planning profession by these technical and design fields. The changing nature of planning work, and pressure to compete for government work, motivated these professions to reconsider the balance of their curriculum, and to consider ways to incorporate more emphasis in geography, economics, and sociology. This shift in education reflected a shift in the definition of planning from being primarily art and engineering, to acknowledging the social, economic, and political aspects of planning.

In the 1940s, as architects and related professions embraced a broader definition of their work, they reconsidered what type of educational training would best prepare students to address these new professional challenges. Most planning consultants had been trained as architects, often receiving a "Diploma in Town Planning" from RIBA in order to hone their skills in larger-scale site design. In 1945, RIBA extended the ability of practicing architects to gain planning credentials, creating an "Award in Town Planning" examination for senior architects, "suited to their age and existing attainments."⁴¹ Throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s the *Journal of RIBA* also debated how the education of new architects could be reorganized to address the growing importance of town planning skills. In 1945, Lionel Bailey Budden, Professor of Architecture at the University of Liverpool, argued that architecture schools should add chairs in Civic Design or Town and County Planning and a graduate program in a Department of Planning Studies.⁴²

As the number of planning education programs grew after the war, the Board of Architectural Education formed a town planning subcommittee to "review all questions of town planning education as they affect the architectural profession."⁴³ R. Gordon Brown argued that because architects and planners served the community as a whole, they should come from diverse class backgrounds; thus, schools should be opened to students of more limited means and opportunities. Furthermore, Brown advised that there should be a much closer liaison between the architecture schools and those of other arts, saying "There is no reason why a general liaison between the different schools should not give the architectural student a wider experience without increasing the curriculum."⁴⁴ S.L.G. Beaufoy, Ministry of Town and County Planning, suggests, "Architects should, in the schools and elsewhere, devote much more of their time to this

⁴⁰ THA: P/MUN/6 Printed Pamphlets, "Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction- Progress Sheet No. 151" (January 31, 1945.) 2.

⁴¹ "New R.I.B.A. Award in Town Planning," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.4. (February 1945) 90.

⁴² L.L. Budden. "The Future of Architectural Education," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.9. (July 1945) 253.

⁴³ "The Board of Architectural Education," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.6 (April 1946) 211.

⁴⁴ R. Gordon Brown, "Some problems in Architectural Education," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 56.3. (January 1949) 163.

question of grouping buildings.”⁴⁵ This reflected the importance to architects of designing buildings as part of urban landscapes, rather than as isolated monumental objects. In 1949, the Ministry of Education held a National Short Course for Teachers of Architecture in which various architectural educators debated pedagogical issues, including the amount of time that could be devoted to town planning studies in the already overloaded curriculum of an architectural school. Professor Gordon Stephenson emphasized “the need for ‘designers’ in town planning.” However, Mr. Cecil Stewart remarked, “The technique of planning towns or regions was the same techniques of planning in architectural design, research, analysis and synthesis.”⁴⁶ These debates about the future of architectural education showed how designers increasingly recognized the need to consider larger scale design and planning, and the need to have a broader understanding of humanities and social sciences in order to be strong designers.

Other professional organizations, such as the Institution of Municipal Engineers (IME) also expressed the importance of educating technical experts to have a broader cultural and social understanding of the impacts of their work. In his Presidential Address in 1946, Ernst Hone Ford argued in favor of emphasizing the cultural aspects of the profession when training Municipal Engineers. He asserts, “The work of the municipal surveyor...calls for qualities of character and training which can only be achieved by a comprehensive education in the broader sense, wide reading, and an appreciation of the values in the Arts as well as in the Sciences.”⁴⁷ This reevaluation of the pedagogical approach and curriculum of both architects and engineers reflected the interest of these professions in reaffirming their role in planning, and expanding their claim to being the profession best able to coordinate the technical, aesthetic, and social aspects of planning work. This reflected a shift within the field of planning from the architectural Beaux Arts master plans and engineering based building and zoning codes, to a more integrated multi-discipline approach to town planning, with strong social scientific grounding.

Securing Government Employment

As the government began to plan for reconstruction, professional groups increased their efforts to claim planning skills and to monopolize government planning employment. The national ministries and regional planning agencies received pleas from professional groups who aimed to ensure work for their members in post war town planning.

Beginning after the Blitz, the Town Planning Institute (TPI) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) began implementing strategies for how to assert their role in the rebuilding process. The TPI formed the Joint Council/Town Planning Officer's Section Committee to study and promote how TPI members could serve local authorities also and secure government work. The TPI served as consultants to Minister of Works, John Reith's Consultative Committee on Planning, advising that local Planning Departments each have a Planning Officer, presumably from their

⁴⁵ Lionel Brett, “Second Thoughts on Planning,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 57.2. (December 1949) 47.

⁴⁶ “Ministry of Education National Short Course for Teachers of Architecture,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 56. 7 (May 1949) 332.

⁴⁷ Earnst Hone Ford, City Engineer and Surveyor of Coventry, “Presidential Address, 1946,” *Journal of the Institution of Municipal Engineers*. 73.1 (September 1946) 15.

membership.⁴⁸ RIBA also corresponded with the government, writing to the Minister of Works and Building to express the organization's commitment to "its responsibilities to the whole community in the matter of reconstruction." RIBA asserted the value of architects after the war arguing, "The problems of reconstruction are precisely those which come within the purview of the architect's professional activities."⁴⁹ The letter asked the Minister of Works to accept their help in reconstruction planning, asserting that RIBA "feels that its duty to the community gives it the right to ask that its resources and experience should be consulted by the Government as a preliminary to far reaching decisions."⁵⁰ Correspondence between Ministry officials expressed their displeasure at RIBA's presumptuous request for information and statistics to begin reconstruction planning, saying "their job starts much later" and that they should let the Government do its work and in the mean be "persuaded not to go beyond their field."⁵¹ In internal memos, they criticized RIBA's blatant "propagandizing" and "general campaign...to set themselves up in the planning consultant world." Nonetheless, the Ministry hesitated to respond to RIBA or the other professional organizations, aiming not to take sides regarding these "difficult questions of the relative positions of various professional bodies."⁵²

The Institution of Municipal Engineers (IME) made similar claims about their role in planning in several letters to Minister of Town and County Planning, Lewis Silkin. Mr. Vincent and H.J. Manzioni of the IME asserted the municipal engineers' unique skills of in guiding planning for local authorities, and argued that outside planning consultants would not be needed within the planning process. These letters lamented that Government departments ignored or belittled the skills of engineers and surveyors, and informed the Ministry that they would "fight a deliberate attempt to supercede them in their work." A letter from H.J. Manzioni argued that other professional organizations such as RIBA and TPI used propaganda and "influential contacts" to establish a "connection with future planning and reconstruction out of all proportion to their relative experience and past work." He complained that except for making an appeal to the Ministry, his hands were tied in this battle for professional territory because as local government employees "the weapons of propaganda and public announcement are denied to its members by the traditions of public service."⁵³ The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) made similar claims for their expertise, arguing for more technical expertise in planning, when weighing in on influential plans such as the *County of London Plan*. They criticized the plan saying, "apart from finance, the practical sides of the problem have not been considered." These types of critiques grew out of the surveyors' defensive desire to protect their role as technical experts in postwar reconstruction planning.⁵⁴

Town Planning Minister Lewis Silken, and his staff hoped to avoid a turf war in which various professionals staked claim on planning duties. Instead they asserted that all proficient professionals should be given the responsibility, whatever their affiliations.

⁴⁸ Cherry, 135.

⁴⁹ NA: HLG 71/750 Postwar Reconstruction. "Royal Institute of British Architects, March 1941."

⁵⁰ NA: HLG 71/750 Postwar Reconstruction. "Outline Summary of the Memorandum to the Minister of Works and Building," 1.

⁵¹ NA: HLG 71/760 Institution of Municipal Engineers, 1941-1949, "Letter to Mr. Neal. From H.M.V., January 19, 1944."

⁵² NA: HLG 71/750 Postwar Reconstruction. Letter to Mr. Root. March 8, 1941; Letter to Mr. Rodda from Blaise Gillie, July 2, 1945.

⁵³ NA: HLG 71/760 Institution of Municipal Engineers "Letter from HJ Manzioni to Lawrence Neal, October 2, 1942."

⁵⁴ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/40 County of London Plan, 1943, Observations of Interested Bodies "Memorandum of Observations by the Council of the Chartered Surveyor's Institution on the County of London Plan, 1943. December 1943."

Trained as a solicitor, not a planner, Silkin tried to remain impartial in his evaluation of the various professions. Nonetheless Silkin agreed with some of the limitations of the technical professions. Describing surveyors, he asserts, "Generally speaking, it may be said that they lack the breadth of outlook and 'savoir-faire' of the best consultants and planning officers." However, he questioned the dominance of the planning consultants, saying "it remains to be seen whether we will get better results from the planning priesthood."⁵⁵ One ministry employee, balked at the presumptuousness of the professional organizations, particularly the IME saying, "The institution are, in effect, claiming that the Municipal and County Engineer is a planner by Divine Right...[I] contend that no one is a planner by Devine Right. It is an art that has to be learnt and releartnt continuously." The ministry did not acknowledge the superior claim of any of these professional groups to lead planning, and asserted that these claims would have little impact on the government's policy toward who plans.⁵⁶

Determining the Qualifications of Planning

The issue of who would plan reemerged years later after the British Parliament passed the 1947 Town and County Planning Act, drastically reshaping government responsibilities in town planning. Recognizing that more planners would be needed under new planning legislation, the Minister Silkin formed the Qualifications of Planning Committee to determine how to fill the growing need for professionals, which professions should take part in planning, and what education and skills planners should receive. This committee, headed by barrister and Liberal politician George Schuster, and composed of non-professionals, became known as the Schuster Committee. The committee's approach redefined planning to place greater emphasis on the task of regulating the development of land, accounting for social and economic objectives, and resolving conflicts to protect the public interest, all tasks outside the bounds of architectural and urban design training. The Committee, considered planning to be as much a social and economic activity as it was a technical or design problem.⁵⁷ The committee aimed to diversify the types of professions and skills that could engage in planning, thus diminishing the emphasis on design and technical skills. This shift disrupted the existing membership qualifications of the Town Planning Institute (TPI) that favored the engineers, surveyors, and architects who accounted for the majority of practicing planners. Instead, the committee aimed to increase the number of planners with skills in public administration and the social sciences.⁵⁸ Silkin argued, "I should like to see the distinction between the technician and the administrator very much blurred... the leader of the technical team should be chosen on account of his administrative ability."⁵⁹ Silkin hoped to break down the professional dominance of the surveyors, engineers, and architects in planning work, and encourage greater acceptance of professions such a geographers, economists, and sociologists into the TPI and into planning positions. This definition of planners, with its lack of attention to architectural design, worried architects and planning consultants who had been working in the field.

⁵⁵ NA: HLG 71/760 Institution of Municipal Engineers "Minutes Sheet. From Mr. Silkin to Mr. Vincent. June 14, 1941."

⁵⁶ NA: HLG 71/760 Institution of Municipal Engineers "Letter from Mr. Neal. Sept. 21, 1942. In response to Institution of Municipal and County Engineers' "Memorandum on the Qualifications of Persons Entrusted with Town and County Planning," Sept 15, 1942.

⁵⁷ William Hollingford, "Qualifications for Town and Country Planners: A review of the Schuster Committee," Town Planning Review, 21.4 (January, 1951) 357.

⁵⁸ Eric Reade, *British Town and County Planning* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987) 53.

⁵⁹ Cherry, 163.

Silkin's challenge to the professional monopolies, which had been loosely established for nearly four decades, motivated many professional groups to speak out to protect their professional territory. While making the recommendations for the future of planning, the committee received pleas from many of the professional institutions, which again hoped to stake a claim on planning work. One of the most vocal advocates, the prolific planning consultant Thomas Sharp, trained as a borough surveyor, spoke on behalf of the older generation of planning consultants. Sharp expressed concern that the new 1947 planning legislation would hinder his planning practice, as work shifted to in-house employees in local government agencies. As the role of the planner diversified into social, physical, and technical planning, Sharp's primarily physically and historically situated approach became outdated by modern social scientific, technical, and survey based methods of design. Fearing a change in his status in the field, Sharp coordinated with other planning consultants to write a letter to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, to try to protect the role of the planning consultant in the new planning process. Sharp argued, "It would be regrettable, and a substantial loss to the planning movement, if the Consultant came to be regarded more in the nature of an expert witness than as a normal practitioner of planning."⁶⁰ Sharp's statement shows the concern that local authorities would hire engineers and surveyors as in house staff, only using consultants occasionally to augment their work on larger plans. He asked the Ministry to guide to encourage or even require local authorities to hire consultants and to advise them as to the usefulness of consultants in ensuring design quality.⁶¹ He believed that the reluctance of in-house staff to hire outside consultants "arises from a fear that such employment must cast doubt of their own professional competence."⁶² He argued that the average Planning Officer of a Local authority lacked the "special kind of architectural skill and experience...necessary to preserve and enhance the effect of existing good architecture" and ensure the public good.⁶³

Minister Silkin responded, "I see no reason at all why Consultants...should not continue to play a full part in the future as they have done in the past...the great problem in planning is going to be the shortage of qualified and experienced men and women..."⁶⁴ Nonetheless, Silkin warned Sharp that if planning consultants want to remain relevant and useful in town planning, their usefulness must also "depend on the methods adopted by the consultants themselves." He advised them to ensure that they examine the particularities of the local places they plan through extended rather than quick visits, speculating that Planning Authorities would be hesitant to hire consultants who apply a standard plan to every site, without attaining a detailed view of the local problem.⁶⁵ Mr. Politzer of the Qualifications of Planning Committee encouraged consultants that work for Local Authorities "may pick up again soon" and that lists of these consultants had been made available. However he warned that he "would not

⁶⁰ NA: HLG/87/5 Committee on Qualifications of Planners: Planning Consultants 1947-1949, "The Position of the Planning Consultant under New Town and Country Planning Bill. Enclosed in Letter from Thomas Sharp to Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning. June 25, 1947."

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² NA: HLG/87/5 Letter from Thomas Sharp to Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning. November 12, 1948.

⁶³ NA: HLG/87/5 Letter from Thomas Sharp to Mr. Politzer. January 7, 1949.

⁶⁴ NA: HLG/87/5 Letter from Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning to Thomas Sharp. July 8, 1947.

⁶⁵ NA: HLG/87/5 Letter from Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning to Thomas Sharp. November 30, 1948.

recommend above half” of the consultants who have little experience, no particular training, and are “only known to be in private practice.”⁶⁶

Although the Qualifications of Planning Committee avoided engaging in the disputes to define professional territory, the correspondence of the committee did stress the importance of the Planning Consultants in acting as a coordinator in order to combine the various knowledge and skills by these different specialists into a coherent whole. The Committee admitted “it would be ‘a thousand pities’ or ‘disastrous’ if the Planning consultants were to disappear” and that it would not be possible for Local Authorities “making use of Borough Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, etc... to fulfill its planning responsibilities.” The committee affirmed the importance of the planning consultant as a liaison between the various other professions. At this time, however, the committee still doubted that there might be “no need (or no possibility) of building up a completely independent profession of ‘planners.’”⁶⁷ Minister Silkin further embraced the role of the Planning Consultant in ensuring public support for planning. He expressed concern that Surveyors have been unpopular and have faced opposition to their projects, criticizing them for being “hide-bound and autocratic” and attempting “unduly to obtain coercion of owners that the skilled planner would obtain more effectively by persuasion.”⁶⁸ In the 1940s, as the practice of planning took on an increasingly social and political character, this ability to communicate effectively with the public gave planning consultants and architects a major edge over the formerly dominant technical fields of municipal engineers and chartered surveyors. Nonetheless, the Qualifications of Planning Committee did not take a clear stand on which profession should take the lead in planning practice, but instead focused on ensuring the availability of qualified planners of any profession. Nonetheless, their bias toward the need of planner for technical and administrative skills overshadowed the importance of designers in the profession.

To meet this goal, the Committee recommended that the TPI open their membership qualifications to include a broader variety of professions and skills. In response to early suggestions that the TPI extend its membership to include social scientists, the organization replied, “they would warmly welcome them as part of the planning team, if...they should take the normal course examinations.”⁶⁹ However, in 1948 former TPI administrator George Pepler, wrote to the Committee asserting the institute’s right to define their own standards for professional membership. His memo asking the Committee to validate TPI’s authority over the planning profession, recognized planning as a discrete profession, and empowered TPI to lead the training and qualification of planners.⁷⁰

The Schuster Committee report granted the first of these goals, naming the Institute as the “authoritative national institution” in developing planning as an independent profession. However, the report did advise opening up the qualifications to a greater range of professions, including geography and social sciences, challenging the idea of planning as a discrete design profession. This broader definition of planning threatened

⁶⁶ NA: HLG/87/5 ‘Q.P. Committee-Consultants’ Letter to Politzer from S.L.G. Beaufoy, December 14, 1948

⁶⁷ NA: HLG/87/5 Qualifications of Planning Committee- Notes from Chairman, Dec 12, 1948.

⁶⁸ NA: HLG 71/760 Minutes Sheet. From Mr. Silkin to Mr. Vincent. June 14, 1941.

⁶⁹ TPI committee as quoted by Cherry, 219.

⁷⁰ Cherry, 163-4.

the professional monopoly that architects, engineers and surveyors had established for themselves. The report also challenged the TPI as the authority for determining the training of planners, it calling for TPI to dismantle the Joint Examination Board. For years, these planning exams has tested the technical and design skills necessary for the surveying, engineering, and architecture professions, but lacked material related to the social sciences.⁷¹ The TPI resisted these changes, especially arguments that planning should place greater emphasis on administration and coordination of a diverse range of professionals. Instead the TPI held onto their older definition of planning as a distinct profession that primarily entailed design. In the end the TPI, largely ignored the Schuster Committee's recommendations.⁷²

However, the TPI did make use of the Schuster Report as the basis to claim leadership over administering and developing the planning profession, independent of the other professional organizations. During the Schuster Committee's deliberations, the TPI aimed to strengthen this professional role by applying for a Royal Charter, which would establish Town Planning as a discrete profession and allow the TPI as the authoritative institutions of the profession. The charter would empower the TPI to stake clear claims over the professional sphere of planning, certify which professionals had the necessary skills to engage in planning work, and prevent interference and competition from related professional bodies. This did not sit well with the other planning professions. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, and the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) challenged the charter arguing, "'Town Planning is not a separate professional activity. It requires a bringing together of the art of the architect with the skill of the civil engineer and the knowledge of the surveyor, as well as a knowledge of public administration, a judgment of economic trends and populations distributions and other matters of social character.'" TPI contradicted that planning was an independent profession, because it "requires a technique of its own and is, therefore, clearly a separate professional activity." Although the TPI failed to gain the Charter in 1953, it successfully reapplied in 1959, with a higher percentage of professional planners enrolled as member.⁷³

The publicity and debate around the qualifications of planners crystallized a new conception of the planner, not merely as a designer or technician, but as a liaison between the public and the government, and a coordinator of artistic, technical social, economic, and political considerations. The TPI asserted a new role for the planner as a discrete profession of generalists diverging from other related occupations. This new role for planners illuminated the need for planners to have skills in social as well as physical planning, opening a new field of inquiry within the field.

⁷¹ Cherry, 165.

⁷² Reade, 53.

⁷³ Cherry, 165, 167, 169.

The Birth of Social Planning

In order to understand this shift in the definition of the professional skills of planners, it is necessary to understand the growing emphasis on the social aspects of planning work, and the birth of social planning as a discrete field. Social planning can be traced back to the work of 19th and early 20th century social reformers and social scientists to examine the city through a social and economic lens. The London School of Economics developed one of the first programs for training social scientists to use surveys as a tool for studying and solving urban problems. Geographer Patrick Geddes applied these ideas more directly to planning, emphasizing the importance of using local surveys to study the social and physical conditions of regions and the patterns of urban growth as preparation for town planning. Garden city planners, such as Lewis Mumford also applied social and economic principles such as demographics to planning. Social planning then arose through a transatlantic dialogue about how social science could be applied to planning.

During the 1930s and 40s, planning literature had increasingly emphasized social planning, which often received equal or greater coverage than technical considerations. Planning literature often emphasized the division between 'social planning' and 'technical planning' as distinct tasks led by professionals with different skills sets and objectives. Both sets of planners dealt with physical planning, albeit through a different lens. While a technical planner solved quantitative problems regarding new road construction and public infrastructure, social planners addressed issues such as settlement density, arrangement, and social interaction.

The growing interest in the social aspects of planning led to a series of conferences that explored how social issues affected design. The Housing Center, an institute dedicated to studying and solving housing related problems, took the lead in exploring the social aspects of planning, organizing the *Conference on Problems of Social Environment* in February 1940. This conference invited "architects, land planners, housing experts, doctors, agriculturalists, industrialists, educationalists, sociologists, psychologists, and others" including prominent figures such as Patrick Abercrombie, Elizabeth Denby, Frederick J. Osborn. The organizers aimed to establish a permanent council for social planning that would serve to coordinate professional efforts and seek to influence the public and Parliament in the future direction of environmental and social planning. The council's first project, the 'Industrial Location' report, aimed to apply the principles of social planning to the problem of where to locate urban industrial growth.⁷⁴

The Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction organized another conference, titled "Human Needs in Planning" in January 1946. This conference explored the recommendations for territorial planning based on social goals and research. This conference included panels such as "Social Relationships of Territorial Grouping", "The Grouping of Homes in Relation to Workplaces and institutions" and "The Social Function of Towns and their Place in the Region."⁷⁵ An article in the *Journal of RIBA* notes that the conference demonstrated the importance of social science

⁷⁴ "Conference on Problems of Social Environment," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 47.4 (February 19, 1940) 62-63.

⁷⁵ "Human Needs in Planning: The Contribution of Social Sciences to Architecture and Planning," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.12 (October 1945) 345-346.

research in town planning. It promoted research techniques such as interviews, surveys and statistics as tools to determine “what the public wants.” The conference also discussed some of the weakness of relying on social science, a comparatively new discipline without standard research methods, as the primary method of planning practice. One particular concern arose regarding the practice of opinion polling techniques, because “what the public wants does not necessarily give a statement of what the public should have.” Nonetheless, planners valued these surveys as a better alternative to “pure guesswork.”⁷⁶

Many professional journals in the 1940s discussed the ways in which architects and planning professionals could address the social needs of the larger public. The *Journal of RIBA* expressed the importance of architects recognizing their responsibility to respond to the “needs and well-being of those who will live and work within the completed building and its surroundings.”⁷⁷ Architect Thomas Penberthy Bennet commented that architects should respond to a shift in patronage during the postwar period, when architects would work to “provide building for an ever-widening public.” Bennet argued for new approaches to architectural dialogue with an increasingly educated and opinionated clientele, in which architects would ‘justify’ rather than ‘tell’ clients what the design should be. Bennet notes that the architect’s role would become more advisory, consulting clients and serving on committees, rather than working as the sole artistic author of design projects.⁷⁸

Addressing this new social role of the designer, many journals included articles questioning what role the social sciences would play in town planning. In his article “Sociology and Architecture” published by RIBA, architect Richard Sheppard noted that because “both architect and sociologist are concerned with social groups, associations and communities,” sociology could be useful to planners in “supplying statistical and...tested facts that bear on their task” and “providing generalizations and interpretations that summarize these [facts] conveniently.” He recommended that planners needed to address social trends, such as the decay of social institutions, changing patterns of government and social services, mobility, family size and structure, changing units of industry.⁷⁹ Gerald Barry agreed with the need to embrace social science methods, quoting Mumford’s assertion that planning “take an almost anthropological approach.”⁸⁰

In contrast, some planners expressed concern that the social aspects of design not take on too much undue importance. An article in the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* argued that planning cannot be a purely social activity, but is inevitably shaped by the technical considerations. It asserted that although sociologists have contributed much to planners’ understanding of urban social dynamics, sociologists and planners have taken separate paths since World War I, and are no longer working in tandem. Considering the gap between practice and research, the author expressed concern at the dangers of social planning, which may become social engineering if experts take a strong role in

⁷⁶ Human Needs in Planning-Conference at the RIBA,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.4. (February 1946) 126.

⁷⁷ “Architects and Reconstruction,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.11 (September 1945) 313-314.

⁷⁸ T.P. Bennet, “The Architect and the Organization of Post-War Building,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.3. (January 1945) 63-73.

⁷⁹ Richard Sheppard, “Sociology and Architecture,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.9. (July 1946) 386-394.

⁸⁰ Gerald Barry, “The Place of the Architect in the Post War World,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.9. (July 1946) 374.

determining the public's needs. The article worries that democracy could become threatened if planners are perceived as "a petty dictator...posing as a Master Mind who knows what is good for other people better than they know themselves."⁸¹ These articles showed the debates about how social science research should be incorporated into planning practice, on the one hand serving as a useful tool to better meet the needs of the public, while on the other hand potentially leading planners to take on unwarranted power in social engineering. This dichotomy lingered as a lasting question in the role of planners in shaping the social life of cities, and of the role of planning expertise in a democracy.

The Planner for Democracy

This new emphasis on social planning and the role of experts within a democracy grew partially from planners' engagement with the expanding role of the state in this period. During the 1930s, in the context to the New Deal in America, the rise of the Labour Party in London, planners had been engaged as part of the political movements to develop the state's role in protecting the social welfare of the public. This role expanded as both the United Kingdom and the United States entered war, expanding the responsibilities of the government to organize the national economy to mobilize for war.

During the 1930s, planning had taken on new meanings; beyond serving as a technical tool for guiding urban form, planning also offered a means to coordinate social change, and to propose rational solutions to political problems. As the Government began to pursue more ambitious town planning measures in the 1940s, several politicians and bureaucrats engaged in planning expressed concern that the work be done in a democratic way, in cooperation with the people. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, leader of the parliamentary group promoting town planning, emphasized the need for "a form of co-operation between Government and people, between administrator and administered, which would savor not of control or restriction, but of welcome initiative and shared experience."⁸² Minister of Works and Planning, John Reith concurred, saying, "Understanding and co-operation between Government and people, is...essential if objectives are to be reached."⁸³ The planning bureaucrats emphasized that in order to meet the public interest in a democratic way, planners had to base their work of factual research, apolitical motives, and a non-authoritative approach. Noting the role of architects as "planners in the political sense of the word" Sir Richard Acland, M.P. presented a new code of conduct for architects in relationship to their political duties. Rather than focusing on self-interest, self-promotion, and the accumulation of wealth, Acland asserted a new order that emphasized the duty of architects to be of service to the community, to align their fees with their needs, and to reject the role of landlord or capital investor.⁸⁴ This new socialist order highlighted the privileged position that professionals such as architects had held, and asserted their responsibility to act in service to the greater community.

⁸¹ "The Contribution of the Sociologist to Town Planning" *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 39.5 (April, 1953) 127.

⁸² NA: HLG 86/1 The 1940 Council- Lord Balfour of Burleigh. Letter from Lord Burleigh to Lord Reith "Ground Plan of Britain," *The 1940 Council*. 3.

⁸³ NA: HLG 86/1 Letter from Lord J.C.W. Reith to Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Feb 18, 1942.

⁸⁴ Sir Richard Acland, M.P., "The Politics of Planning," *Architectural Review*, 94, 562. (September 1943) 91-92.

Starting in the 1930s, architects and planners had embraced the discourse of democracy, describing their work as “self education,” “safeguarding public interest,” and a “contribution to society.” In response the Town Planning Institute (TPI) adopted a new form of professionalism, which shifted in focus from technical expertise to meet the needs of private clients toward rational planning skills to meet broader public interests.⁸⁵ Architects agreed with the need for democratic planning, noting that it would require new skills from professionals. David Brookes in *Architect's Journal* argues, “This is the hard way, the democratic way, to the realization of plans. It can only be done by a co-operative job of technical research and presentation, followed by public understanding and acceptance.”⁸⁶ Architect Ronald Bradbury posited that public building work had created a “new class of architects” working for local authorities, which must “embrace ethical and sociological considerations as well as practical and aesthetic concerns.” He argues that the profession must “reorient its views and ideas,” curbing individualism in the name of needs of the community.⁸⁷

One of the greatest concerns about planning during this period grew from the question of how much authority the planner should have to make decisions. The public expressed fear that planners would have too much power. In the face of totalitarian governments like Germany and Russia, the British defended their ideals of democracy. Lord Burleigh warned that “Planning means Direction; it does not mean Dictation.”⁸⁸ Architectural historian John Gloag expressed concern that the reputation of planners has been sullied, often depicted as “humorless highbrows, intent in such alien activities as ‘social engineering’ or in plain English. ‘Pushing people around.’” He critiqued the practice of many planners to “hide their always excellent intentions behind a smoke screen of economic, psychological, and sociological jargon.”⁸⁹ For that reason, the *Journal of RIBA*, architect Lionel Brett argued that planners should avoid subjecting the public to social experiments that disrupt and uproot people’s everyday lives.⁹⁰ On the other hand, in *Architect's Journal*, E.M. Nicholson, advised planners not to be deterred from planning, because of the common accusation that it is undemocratic. He argued that Democracy does not necessarily mean laissez faire policies, but should also include positive social goals attained through consent. While he admitted that “Some kinds of planning restrict liberty”, he argued that planning also opened up possibilities to people.⁹¹

In 1943 and 1944, this theme of democracy appeared in several articles in *Architectural Review*, in which American New Deal planners advised the British on reconstruction. The frequent inclusion of American planning projects, and American commentators showed the influence of New Deal planning in the United States in the shaping the dialog of democratic, socialist planning methods in Britain in the 1940s. Julian Huxley, consultant for the British policy think tank Political and Economic Planning, argued for the importance of participatory rather than authoritarian planning. He advised planners to resist the temptations and the lure of power and of becoming a benevolent dictator,

⁸⁵ Cherry, 108-9, 111.

⁸⁶ David Brookes (nom de Plume), “We Must Make Certain The Plan are Realized’ *Architect's Journal*. (April 27, 1943) 315.

⁸⁷ Ronald Bradbury, “The Architect and the Community,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 56. 8. (June 1949) 366-8.

⁸⁸ NA: HLG 86/1 Lord Burleigh to Lord Reith, “Ground Plan of Britain,” *The 1940 Council*. 2.

⁸⁹ John Gloag, “Planning and Ordinary People,” *Town and Country Planning* 20,103 (1952) 509.

⁹⁰ Lionel Brett, “Second Thoughts on Planning,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 57.2 (December 1949) 43-48.

⁹¹ E.M. Nicholson, “Physical Planning-The Bogies- Democracy: Planning is Undemocratic” *Architect's Journal*, 98, 2541 (Oct 7, 1943) 253.

saying than even a good plan will fail if imposed because, “happiness cannot be imposed” and “power, even when...intellectual and beneficent...corrupts.” He advocated that participation should be encouraged among the people at large, saying that in order to succeed, the “living plan itself must evolve and grow and can only do so on the basis of co-operative participation.”⁹² American planning advocate, Catherine Bauer emphasized, “Planning is politics...it cannot and should not be decided by experts and intellectuals alone, no matter how rational, eloquent, scientifically objective, high minded, progressive, and correct they may be. Although she notes that many professions are weary to engage in politics, she argues, “It is clearly the lifeblood of democracy.” Bauer anticipated that developing a means for democratic decision-making would be one of the “most delicate and difficult problems of our day”. She noted that in the field of town planning, “which is technically complex but at the same time literally ‘close to home’ for the individual citizen”, the problem of how to balance expertise and public opinion would be particularly difficult. She warned planners to avoid taking ‘progressive’ tactics for reform, which often lead to paternalism. She instead urged professionals to practice planning ‘with the people’ rather than ‘for the people.’⁹³ Together these American planners promoted citizen engagement in government planning projects, serving as a model for the type of social planning methods many British planners hoped to utilize in their postwar work.

Balancing Public Participation and Professional Expertise

As planning professionals recognized their new role with democracy, they struggled to answer the question of how to balance their duty to the public with the technical aspects of their professional knowledge. Many planners and officials embraced public participation as a means to establish a more democratic planning process. Planner E.M. Nicholson notes, “So far planning has had feeble contact with the life of the people.” He advised planners to “subject planning itself to the healthy and sometimes brutal judgments of public opinion” by submitting their plans to the public through clear and understandable language and imagery.⁹⁴ Architect and critic, J.M. Richards, advised architects to “develop some machinery which would permit decisions to be made by people themselves.”⁹⁵ RIBA president, W.H. Ansell outlined a possible approach for participation, which advocated that the “whole community should take part” to create a “flexible vision of the kind of community to be created” which would incorporate “suggestions by all manner of citizens, by civic societies and the like.”⁹⁶ An article in the *Architect's Journal* encouraged the public, seen to be weary of planning, to take interest. “Planning must not be regarded merely as a game for experts for it will condition the lives of each one of us. Every individual will be deeply affected by the results of planning and he should “take a hand in influencing them.”⁹⁷

⁹² Julian Huxley, “TVA-Planning for the People or With the People,” *Architectural Review*, 93, 558. (June 1943) 165; Catherine Bauer, “The County of London Plan—American Reactions: Planning is Politics—But are Planners Politicians,” *Architectural Review*. 96, 574 (September 1944) 81-82.

⁹⁴ E.M. Nicholson, “Physical Planning-The Bogies- Democracy: Planning is Undemocratic” *Architect's Journal*, 98, 2541 (Oct 7, 1943) 253.

⁹⁵ J.M. Richards as quoted by “Catherine Bauer. “The County of London Plan—American Reactions: Planning is Politics—But are Planners Politicians” *Architectural Review*. 96, 574. (September 1944) 81-82.

⁹⁶ “Town Planning Conference at Manchester,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.12. (October 1945) 345-346.

⁹⁷ “People, Plans, Pride,” *Architect's Journal*, 102, 2649 (November 1, 1945) 309.

Nonetheless, few planners believed that their role entailed simply translating the people's wishes directly into plans. Many planners questioned the effectiveness of public participation, and whether public opinion would be an accurate or helpful measure of the public good. Most planners advocated an approach that would encourage consultation of the public, but that maintained the expert as the authority best able to ensure the 'public good.' Thomas Sharp, in his Presidential address to the Town Planning Institute notes that the "people have the inalienable right to know fully what is being planned for them." However, he warns against the 'demagoguery' of excessive popular input during the drafting of plans. Instead his vision for "consultation with the people" remained limited to providing "the opportunity for criticism," to understand, critic and possibly reject the plan, rather than "actual participation in the act of planning." According to Sharp, publicity and criticism would insure the "the democratic character of the plan."⁹⁸ Minister of Town Planning, Silkin, took a balanced approach to professional expertise, in which professionals should neither be "undervalued nor allowed to dominate." Silkin believed that his planning legislation, which embodied the principles of planning on which the Labour Party has been elected, grew from democratic consensus. He aimed to further ensure democratic consensus through provisions in his proposals for the 1947 Town and Planning Act.⁹⁹

The Not-So-Public Planner

Planning professionals in the 1940s recognized and embraced the public and political nature of their work within a democracy. Architects, engineers and public servants aimed to increase their skills in social planning in order to satisfy the public interest and meet the requirements of public planning practice for local authorities. However, once post-war reconstruction began in earnest, the planning profession shifted away from the public role it had imagined for itself, retreating into a more pragmatic approach to getting the job done. After 1951 many of these discourses about the role of social planning and participatory planning died down as the Conservatives came to power, and as planning faced great financial restraints, with expediency replacing idealism. The idea of social planning remained important within some planning research, but did not come into practice in a substantial way until the 1960s. In the large-scale projects of the 1950s and 1960s, the planner acted as either 'technical expert' or 'bumbling bureaucrat'. Planners lost their 'evangelical spirit,' instead seeing planning as a 'taken for granted' task. In 1957 Thomas Sharp worried "'We used to be so respected—even if it was the rather indulgent respect that idealists and do-gooders are generally given! And now we are not respected.'"¹⁰⁰ In the 1950s, the profession organized a series of meetings "the Planner and the Planned" to address their poor public image.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, the planner, as a professional, faded into the background of public life.

The public image of planners in film also shifted. Fewer planning films were made and released, and those few created no longer heroicized the planner as a charismatic team leaders and or an artistic visionary. Most the films become purely informational rather than propagandistic, routine and dull, without flair and with little attempt at capturing

⁹⁸ Thomas Sharp, "Presidential Address at the Town Planning Institute, November 15," *Architect's Journal*, (November 29, 1945) 402.

⁹⁹ F.J. Osborn quoted by Nick Tiratsoo, "The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities, 1945-55: Myths and Reality." *Contemporary British History*. 14.1 (2000) 27-44. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Sharp quoted by Cherry. *The Evolution of British Town Planning*, 160.

¹⁰¹ Cherry, 160.

the public imagination. The Ministry of Information called one of its own films, *A Plan to Work* (1948), “too dull for words.”¹⁰² Some of the last of the propaganda films stopped featuring live planners at all, instead choosing to feature cartoons, as in the 1948 film promoting New Towns. In this film, the cartoon planner waves his hand and the landscape changes from before to after. Gone were the technical maps, the surveys, the explanations, and the planner as a technical or political figure. Instead this film presented planning as wizardry, a magical act that takes place instantaneously without conscious effort from planners or the public.¹⁰³ The filmmakers had decided that the public perceived planners as dull, technical and remote.

The fading public presence of planners after the 1940s reflected the changing role of planners in public life. Gordon Cherry calls this change, “role confusion” in which planners had adopted a technique of adapting their role according to the political expedient.¹⁰⁴ During the war, as the profession sought to establish itself, planners sought a more public role in protecting the public good. After their profession had become established, with much work to do, at tight resources of the postwar recession and Conservative leadership, planners choose to take a low profile, and claim a non-ideological, practical role. Although the planners’ idealistic role within democratic politics subsided for several decades after the 1940s, reconstruction planners made a lasting impact on the ideas and mechanisms of planning for future generations. The next chapter will show how the planner embraced their new role within politics by serving as advocates for new planning legislation.

¹⁰² NA: INF 6/547 *A Plan to Work* on (Town Planning: Dufermine) 1948. “Letter from Miss Catch to Mr. John Grierson. November 1948.”

¹⁰³ Gold and Ward, 72.

¹⁰⁴ Reade, 33.

3 The Word on the Streets: Social Surveys and Public Opinion for Town Planning



Figure 1 and 2: In the still on the left George Gribble asked survey questions to a Tangleton resident in his home, while the still on the right showed him reading the negative survey responses to the displeased members of the Tangleton town council. Marcel Varnel, Director. *He Snoops to Conquer*. Columbia British Productions, 1944.

In 1944, the British commercial film “He Snoops to Conquer” depicted the rising popularity of the social survey as a tool for post war town planning through a comedic lens. The film started with the Town Council of Tangleton deciding to conduct a social survey in order to secure funding from the national government that would solve its budget deficit. They also hoped the survey would disprove the critique of Tangleton’s poor housing conditions reported in the press. The council hired the bumbling George Gribble to conduct the survey. Played by popular comedian George Formby, the established face of the innocent proletarian class, Gribble represented the sympathetic ordinary man. Most of the residents responded incredulously to the survey questions, which included such impertinent inquiries such as “Do you wear long or short underpants? How much water do you have in your bath?” One woman hit Gribble over the head with a frying pan when he stated, “I am here to investigate you.” However the more serious questions on the survey exposed the resident’s ire at the poor quality of their housing, and their anger at the council for not improving their living conditions. Gribble asked the residents, “Are you satisfied with the housing conditions in which you live?” A series of respondents answered “Could you be satisfied if the roof leaked, and the plaster keeps falling down? The floor is rotten, and the chimney smokes. The ceiling’s too low. The rent’s too high.” When Gribble returned to the council with the results, the council members were furious with the negative results and decided to suppress the unflattering responses to protect their reputation. They sent only the positive surveys to the national government and burned the rest. Again the unwitting Gribble is put to the task. However, an accident sent the surveys flying through the streets, leading an angry mob of citizens to protest the scandalous destruction of government documents. The council members were exposed as manipulative landlords only interested in maintaining power.¹ (Figures 1 and 2)

¹ Marcel Varnel, Director. *He Snoops to Conquer*. Columbia British Productions, 1944.

This film poked fun at the social survey, including its intrusiveness in the lives of the poor, the minimal effect it had on real plans for change, and its role as a bureaucratic tool that propagated the power of political leaders and technical experts. However, the film also capitalized on the optimism of the time, depicting how the survey helped to awaken public opinion in support of town planning and for housing reform, showing the positive power of the survey to expose problems and enable change. This film was indicative of the symbolic and functional role the survey played in 1940s urban and social planning.

As the planning profession increasingly embraced the application of social science methodology into the task of physical planning, it adopted the survey as a major tool both for understanding public opinion and local demographics. The application of survey techniques and public opinion polling led planners to try to serve the needs of the public by constantly measuring their wants and needs.

This chapter explores the various forms of surveys and public opinion polls applied and developed for town planning practice in the 1940s. Examining case studies such as the surveys conducted by women's organizations, local planning agencies, and social scientists highlights how these groups attempted to understand the needs and wants of the working classes in order to develop better housing and neighborhood design policies. The survey results indicated that professionals and laypeople held fundamentally different views about what amenities new housing should include and how social services should be approached and delivered. Unfortunately these important findings often did not become integrated into the town plans due to the financial and bureaucratic limitations under which government agencies operated. This chapter illuminates the role of the survey within planning practice, and examines how it failed to serve as a tool for ensuring democratic decision-making.

The Antecedents of the Planning Survey

In the 1940s, planners drew upon a variety of forms of statistics, mapping techniques, surveys, public opinions polls, and market research methods that had been developed over the previous century. In order to understand the use of these tools in the 1940s, it is useful to look back to the 19th and early 20th century to understand how and why social scientists developed these tools, and how they served to aid in understanding and governing of society.

This historical analysis reveals how the collection of statistics and quantitative surveys of the populace became a means to extend government power to address new responsibilities to care for the public through intervention in housing and urban planning. In the 19th century, the development of technologies for mapping and counting social facts, including census and survey technologies, facilitated the government's 'discovery of the population.' This allowed the state to develop forms of 'bio-political' governmentality aimed at rational rule from afar over the collective social body.² These statistics, by gathering together facts about the condition of society, served as a tool for allowing self-regulation of these problems by civil society. However, the

² See Michel Foucault, "Governmentality." *Ideology and Consciousness*. 6 (1979) 5-21; Bruce Curtis, "Foucault on Governmentality and Population: The Impossible Discovery." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*. 27, 4 (Fall 2002) 506-508.

growth of non-state actors as regulators of society increased rather than decreased the power of the state.³ During the interwar and postwar periods, as Britain expanded the role of the welfare state, this type of demographic data became an important tool for making the populace visible, as well as for enacting housing and planning policies.

The Social Body and the Science of Statistics

While the survey became an increasingly important political and technical tool in the interwar period, its history and methodology date back to the 19th century. During the 1800s social reformers recognized the need to develop techniques for investigating and conceptualizing society, searching for tools or metaphors that would allow them to abstract space and society into frameworks for government regulation. One of these abstractions adopted by reformers was the metaphor of the social body, which captured the idea of society as an organism shaped by its physical environment. This metaphor allowed reformers and experts to differentiate themselves from their object of analysis, as doctors and healers working on the diseased body. However this abstraction of social problems still allowed reformers to sympathize with the subjects, often social others such as the poor or the colonial subject, as the patient. Using the metaphor of the social body, social scientists examined the populace or the city as a single entity, or site for reform. Statistics and surveys served as a tool for studying the social body, applying rational research to diagnose social ills.⁴

The idea of the survey, while simple in its basic methodology, was not adopted by governments as a tool for rule until the Victorian period. As industrialization and urbanization created new social problems, the government began to recognize and take responsibility for addressing social issues. The desire to plan and improve cities grew from the efforts to improve the social and physical conditions of the poor. Social reformers and government officials recognized the value of the survey as a tool for rational governance, providing a means to quantify, analyze and solving issues of poverty, crime, housing shortages, and illness.⁵

In 1832, social reformer Edwin Chadwick conducted one of the first social surveys in Manchester as part of the Royal Commission of Enquiry on the Poor Laws. The results of Chadwick's survey, published as *The Moral and Physical Condition of Working Classes*, shaped the way in which Chadwick helped frame the New Poor Law of 1834. Chadwick's techniques combined eyewitness reports and statistics, establishing a precedent for future social surveys into the late 19th century.⁶ However, while the results of the survey shaped Chadwick's understanding of poverty, his surveys did not question the causes of poverty and how various forms of government aid might affect families. Instead he relied heavily upon Jeremy Bentham's ideas of government institutions as tools to observe and discipline citizens, and applying 'common sense' policies that aimed to prevent poverty by using the workhouse as a deterrent to punish the poor.⁷ In this case survey research served to augment rather than guide poverty

³ Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003). 24.

⁴ Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). 25-26, 41.

⁵ Mark Abrams, *Social Surveys and Social Action*. (Melbourne: William Heinemann Ltd., 1951) 3-4.

⁶ Poovey, 42, 75;

James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). 81-82

⁷ Abrams, 26.

policies. A later survey, *London Labour and the Poor Law* (1859), by Henry Mayhew, took a more descriptive approach to examining poverty in London, identifying and describing different character types among the poor to give a qualitative portrait of the working classes. Although the survey did include some statistics, overall its analysis was not quantitative.⁸ These early surveys did not apply the scientific analysis of statistics, but instead used statistics loosely, in tandem with social theories and qualitative observations.

At the beginning of the Victorian period, statistics emerged as a discrete academic field, with the formation of the Manchester and London Statistical societies in 1833 and 1834, the statistics sections of Brit Association for the Advancement of Science in 1834 and National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences 1857. The government began to collect surveys in 1832, forming the statistical department, which would serve as a means of attempting to rationalize government, in the context of expansion of voting rights. In 1841, England became the first country to establish the national census, gathering both statistical information about the number of people in a household or institution, but also for the first time recording all individuals' names, ages, occupations, and birthplaces. However, until the 1870s, the government's attempts to gather and use statistics for public policy remained uncoordinated, entailed separated projects by different government bodies, without any attempts to centralize or share information across fields or agencies.⁹ Statistical surveys often focused on only one aspect of life, for example education or housing.¹⁰

Codifying the 'social' into numbers for analysis and management allowed forms of rational liberal rule in which the 'social' became divided from other problems such as the political or economic, allowing for a segmented approach to government administration. While social scientists and reformed did not realize the full potential of surveys during this period, these early survey projects set precedents and developed techniques for using surveys as a tool for the abstraction and regulation of the population through the use of statistics.¹¹

Philanthropy and Social Science

Survey techniques in the UK developed in close relationship with efforts to inform and reform public policy. As the middle classes expressed concerns about the moral and social degradation caused by urbanism and industrialization, social surveys and philanthropy efforts arose as methods to understand and reform the working classes.¹² In response to the poverty of the late 19th century, social activists developed two different modes of social investigation, the social scientific methods as developed by academics at London School of Economics (LSE), and the method of individual casework usually conducted by women's philanthropy organizations such as the Charity Organization Society. The LSE model, which developed in tandem with the academic field of sociology, focused on scientific methods for conducting and

⁸ Wells, 14.

⁹ Louis Moss, *The Government Social Survey*, (London: HMSO, 1991) 1-2.

¹⁰ Wells 15.

¹¹ Poovey. 49-50, 75.

¹² Martin Bulmer, Kevin Bales and Kathryn Sklar, *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 1, 3.

interpreting social surveys and statistics. In his histories of social surveys, social scientist, David Glass described the method as “‘a scientific study of social conditions and social problems, within a limited geographical setting, the objectives of that study being implicitly or explicitly related to social policy.’”¹³

On the other hand, philanthropy work, primarily by women’s organizations, developed the case-study method as a predecessor to the professional field of social work. These women embraced social work as an extension of their role in home life, which allowed them to extend their influence into public life, forging a path to active citizenship. Despite their absence in most academic and professional fields, women played an important role in studying the conditions of the working classes. They claimed to be the most appropriate liaisons with the working classes due to the acknowledged role of the working class mother as the head of the working class family life, thus making middle class women rather than professional men a more suitable group to conduct surveys and interviews with working class families.¹⁴ Women could establish the trust of other women, due to their monopoly in the “feminized epistemology of sympathy.”¹⁵ Early philanthropist social workers often utilized casework and prescriptive strategies to solve individual family problems, focusing less on scientific or statistical analysis of the working class population as a whole. However, over time women’s groups, such as the Fabian Women’s Group, shifted away from case study methods towards an increasing use of ‘scientific’ survey techniques, and carried out their own surveys.¹⁶

This field of social investigation early on attracted many women philanthropists, who continued to participate in planning through work as social surveyors and housing reformers, often outside academic and official roles. The adoption of scientific techniques allowed these women to continue to play an essential role in social investigation and reform as the field increasingly professionalized in the 20th century. Another organization that bridged the divide between personal relationships and scientific distance was the Toynbee Hall settlement house. This organization, with ties to both LSE and Christian Socialist ideas, aimed to “‘bridge the gulf that industrialism had created between rich and poor...and to do something more than give charity.’” The Settlement house had three goals: “to spread education and culture, enable middle-class people to form personal relationships with members of the working class, and to discover facts about social problems.”¹⁷

Urban Mapping and Social Reform

After 1870, the government organized its survey efforts, including a new census type survey, in accordance with new legislation that gave the government greater responsibility over addressing social problems.¹⁸ Parliamentary Acts to prevent unhealthy urban living conditions, such as the Artisans and Laborer’s Dwelling Act of

¹³ David Glass quoted by Bulmer, et al. 3

¹⁴ Jane Lewis, “The Place of Social Investigation, Social Theory and Social work in the Approach to Late Victorian and Edwardian social problems: the Case of Beatrice Webb and Helen Bosanquet,” eds. Bulmer, et al. *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991). 148.

¹⁵ Poovey, 43.

¹⁶ Bulmer, et al., 23.

¹⁷ Objectives of Toynbee Hall as quoted by Bulmer, et al., 24.

¹⁸ Moss, 1-2.

1868 and 1875, and the Public Health Act of 1875, extended the power of local governments to set sanitary standards for houses and streets, to enlist surveyors to inspect and enforce that private property met those standards. This new legislation enabled surveys to be used as tools for urban reform and planning, giving rise to a new form of survey which mapped social conditions in relation to physical space.

Social researcher and philanthropist, Charles Booth pioneered this shift with his maps locating slum-housing conditions. His surveys of the East of London visually represented the physical segregation of classes and the concentration of poverty and physical degradation in certain streets and neighborhoods. The type of surveys conducted by Booth and others, mapped poverty and crime spatially, fueling concern among the upper and middle classes about the moral and social degradation caused by urbanism and industrialization.¹⁹

In the early 20th century, geographer Patrick Geddes built upon this tradition combining social surveys with physical surveys to show the relationship between place, urban development, and social conditions. He argued that understanding urban problems required a “geographic and historic” survey as well as a “contemporary survey.” Geddes criticized Booth’s survey saying, “Despite its admirable intention...its accurate and laborious detail...has thrown so little light upon the foggy Labyrinth.” Instead his surveys examined the way in which regional characteristics shaped urban growth. These surveys also differed in their audience from the early social surveys. Geddes viewed the survey as a tool for edifying the general public of a local community in order to guide them in making decisions about the physical planning of their towns, whereas the early social surveys by social reformers made appeals to the government or to civic groups to make more larger-reaching social policy reforms.²⁰

As the fields of social work and sociology professionalized, their theories, methodology and skills became standardized. Social surveys became increasingly specialized and statistically accurate. These surveys aimed to measure and map specific factors such as living conditions, delinquency or unemployment, rather than poverty in general. The growing interest in developing housing and town planning policy during the interwar period led to a substantial increase in surveys on the physical conditions of cities, including 63 surveys conducted in London between 1914-1940.²¹ This legacy fed directly into the type of physical and social survey maps that became prevalent in the wartime and postwar planning process. During the interwar period, scientific survey techniques evolved from mere cataloging to more calculated methods for modeling generalizations about populations as a whole by observing selected portions of society. Surveys attained greater statistical accuracy by changing from sampling techniques based on ‘purposive’ selection of representative types toward random selection within populations.²² In 1935, LSE professor and social scientist A. M. Carr Saunders argued that more social surveys had been conducted over the previous ten years than in any

¹⁹ Bulmer, 1, 3.

²⁰ Wells 25-27.

²¹ Bulmer, et al., 39.

²² Alain Desrosières. “The Part in Relation to the Whole: How to Generalize? The Prehistory of Representative Sampling,” eds. Bulmer, et al. *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991). 218.

previous decade.²³ By World War II, the social survey and urban mapping techniques had been standardized and accepted as the tools which would quantify and locate urban social problems, and facilitate the creation of appropriate policy solutions.

Meanwhile, social scientists and reformers in the United States had also been developing survey techniques. Philanthropic workers such as Jane Adams in Chicago and Robert Woods conducted urban reconnaissance collecting information of social problems such as poverty and housing quality, as a way to promote social reform policies. Surveys became an indispensable tool for civil society to gather information and demand social reforms to address social problems.²⁴ In the interwar period, academic sociologists such as Robert E. Park and Earnest Burgess formed the Chicago School of urban sociology, which examined social problems in relation to social structures and physical environmental factors, rather than genetic or personal characteristics. Their influential publications used surveys to study the pathological aspects of urban life and to develop theories about the social and physical patterns of urban growth. During this period social scientist A. F. Wells lamented that England trailed the United States in their use of surveys to address social problems.²⁵ America also took the lead in a new type of survey, the public opinion poll.

Public Opinion Surveys as Political Tools

Social surveys also developed out of another branch of social science, the field of public opinion. Like social mapping, public opinion surveys evolved as a means of influencing policy decisions by quantifying data, in this case the political opinions of the public rather than their economic or physical conditions. During the 1930s the field of public opinion formalized as an academic and professional discipline, with its own journal, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and will polls such as the Gallup poll became an accepted tool in measuring 'the public will' in politics.²⁶ In 1935 George Gallup had established the American Institute of Public Opinion. He believed that public opinion played a vital role in democracy, putting faith in the people to make informed decisions, and showing that their opinions could and should be constitutive of democratic governance. Gallup argued that the people could no longer be viewed as an ignorant 'boobocracy.' He believed that opinion polls demonstrated that the public could display good sense, rekindling his faith in democracy. The ideal of popular democracy became influential in the interwar period showing an American optimism that public opinion was not the product of an ungovernable mass but of the consciences of individuals who could participate in informed democratic action. The increasing influence of the masses in politics necessitated a broader standing of the public opinion as including not only the ideas of the 'civilized' elite but of 'the people as a whole'.²⁷

Influenced by commercial and political poll taking techniques developed in the United States, Britain also began to adopt public opinion polling, leading to the establishment

²³ A. M. Carr Saunders, "Preface," *The Local Social Survey in Great Britain*. A.F. Wells, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1935) 8.

²⁴ Wells, 17.

²⁵ A.F. Wells, *The Local Social Survey in Great Britain*. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1935), 17.

²⁶ Mark Abrams. *Social Surveys and Social Action* (Melbourne. William Heinemann Ltd., 1951) 66.; Thomas Osborn and Nikolas Rose. "Do the social sciences create phenomena: the case of public opinion research," *British Journal of Sociology* 50, 3, (1999) 9.

²⁷ Osborn and Rose, 11, 13, 17.

of the British Institute of Public Opinion. Many British institutions including the London Press Exchange, and the British Broadcast Company (BBC), conducted surveys to better understand and cater to their public audience.²⁸ Architects also jumped on the surveying bandwagon, with the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* (RIBA) advising their readers that questionnaires served as the most effective method to understand a clients' "complete requirements", particularly when developing designs for a "town, village or housing scheme."²⁹ The *Journal of RIBA* endorsed the science of the social survey praising the ability of skilled researchers to ask carefully designed questions and statistically accurate sampling methods to accurately depict "what the public wants."³⁰

The government took a greater role in Britain than in America in conducting public opinion polls as a means to gauge and shape opinions on public policy issues. During World War II, the British government adopted Gallup style techniques, forming the Ministry of Information to keep track of public morale and opinion and to build the political consensus they believed would be necessary to win a 'total war'. By 1937, the means for social inquiry had been established in Britain, but the government had not embraced the opportunity to use that power. However, as Britain approached war in 1939, the government recognized the need for gathering new information in order to enact the new responsibilities inherent in a total war. Facts, rather than precedent, served as the foundation for organizing mobilization of the armed forces and industrial sectors, as well as for organizing home front program such as rationing and boosting morale.³¹ During the war, the goals of surveys not only included identifying and addressing social problems, but also analyzing effective communication between the classes to ensure 'political democracy.'³²

Government agencies adopted the social survey as a necessary tool of governance, which could help them to understand the morale of the people as they suffered from home front sacrifices, and understand their desires for post war reconstruction. The Division of Program Surveys served as a central organizer of survey projects, however the division primarily hired outside consultants to conduct specific survey projects.³³ Examples of wartime surveys included the Wartime Social Survey, an organization composed of some fifty-five fieldworkers and regional investigators inquiry into wartime policy issues and how they affected the public. The government had determined that a sample survey would be the most effective way to gather information, and the "Home Intelligence Division" formed under Duff Cooper, and initiated a survey in 1940. They recruited LSE academics to organize a survey on market research lines, known as the War Time Social Survey (WTSS).³⁴

²⁸ Jennifer Platt, "Anglo-American Contacts in the Development of research methods before 1945," eds. Bulmer, et al. *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 346, 350, 353.

²⁹ T.P. Bennet. "The Architect and the Organization of Post-War Building" *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.3. (January 1945) 64; "Human Needs in Planning-Conference at the RIBA." *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.4. (February 1946) 126-128.

³⁰ "Human Needs in Planning-Conference at the RIBA." *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. Vol. 53. No. 4. February 1946. 126.

³¹ Osborn and Rose. 18-20. Platt, 2-4.

³² Abrams, 143.

³³ Mark Abrams, *Social Surveys and Social Action* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Ltd., 1951. 120, 123.

³⁴ Osborn and Rose. 18-20. Platt, 2-4.

The first wartime surveys received negative press, dubbing the surveyors 'Cooper's Snoopers,' and attacking them for their intrusive questions about citizens' private lives and opinions. The ministry officials, concerned by the negative press, halted the surveys, particularly those focused on morale, which had received the greatest negative press, but continued to encourage other government departments to gather information for their own projects.³⁵ Later, the government reestablished the wartime survey, focusing on collections of statistical information, and eliminating the more controversial question about public morale. These types of opinion polls allowed the government and political parties to better understand the social conditions in which the people of Britain lived during the war, and aimed to reveal the moral and the political will of the public.

Surveys for Post-war Housing and Planning

Survey Research and Reconstruction Policies

In the early 1940s, as the U.K. began to plan for postwar reconstruction, planners combined social mapping and public opinion polling techniques to better understand the needs and desires of the people that they planned for. The Ministry of Information hired Mass Observation, a group of researchers interested in "popular and radical social science", whose informal observational methods and unstructured surveys and interviews aimed to "demolish divisions between us and them."³⁶ Research groups such as Mass Observation and various housing advocacy groups served as intermediaries between the public and the government collecting public opinion data on policy issues then developed reports and books explaining their findings to government.

Mass Observation researchers conducted polls on all aspects of social and political life. Regarding planning, they conducted surveys about people's hopes for post-war life, needs and wants for housing, and responses to government plans and exhibitions. In 1942, Mass Observation conducted a sixteen-question survey about post-war life that asked a variety of questions about post war economics, politics, international relations, as well as questions about reconstruction. Although aiming to collect opinions on a broad array of issues, the survey emphasized the issue of post-war planning as a part of physical reconstruction in several of the early questions, including:

Do you think reconstruction must wait till after the war, or should it begin now?
Do you know what town planning is? What do you think should be done about post-war housing?
Have you any views on the way London should be rebuilt after the war? What are they?³⁷

Although each question remained neutral and open ended, not advocating or depreciating the importance of town planning, their repetitive questions emphasized certain issues, exerting a subtle pro-planning bias that encouraged the respondents to consider planning issues which may not have been of particular importance to them

³⁵ James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007) 141-143; Louis Moss, *The Government Social Survey* (London: HMSO, 1991) 2-4.

³⁶ Liz Stanley. "Occasional Paper 27: The Archeology of a 1930s mass Observation Project." (Manchester: University of Manchester, Department of Sociology, 1990) 10.

³⁷ Mass Observation Microfilm Archive. Reel 51 TC 2 Box 3. "Reconstruction Survey 1942- Questionnaires and Responses."

previously. The results to this survey showed the public was divided or ambivalent towards the need for post-war planning.

Influenced by anthropologists and social scientists, Mass Observation adopted several approaches to gathering information including direct interviewing using structured questions with samples, casual free or free form interviews, collecting overheard remarks, observation of people's behavior in public spaces, and through autobiographical statements.³⁸ In this study, the group used relatively informal techniques for their man-on-the-street, structured interviews which tried to capture the participants' opinions and experiences in short phrases. Mass Observation gave their surveyors leeway in conducting their interviews, telling them "Ask question 1 in every interview, and then use your own discretion as to which further questions to ask...with subjects in the interviewee appears to be interested?"³⁹

Mass Observation also offered advice to government agencies about what type of engagement planners should have with their constituents. Mass Observation recommended to the government that "The planner must of course be a leader...but to do this he must know what is the public mind"⁴⁰ They envisioned the social planner as one whose raw material is not the land but "the men, the women, the child, and the relationships between all of these in the whole community." Mass Observation expressed concern that "many planners are simply projecting into the public minds their own questions and interests"⁴¹ and that in order to truly address the needs of the public, "Planning needs a strong injection of good social science field-work."⁴² These recommendations introduced the methods of public opinion polling into planning methodology. Most plans in the 1940s conducted social surveys, which consisted of traditional maps of social conditions sometimes accompanied by data from public opinion questionnaires.

Surveying Housing Wants and Needs

During the war the national government and local councils conducted surveys as part of their Reconstruction planning to address war damage and slum clearance. While nearly all areas slated for postwar reconstruction or redevelopment underwent some form of survey, East London's extensive damage and proximity to powerful institutions became a particular focus survey research. Surveys in the late 1930s and early in the war included the Raleigh Institute on Housing Wants, the London County Council Overcrowding Survey, the London Diocesan Church of England Temperance Society, and the British Association of Residential Settlement. These surveys measured many aspects of life in the slums, from morality and employment to overcrowding and housing. After the Blitz, the issue of housing became particularly urgent, attracting the efforts of several groups including the London Labour Party Women, the London School of Economics, the Stepney Reconstruction Group, and the Women's Advisory Housing Council Survey.

³⁸ Abrams, 105-6.

³⁹ Mass Observation Archive Microfilm Reel 51. TC 2. Box 3.

⁴⁰ Mass Observation Report 873- "Draft-Human Planning" (Sept 15, 1941) 12.

⁴¹ Mass Observation Report 874- "Human Planning" (Sept 15, 1941) 4.

⁴² Mass Observation Report 873- "Draft-Human Planning" (Sept 15, 1941) 12.

These groups aimed to survey the housing need and wants of ordinary people as a way to ensure that housing reform best fit the needs of the inhabitants. As with the 19th century social surveys, women played a large role in conducting these surveys, and were often the subject of study. These women surveyors justified their role in surveying both in relation to their shared gender with their subjects, as well as through claiming their female expertise in housing design as deriving from their role as homemakers. The London Labour Party of Women particularly aimed to give a voice to women to express their housing wants and needs. In 1942 the party organized a series of free neighborhood conferences inviting local women to “consider the design and equipment of dwellings” and to fill out housing questionnaires.⁴³ The Standing Joint Committee of Women’s Organizations presented a report summarizing working class women’s opinions to the Ministry of Health’s in order to influence their decisions regarding housing standards and amenities.⁴⁴

From 1943 to 1944, the Stepney Reconstruction Group also sought to survey their neighbors about their housing and infrastructure needs. They hoped that their surveys would help the citizens of Stepney to give input as to how the LCC plan for the County of London would be applied in their neighborhoods.⁴⁵ Their survey included questions on their current housing conditions, including: the number and age of the family members, the kind of house, the types of rooms, the types of utilities, and the time spent commuting. They hoped, “The more the views of the people are expressed, the more likelihood of their getting the kind of Stepney they want.”⁴⁶

The London School of Economics, (LSE) took a leading role in developing the types of survey questions that were asked regarding housing. Their survey conducted in 1946 to 1944 included questions about their current home and family, including: the number and age of occupants, the number and type of rooms, where children play, where family members take their meals, what type of entertainment they engaged in, and what clubs or organizations they belong to. The LSE survey also asked for their future housing preferences, including: if they would want to remain near their neighbors, what type of dwelling they would prefer, what type of garden or outdoor space they preferred, whether they preferred individual or communal laundry. This series of local surveys collected information about the housing needs and wants of East London, which the institutions shared with local and county government planning agencies in the hopes they could positively shape their housing plans.⁴⁷

These types of local surveys were supported by national surveys that collected similar, though less locally specific housing preferences. In particular, the extensive housing surveys conducted by the Women’s Advisory Housing Council (WAHC) became particularly influential in housing policy discussions. This group, formed in 1937,

⁴³ LMA: ACC/2417/H/003-4 London Labour Party Women’s Advisory Committee Minutes-September 14, 1942.

⁴⁴ LMA: ACC/2417/H/003-4 London Labour Party Women’s Advisory Committee Minutes-July 6, 1942.

⁴⁵ THA: P/MUN/5/2 “Notes on the Work Which Stepney reconstruction Group Can Usefully Do.” Stepney Reconstruction Group-Accounts, Letters, Questionnaires

⁴⁶ THA: P/MUN/5/2 “Stepney Reconstruction Group [Intro Letter to Survey from Denys Munby Research Secretary]” “Notes of Work...can Usefully Do” Draft Appeal.

⁴⁷ THA: P/MUN/1/15 Stepney Various” Petition, Silkin Talks. “London School of Economics: Social Survey of London (1946)—Rebuilding London.”

included many wealthy and influential women, including nobility such as Committee President, Lady Bonham Carter and politician's wives such as Miss Megan Lloyd George. The group aimed to represent "the needs of women in the planning, building and equipment of her home" to government agencies such as the Central Housing Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health.⁴⁸ By gathering and publishing the opinions of working class women gathered through surveying and town hall meeting, the WAHC attempted to amplify the voice of the working class in order to affect policy.

In 1942 the WAHC conducted an extensive survey of working class women about their current housing conditions, and their housing needs and preferences after the war. The group conducted a pilot survey in East London, and then circulated 40,000 surveys to both married and unmarried women in villages, towns and cities around Britain, including 5,000 young women serving in the armed forces and working in war factories. The sample included women from varying ages, incomes levels, family sizes, and housing types.⁴⁹ The survey questions addressed both the intimate needs of the home as well as the large public services of the neighborhood, including questions on dwelling type, preferred number and arrangement of rooms, budgets, utilities, preferred outdoor spaces, and communal amenities. The WAHC's survey, while focusing primarily on the details of housing arrangement and amenities, included several pertinent questions regarding communal amenities and social welfare. They asked:

33. Would you like: (a) a refrigerator, (b) a communal laundry, (c) an open air market, (d) a community centre..., (e) a recreation ground, (f) a communal restaurant?
34. Do you think it is necessary to be near: -- (a) cinema, (b) churches, (c) schools, (d) bus routes, (e) public house, (f) big shops, (g) railway station?
35. Would you use a nursery for children...if it were conveniently near?⁵⁰

The WAHC report indicated that women showed the greatest interest in the details of their own future home and least in questions regarding communal amenities. They expressed surprise that women expressed a disinterest in communal services. In their survey results, only 24.7% of women wanted a communal laundry, 53% wanted a community center, and 53% wanted a communal restaurant, and 74% would use a nursery. This contradicted the aims of town planners and the WAHC and Labour party leaders who focused on the need for neighborhood planning and community services. After years of living communally while in the service, women expressed a strong yearning for home life, and emphasized the importance of privacy in the home. Although single women were slightly more open to communal services, most women showed little interest in communal restaurants, laundries or nurseries in peacetime, despite their usefulness and necessity during the war. The report noted this fact with surprise, saying, "nurseries can do much good for working women."⁵¹ The tone suggests that perhaps these workingwomen did not quite know what was good for

⁴⁸ LMA: ACC/3445/WHT/10/012 "Women's Advisory Housing Council 1939-Finding of and Enquiry" P. 11

⁴⁹ NA: AIR/2/6661 Women's Ad House Council- Post War Housing of Women-Auxiliary Air Force

"Report from The Women's Advisory Housing Council on The Younger Women's Needs in Future Housing," 1, 3.

THA: P/MUN/2/1 Women's Advisory Housing Council, "Report from the Women's Advisory Housing Council- Need in Future Housing."

⁵⁰ THA: P/MUN/2/1 Women's Advisory Housing Council Completed Draft Questionnaires.

⁵¹ NA: AIR/2/6661. "Report from The Women's Advisory Housing Council on The Younger Women's Needs in Future Housing" 3-5.

them. While the report maintained objective language in reporting the views of working class women, the interpretation of the results showed the WAHC's biases in favor of socialist service provision, as supported by most Labour party leaders and planning professionals. In this case, the shared gender experience of the female surveyors and subjects did not overcome cultural and political differences of class.

Meanwhile, other commentators in *The Sunday Times*, such as Julia Herrick expressed a conservative bias towards family life based on traditional moralistic agenda. Herrick reassures the public that the importance of home life remains strong, and that the housewife and mother utilize labor saving devices to ease rather than shirk her responsibility in running her home. She also praised their interest in wholesome entertainment and social institutions noting the preference for neighborhood churches, community centers and parks over cinemas and pubs.⁵² This type of moral agenda, adopted by some philanthropic and conservative political groups, filtered public sentiment through their own ideological lens, stressing the importance of family life and wholesome entertainment over the dangers of socialism, women working outside the home, and commercial culture. Despite the democratic intentions of the WAHC to act as a voice of the working class women, the upper and middle class members ended up articulating working class experiences in relationship to their own moral and political agenda. Their leftist agenda for socialism differed as greatly from working class attitudes as the conservative moralizing from the right.

Surveys as the "Social Background for a Plan"

In the 1930s and 40s, the social surveys became an increasingly integral part of the master planning process for towns and regions. While the 19th and early 20th century surveys had been influential in shaping new policies to address urban problems, the decentralized nature of urban interventions had meant that mapping and statistical data did not often become integrated into large scale planning proposals. By 1904, Geddes had proposed a process of regional planning based on observation of the existing geography of social and environmental landscapes.⁵³ His student, Patrick Abercrombie advocated these techniques in his 1926 book *The Preservation of Rural England*, and applied them in his work throughout the 1930s.⁵⁴ By the time of the Blitz, Abercrombie had established himself as Britain's most prolific and influential planner. He formalized a process of planning that emphasized the importance of the social survey, in the form of maps and populations statistics, as the preliminary step for physical planning. In his method the results of surveying are portrayed in map form, serving as a preliminary step to design. Abercrombie viewed surveying both as a way to understand the needs of the people, as well as a means to ensure public support and prevent objections to the completed plan.⁵⁵ This technique, made famous in his social and physical diagrams for the *County of London Plan* and the *Greater Plan for London*, became standardized for most of the reconstruction plans of the time.

⁵² NA: AIR/2/6661. News clipping. Herrick, Julia. "Home Life Women Want". *The Sunday Times* Dec 19, 1943.

⁵³ Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950) 95; Helen Mellor, *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (London: Routledge, 1990) 179.

⁵⁴ Patrick Abercrombie, *The preservation of Rural England: The Control of Development by Means of Rural Planning*. (London: The University of Liverpool/Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1926) 55.

⁵⁵ "Planning and the Public." *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, Vol.39, No.2 (1953) 29. Also see Chapter 6 for more information about Abercrombie's views on surveys as part of the larger process of public consultation.



Figure 3 and 4: On the left Max Locke questioned residents of Middlesbrough, while on the right Barbara Foster-Sutton surveyed a shop keeper. These photos, used in publicity brochures, newspaper and journal articles, celebrated the social survey as an integral stage in the developing the Plan for Middlesbrough. Reproduced with the permission of the Max Lock Archive/ University of Westminster Archive Services.

However, one of the most extensive social surveys conducted for a reconstruction plan took a different form, integrating the mapping and statistical techniques common to planning, with sociological research through surveys and participant observation. The survey conducted by Ruth Glass and Jacqueline Tyrwhitt served as preliminary research for the Middlesbrough Reconstruction Plan prepared by Max Lock from 1944-47. Jacqueline Tyrwhitt, trained as a landscape architect at the Architectural Association, adopted the teaching of Geddes, believing that urban patterns should grow organically from the needs of society. Before coming to Middlesbrough, she served as Director of Research at the School of Planning and Regional Reconstruction. Tyrwhitt aimed to “make sure that what looks good on the drawing board was also related to the needs of the people in every aspect of their lives.”⁵⁶ Ruth Glass studied sociological research at the London School of Economics and Columbia University. She established her reputation as a social scientist with her study of a LCC cottage estate at Watling, on the outskirts of London, published in 1939. Before working on the survey at Middlesbrough, she served as a research officer at the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction. As a Marxist, Glass believed that sociological research should go beyond gathering facts or describing social conditions, but should influence government policy and engender social change. Glass’s passion for justice led her to engage in political debates, especially those in which could champion the rights of oppressed peoples. Glass also promoted the survey as a medium for making communities more visible to themselves. She stressed the political function of the survey as “an instrument of democratic planning” which could measure and stimulate public opinion, as well as “prove the obvious in order to obtain public support.” She

⁵⁶ Jacqueline Tyrwhitt quoted by Hellen Mellor, “Gender, Citizenship and the Making of the Modern Environment,” *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950*. Ed. Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth. (Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2007) 33-50.

noted that the survey could serve as a bridge to break down barriers between professional and laypeople, that the process brought “the planner and the people together” to engender cooperation between many local people from different organizations, giving them a greater stake in the results of the survey and the resulting plan.⁵⁷

Tyrwhitt took charge of collecting the information door to door, while Glass interpreted the results. (Figure 3 and 4) Glass and Tyrwhitt built upon the techniques of similar surveys conducted by women’s philanthropy groups, but applied a more rigorous social scientific methodology. The survey focused on studying the social patterns of residents particularly the physical and social structures of neighborhoods. Tyrwhitt and the other surveyors went door-to-door conducting structured interviews with residents, as well as visiting shopkeepers, insurance agents, industrialists, and local leaders. Questions to residents included:

- 5. If you were entirely free to choose, would you want to live among the same type of people that are in your neighborhood now, or would you prefer to live among a different group of people?
- 6. Among what people have you found your closest friends? Have you friends amongst your neighbors?
- 10. Is your house convenient or inconvenient for these places...work, post office, parks, worship, shopping, clinics, sports grounds, cinema, club hall, pub, restaurant, canteen?
- 13. Post war Amenities: Is there anything you would like to see done to make this neighborhood a better place to live in?⁵⁸

These questions focused on understanding how class, geography, and social services affected the social relationships and identities of various neighborhoods. Glass mapped the way residents used the neighborhood as opposed to the larger city or regional amenities, and the physical distribution of their social relationships and associational memberships. The survey showed that while residents did use neighborhood community services, they also utilized the entire city to access amenities, friends and family, and associations.

Although this was one of many social surveys done by towns developing post-war urban plans, this survey became influential both for its thorough technique, and for its larger implications for planning theory in general. Beyond merely descriptive, Glass’s surveys also served as a tool to test the theories and principles of planning. Her study of Middlesbrough, addressed contemporary debates about the validity of the social benefits of the neighborhood unit and the effectiveness of class mixing. Most surveys accepted these goals then investigated the conditions of the specific place, in order to determine how to achieve these goals. Unlike previous U.K. studies, Ruth Glass aimed not to implement, but rather to test the theory to see if the statistics supported the hypothesis. The survey showed that while neighborhood services were important, the neighborhood had been overemphasized as a social and geographic unit. The survey also showed that social networks were more closely related to social-economic similarities than proximity. The failure of the neighborhood and class-diversified communities to function as theorized opened up these broadly accepted planning

⁵⁷ Ruth Glass, Ed. *The Social Background of a Plan: A Study of Middlesbrough*. (London Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited. 1948). 191-2.

⁵⁸ MLA 3.42b Middlesbrough Survey Questionnaires. “Middlesbrough Planning Survey.”

models to critique. Social surveys showed that these goals had derived more from the planners' own ideological and design preferences than from the social and geographical practices of the people for which they planned. Glass's surveys in the 1950s of finished planning projects, particularly of Lansbury in East London, tested the success of the design features of reconstruction plans as experienced and used by their occupants. Glass's work became instrumental in identifying key post war social trends such as the affects of relocation and gentrification on working class neighborhoods.⁵⁹

Many prominent planners such as Abercrombie lauded Max Lock for his extensive survey at Middlesbrough, calling it 'the most complete technique in the country' and praising his efforts which, "really took the people into his confidence...they really felt their views were wanted."⁶⁰ Despite their great contributions to planning theory, the type of surveys conducted by Glass and Lock became the exception, rather than the rule in post-war planning practice. The type of surveys she conducted did not work compatibly with Abercrombie's techniques, which had become crystallized as the standard survey technique by the late 1940s. In this type of map survey, those qualitative ideas that cannot be quantified and geographically located became parallel narratives that were less likely to shape urban form. The time and expense of surveying meant that few towns chose to conduct such thorough surveys as Glass and Lock had done for Middlesbrough.⁶¹

Additionally, planning theory and larger sociological questions became less important than the practical considerations. In the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, an article entitled "The Contribution of the Sociologist to Town Planning" argued that while the application of sociology to planning had been important, sociologists had been unable to keep pace with planners, leading them to take separate paths. The divide between sociologists and planners increased in the 1950s, after the Schuster Committee stated, "Planning is not primarily a social and economic activity" but is "limited but not determined by the technical possibilities of design."⁶² Although Ruth Glass remained an influential social scientist in observing urban phenomena, her work diverged from that of Abercrombie, and rarely exerted any direct influence on town plans. The purpose of surveying shifted away from representing the political will of the public, toward collecting demographic data, abstracted from the perceptions and desires of the people. These surveys aimed to shape the planners quantitative knowledge of how much to plan, rather than qualitative understanding of what people wanted them to plan.

The Limitations of Post-war Surveys in Representing the Public

From these examples of social surveys from the 1940s, several concerns reoccurred regarding how planners could use the survey as a tool for engaging the public in planning decisions. Planners had attempted to use surveys as a means to balance their technical knowledge with information about the public's wants, goals, and values. Using surveys in combination with education and publicity efforts such as exhibitions and media propaganda, planners strove to create avenues to democratize decision-

⁵⁹ John Westergaard and Ruth Glass, "A Profile of Lansbury" *Town Planning Review*. 25.1 (April 1954); Ruth Glass, *London: Aspects of Change*. Edited by the Centre of Urban Studies. (London: McKibben and Kee, 1964).

⁶⁰ Lewis Silkin, "Planning and the Public." *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 39.2 (1953). 29.

⁶¹ Mellor, 28.

⁶² "The Contribution of the Sociologist to Town Planning," *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 39.5 (April, 1953). 126.

making for town planning allowing the public to understand and respond to design and policy issues. American planning advocate Catherine Bauer advised British planners, "What is needed is... a mechanism for sharing responsibility and thus, eventually, improving the average capacity for decision."⁶³ By establishing better understanding of and communication with the public, experts hoped to renegotiate their role within politics, blurring the boundaries between the technical and political nature of their work.

The efforts by town planners to engage the public in a forum for public discourse stemmed from an attempt to create a 'communicating public' which could express and act upon an enlightened 'political will.'⁶⁴ However, these planners were not able to break down the dichotomy between politicians and technical experts, or the barrier between those in power and the public for whom they make decisions. The Editor of the *Architect's Journal*, reassured planners that, "Fortunately the intelligent reconstruction of our cities does not depend on enlightened public opinion."⁶⁵

Some administrators acknowledged the problem of agencies conducting excessive surveys without purpose. The Architectural Council of the Ministry of Works warned that if a survey is going to be conducted, it must be done so earnestly and not merely for public relations. The Council's minutes stated their worry, "The Survey might show that the local wishes were in conflict with what was in fact being provided. This conflict would be misleading because...it is not always possible for reasons of finance and other considerations, to comply with local wishes, which often express an ideal beyond practical realization."⁶⁶ The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) also commented on the limitations of the surveys, saying, "Finding out what the public wants does not necessarily give a statement of what the public should have, because either the public does not always know what it could get, or what it will like and want some years ahead."⁶⁷ In a limited capacity, many professionals in the 1940s supported the need for public discussion of policy issues. BBC Talks Producer Christopher Salmon supported the opportunity of using the radio to create a forum so that the "community's experience...can be brought to expression and given a useful currency in society."⁶⁸ However, he advised Station Controller George Barnes, "actual legislative proposals, even of the kind which bear directly on working-class conditions, are better discussed by people with administrative experience and knowledge wider than working class people can hope to have."⁶⁹ Most professionals engaged in public outreach embraced the opportunity to benefit from the experiences of laypeople, but believed that it would be inadvisable to translate survey results or public opinion directly into public policy.

⁶³ Catherine Bauer, "The County of London Plan—American Reactions: Planning is Politics—But are Planners Politicians" *Architectural Review*. 96, 574 (September 1944) 81-82.

⁶⁴ These terms come from the work of Jürgen Habermas in *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science and Politics*. Bacon Press: Boston, 1970.

⁶⁵ "The Editor's "Lansbury: A Principle Put Into Practice," *Architect's Journal*. (September 6, 1951.) 275.

⁶⁶ WORK 25/49. Festival of Britain 1951, Council of Architecture, Town Planning and Building Research, "Minutes of Meeting. April 21, 1949." 5.

⁶⁷ "The Contribution of the Sociologist to Town Planning," *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 39.5 (April, 1953). 126.

⁶⁸ BBC Written Archive R51/445/2. Reconstruction- Making Plans, 1940-1941. (Physical) Reconstruction and the Working Man, From Mr. Salmon to Mr. Barnes, July 18, 1941.

⁶⁹ BBC Written Archive R51/445/2. Reconstruction- Making Plans, 1940-1941. (Physical) Reconstruction and the Working Man, From Mr. Salmon to Mr. Barnes, July 18, 1941



Figure 5: This cartoon depicted a surveyor taking the temperature to measure the political 'fire' of several political leaders including, Conservative Prime Minister Winston Churchill; Labour Minister of Health, Aneurin Bevan; and Socialist Emmanuel Shinwell. British Cartoon Archive, Arthur Stuart Michael Cummings. *Daily Express*. Nov. 10, 1948.

Scientific Validity

One major factor that challenged the effectiveness of surveys in shaping planning policies was the level of scientific accuracy. The invention of statistical sampling had raised the bar for how social scientists could ensure the validity of their social observations, increasing emphasis on quantitative results. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) embraced the possibilities of social science methodology to measure public opinion for planning accurately. They lauded the ability of researchers to control survey questions, arguing that "teams of skilled interviewers" carefully designed the questions "to bring out the required information." These predetermined questions allowed researchers to ensure a more focused interview, and results that could be statistically analyzed. Although RIBA acknowledged that social scientific methods still needed development, they emphasized that they greatly improved upon past methods of planning based on "pure guesswork."⁷⁰

Despite the efforts to make surveying a science, many of the surveys conducted during this period lacked attention to the quantitative analysis and sampling methods developed during the interwar years, and instead were conducted by amateurs or interpreted qualitatively. Early survey groups, such as Mass Observation (MO), did not

⁷⁰ "Human Needs in Planning-Conference at the RIBA." *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53. 4. (February 1946) 126.

create quantitative results, but rather measured the temperature of the public response qualitatively. Thus, the results of these surveys did not easily translate into quantifiable preferences or approval ratings of policy options. In a letter to *Architectural Review*, one architect complained that Mass Observation approached their collection and analysis of materials “with such an open mind that it might be used to prove anything and in fact proves nothing.”⁷¹ Another architect wrote to *Architectural Review* complaining about the misapplication of pseudo-scientific methods and the need for quantitative research, saying, “it is not enough to conceive problems—they must be expressed quantitatively.”⁷²

These critiques of social and political surveys also appeared in the popular press. A cartoon from the *Daily Express* in 1948 poked fun at this type of temperature reading for being non-scientific and non-quantifiable. It showed a researcher watching carefully to measure the political ‘fire’ of several candidates. His methods of taking the political temperature included seeing if water will boil, if ice cream will melt, and if an egg will fry.⁷³ (Figure 5) The cartoon depicted the absurdity of trying to describe complicated political conditions using unquantifiable and individualized measuring techniques. Even the more accurate thermometer appeared inadequate to the task, being merely pseudo-scientific. Another cartoon titled “Inquest”, by David Low from 1947, showed a woman floating in midair, lying like a hospital patient, as public relations experts scratch their heads as they try to interpret her wide-ranging opinions.⁷⁴ This cartoon illustrated the frustration of experts in interpreting the wide variety of conflicting responses into a clear ‘scientific’ measure of public opinion.

Surveyors tried to combat these types of concerns by developing scientifically proven survey techniques for question formation, sampling, and statistical analysis. Unlike Mass Observation, other post war survey groups, such as the Women’s Advisory Housing Council (WAHC) did aim to conduct statistically accurate surveys. While they asked some open ended questions such as “Have you any other questions for the home of the future.” They also asked specifically targeted questions such as presenting four possible room arrangements and asking, “Which would you prefer?” They also specifically asserted the statistical accuracy of their sampling size, proclaiming that 3,000 replies from 40,000 inquiries met filed standards ensuring an adequate variety of responses.⁷⁵ However, even when groups achieved reasonable levels of statistical accuracy, the focus on quantitative results could obscure the more subtle nuances of qualitative measures.⁷⁶ While survey techniques continued to strive towards statistical and qualitative accuracy, surveys remained an inexact science.

⁷¹ J.M.R. ‘Wanted: An Hypothesis’ *Architectural Review*, 90, 539 (November 1941) 148.

⁷² E.H. Elis, “Marginalia-Correspondence,” *Architectural Review* 91, 543 (March 1942) xxxviii-xl.

⁷³ BCA: Arthur Stewart Michael Cummings, “Scientific Survey.” *Daily Express*. (1948).

⁷⁴ BCA: David Low. *Evening Standard* (November 7, 1947).

⁷⁵ NA: AIR 2 6661. “Report from The Women’s Advisory Housing Council on The Younger Women’s Needs in Future Housing”

⁷⁶ Patrick Joyce. *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003) 25.



Figure 6: This cartoon depicted the serial character Colonel Blimp disrupting a meeting of the Labor Party to ask policy questions framed in with Conservative bias. British Cartoon Archive, David Low, *The Evening Standard*, Nov. 10, 1948.

The Power to Frame the Questions

Despite the attempts to create scientific, rational, unbiased surveys, surveys often represented the views of the researcher and their interpretations of the public opinion as much as the public itself. Thus pseudo-social-scientific methodology gave validity to reports and policy recommendations, couching politics in science. Critics of social surveys often criticized their unscientific features, and their clear bias towards certain outcomes. While surveys allowed the public to voice their opinions, this forum remained heavily mediated by technical experts and politicians, who controlled the content of the surveys and thus shaped their outcomes, by defining the purpose, articulating the problems, and framing questions. For this reason, most surveys fit the financial and political interests of the pollster, rather than addressing the problems and needs of those polled, as defined by themselves.⁷⁷

A cartoon from *The Evening Standard* in 1948 pokes fun at public opinion gathering by showing the value laden nature of many survey questions. The surveyor asks, "Are you in favor of nationalization or prosperity." A group of Labour party officials respond with incredulous and angry looks, showing their displeasure that the phrasing of the question clearly biases participants against their nationalization policies. (Figure 6) This cartoon exaggerated the kind of value-laden language found in surveys conducted by political or advocacy groups. This continued to be a theme years later, appearing in another cartoon by John Musgrave-Wood in the *Daily Mail* showing a line of surveyors

⁷⁷ For a critic of survey techniques, see Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 1990) 170-1.

at lined up at a door, each carrying a brief case labeled, “anti-Socialist poll”, “anti-Tory poll”, and so on, ending with the “anti-polls poll.”⁷⁸ This cartoon showed the clearly political impetus behind the organization of many polls. These and other public commentaries revealed the public perception that polls were inherently biased, and revealed a growing disinclination to participate.

The surveys designed, delivered and interpreted by social scientists, even those with good intentions, often reflected their own interests and ideas as much as those whom they surveyed. In their surveys, Mass Observation framed their questions as neutrally as possible. Although they tried not to influence the responses with the phrasing, they overemphasized issues of interest to reformers and policy makers. While each question remained neutral, not advocating or depreciating the importance of town planning, their repetitive questions on the subject gave the issues emphasis, exerting a subtle pro-planning bias. A similar bias appeared in the survey by the Women’s Advisory Housing Council (WAHC); although it focused primarily on the details of housing arrangement and amenities, it included several questions regarding communal amenities and social welfare. Their emphasis on the outcomes of these questions in their report, and their surprise at the respondents’ lack of interest in these social services, showed their own clear pro-planning bias. While the WAHC dutifully reported the women’s wishes, they also inserted their own voice into their report, expressing the benefits communal services would have for the poor. Ruth Glass also conducted her survey with a predetermined agenda of the planning profession. She aimed to answer the profession’s questions to understand of how local neighborhood communities functioned, and how this might affect the planning of neighborhoods and communal services. Her surveys showed that the pre-existing ideals of planners for social planning strategies, such as the neighborhood unit and social class mixing, sometimes blinded them to the inappropriateness of these methods and made them deaf to the needs and desires voiced by the poor.

Many town planners, philanthropy organizations, and social science researchers truly believed in the power of surveys to help democratize politics and urban planning and serve the needs of the working classes. However, the fact that social scientists and political groups often controlled the survey process meant that the ‘word on the streets’ could not be represented without being shaped by their own values. By adopting social scientific methodology, planners aimed to transform political problems into technical questions for which they could use data as evidence of the rationality of their scientific solutions. In this way, surveys did not disrupt the technocratic nature of planning, but rather reproduced it by translating complex and diverse opinions of individuals into rational, technical data to be translated into policy by experts.

⁷⁸ BCA: John Musgrave-Wood (Emmwood). Daily Mail, Feb 3, 1959.



Figure 7: This cartoon showed a surveyor asking questions about economic policy to several characters representing various factions of British society, including a Tory, a Communist, and a middle class crank. Each character responded in protection of their own interests while apathetic ostrich stuck her head in the sand without responding. British Cartoon Archive, David Low. *The Evening Standard*. September 3, 1948.

The Apathetic Public

The ability to measure public opinion was often hindered by the short, vague or skeptical responses of respondents to town planning surveys. Surveyors viewed this unresponsiveness as apathy, showing a lack of enthusiasm or interest in the topics of the survey or the surveys themselves. This cartoon printed in *The Evening Standard* in 1948 used the metaphor of the ostrich with its head in the sand to mock the unresponsive segment of the population that remain oblivious or ambivalent to public affairs, accounting for the large number of “don’t know” responses to survey questions. (Figure 7) Noting the high number of unresponsive survey participants, Mass Observation warned, “Within democracy a most serious and dangerous weakness is the shrinkage of citizen involvement.”⁷⁹ Nonetheless, Mass Observation co-founder, Tom Harrison, expressed confidence that “large numbers of individuals were forming their own pictures of what they wanted their post-war world to be like” and that “since the war began, interest in public affairs had been increasing.”⁸⁰ Nonetheless, Prime Minister Winston Churchill worried, “Apathy and weariness are an ever present threat to national morale.”⁸¹ Many commentators denigrated the public for their short-term selfish interests rather than long-term communal concern, calling the public “frivolous”

⁷⁹ MO: File Report 873- “Draft-Human Planning” Sept 15, 1941. 2.

⁸⁰ MO: File Report 1162- ‘Report on Propaganda for Town Planning’ 18 Mar 1942. 1-2

⁸¹ ‘Churchill’s Speech’ *The Architect’s Journal*. 97, 2509 (Feb 25 1943) 141.

and “lacking control.”⁸² The *Architectural Review* warned planners that they must overcome “barriers of apathy, lack of imagination, and ignorance.”⁸³ Although surveys showed the public was not particularly engaged or interested in urban planning, the planners used the survey method as a means to involve the public in a passive way.

Surveyors faced particular problems in receiving clear answers to survey questions on topics that were politically divisive or conceptually abstract, particularly among politically marginal populations.⁸⁴ In the case of the planning surveys of the 1940s, the high level of non-responses could have reflected the public’s lack of knowledge or opinion about the issues, the fact that they did not care about the issues, or an aversion to surveys in general. In the Mass Observation surveys, the questions that were most political or abstract received the most “don’t know answers.” For example, on a survey about reconstruction, questions about people’s everyday experiences and preferences, about their homes, job, and commutes received very high response rates, while those regarding complicated issues, such as when Britain should start preparing for reconstruction, at least 10% responded “I don’t know”. Some respondents expressed deference to professionals for making these decisions. When asked, “What do you think should be done about post-war housing?” several people responded, “Those decisions should be made by architects.”⁸⁵ The failure of planners to receive concrete responses about their preferences and opinions on planning issues may signal the public’s lack of knowledge of these subjects, an inability or unwillingness to discuss complex political issues, or a mismatch between the interest of planners and those of the laypeople, rather than general apathy.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s planners became increasingly disturbed by the public’s lack of interest in planning, and non-responsiveness to planning surveys. Planners and politicians expressed concern over the lack of public engagement with political issues. They feared a great apathy among the people that would make it difficult to push for new powers or improve the quality of life of the poor. Early on planners had been able to spark the public’s interest and imagination, but had gradually lost that interest throughout the decade. Many planners acknowledged that ‘planning’ had become an oversaturated word in public life, with too much talk, not enough action. Planning journals fretted that the public seemed to become less and less interested in planning, even coming to loathe the word, which to them signaled empty promises and lack of action by the government to actually build houses.⁸⁶

The struggle of planners to engage the public derived partially from the planner’s disconnection with the desires and values of the public. While planners took great efforts to engage the public in planning reform and to cultivate public support, many times they assumed rather than followed public opinion, imagining the public should have more socialist sympathies than they did.⁸⁷ In Mass Observation surveys, as well as those conducted by other agencies, most people expressed an interest in having their

⁸² Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo. “England Arise!”: *The Labour Party and Popular Politics in the 1940s Britain*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995). 37.

⁸³ G.S. Kallmann, ‘The Wartime Exhibition,’ *Architectural Review*, September 1943. 94, 562. 95-106.

⁸⁴ For more on the problems of abstain repose, see Bourdieu. 172.

⁸⁵ Mass Observation Archive Microfilm Reel 51. TC 2. Box 3.

⁸⁶ John Golag, “Planning and Ordinary People.” *Town and Country Planning* 20,103 (1952) 509.

⁸⁷ Fielding, et al., 4

own homes and gardens, and showed little interest in the neighborhood unit ideas; for them “planning ended at the garden gate.” Negative responses to these housing surveys by planners, showed their unease about the content of public opinion.⁸⁸ This created a gap between the ideals of planners and those of the ordinary people.⁸⁹

However, another explanation of apathy may derive from the overuse of surveys, and the exhaustion of the public expected to render political decisions on diverse and hypothetical topics on the spot. Several cartoons depicted the invasive nature of surveys during this period. A cartoon by Arthur Horner published in the *News Chronicle*, in 1951 shows a woman disrupted by a surveyor while hanging her laundry. He pops out from behind the wash line asking, “Would you care to say a few words on the subject of the family wash?” while she remains silent, her mouth full of clothes pins.⁹⁰ Another 1949 cartoon by Ronald Carl Giles pictures a man being taken away in an ambulance after a nosy surveyor shocked him with questions about family planning.⁹¹ These cartoons poked fun at the gall of surveyors to show up on the front door and ask personal questions at any time and expect cooperation. People became weary of living under microscope and having their everyday activities be subjected to social observation.

Defining Common Man

This obsession with understanding the ordinary citizen lead social scientists and politicians to try to define, diagnose, and reform the common man. Throughout the 1940s the imaginary figure of “The Common Man” proliferated in political and professional literature. In *Architectural Review* a series of articles about reconstruction reiterated the idea that planning would be for the average citizen, using subtitles such as “A Day in the Life of John Citizen” and Reactions from “The Man on the Street.”⁹²

A cartoon in *The Evening Standard* in 1950 poked fun at myth of “The Common Man.” (Figure 8) In a cartoon about the National Survey, the common man is depicted in two distinct ways. In the first, an artist asks a man to pose as “that common political myth...the common man.” In the second, doctors treated him as a patient to be observed, diagnosed and cured, noting, “The heart of the nation beats true.” These distinct views show how professionals and politicians have simultaneously idealized and problematized the common man. The artist encouraged the Common Man to pose with ‘dignity’ saying, “This is your century! Everyone looks to you.” He is the model subject who transcended class categories; a citizen for the new ‘Better Britain.’ But the artist admitted, “Of course the Common Man is all humbug to uncommon men like us” showing the elitist way in which professionals used but did not identify with the imagery of the Common Man. The lower image shows how professionals treated ‘the common man’ as a possible diseased body in need of a cure or as an exotic creature who planners have discovered.⁹³ The cartoon ridiculed the social survey as a tool that could neither accurately diagnose nor cure the body politic.

⁸⁸ Tsubaki, Tatsuya. ‘Planners and the Public: British Popular Opinion on Housing during the Second World War.’ *Contemporary British History*, 14.1. (Spring 2000). 93, 95.

⁸⁹ Fielding, et al., 102.

⁹⁰ BCA Arthur Horner, “Would you care to say a few words on the subject of the family wash?” *News Chronicle* (Mar 29, 1951).

⁹¹ BCA: Ronald Carl Giles, *Daily Express*, January 21, 1949.

⁹² “Destruction and Reconstruction- Three Dimensional Town Planning,” *Architectural Review*, 91, 541. (January 1942) 13-16.

⁹³ BCA: David Low, *The Evening Standard*, March 31, 1950.

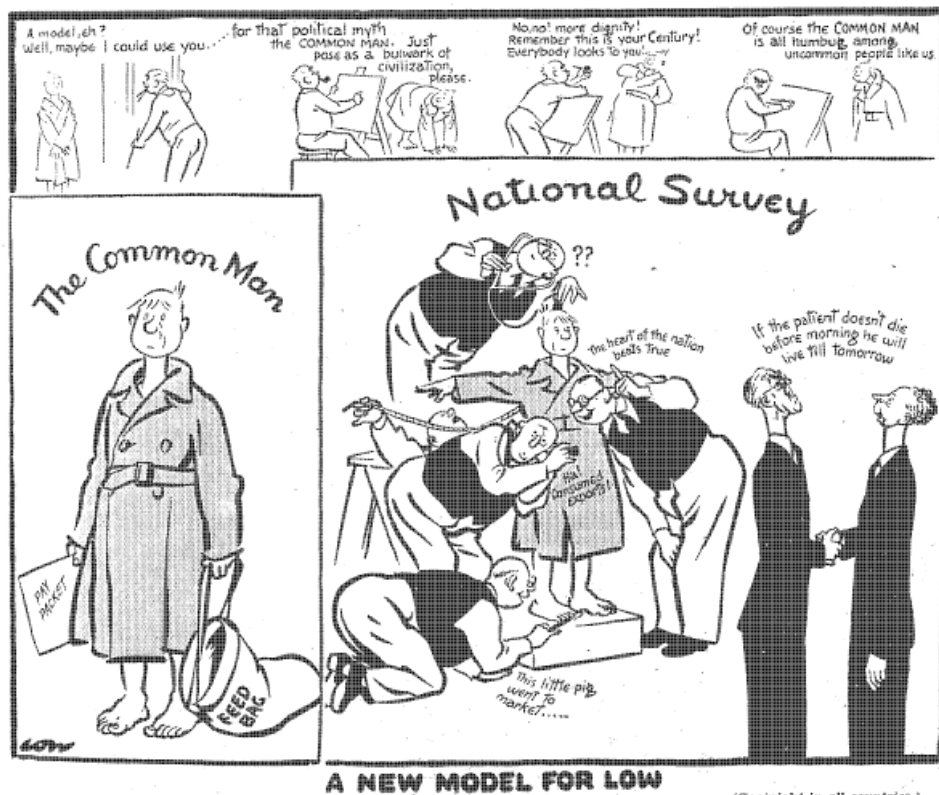


Figure 8: This cartoon shows how the “common man” is used as a figure model whom an artist tries to guide into the correct posture for his publicity uses. He also appears as a patient prodded by scientists. The common man appears humble, at the mercy of experts. British Cartoon Archive, David Low, *The Evening Standard*, Mar 31, 1950.

The cartoon poses the question who and what is ‘the common man’, and how is this figure being used in political rhetoric. Sometimes the ‘common man’ appeared in the guise of the Cockney. A year later in 1951, Low printed another cartoon that questioned the identity of the common man. (Figure 9) It states, “some correspondents object to Low’s version of the common man” as a poor barefoot beggar. Low offered several other images for his readers to choose from, including the patriotic national personification of “John Bull,” the “dignified worker,” and the suburban man “grizzling about income tax.” Below two men struggle over the ‘common man,’ fighting over who would define his image. This cartoon argued that the ‘common man’ served as a social trope that could be altered to represent any social group or political idea, rather than representing any typical or average citizen.⁹⁴ Idealized images morphed the class, occupational, and sub-cultural identity of the ‘the common man,’ using him as a symbol of democratic inclusion while avoiding issues of class specific social and economic interests.

⁹⁴ BCA: David Low. *Daily Herald*, 09 Aug 1951.



Figure 9: In this cartoon the 'common man' is shown in several guises as the poor and down trodden, as the upper-class conservative patriot, as the strong and dignified worker, and as the suburban professional. It shows that groups can alter the 'common man' to represent different social groups or to fit different political uses. British Cartoon Archive, David Low. *Daily Herald*, 09 Aug 1951.

Using the phrases "the common man", "the word on the streets", or "public opinion" served to give democratic clout to decisions made by technical experts or political leaders. While the public may have been the subject of the survey, experts remained the 'gatekeepers' of information whose surveillance of the working classes structured and disciplined their participation on political life.⁹⁵ The survey served less as a tool for cultivating and expressing the 'political will' of the people, than as a social scientific method to quantify this 'political will' into data. This data could then be incorporated into technical evaluation in order to legitimate the decisions of planning bureaucrats and professionals. These cartoons have helped to illuminate some of the weakness of social surveys as tools for promoting democratic decisions making. While planners and policy makers had optimistically promoted the survey as a technique for amplifying the 'word on the street' and empowering the 'common man,' surveys increasingly came to be seen by the public as invasive tools to manipulate public opinion.

Conclusion: The Radical Potential of the Survey?

What then is the legacy of surveys in the project to create a public forum for planning in the 1940s? Did the survey realize any of its radical potential for reform? Returning to the film *He Snoops to Conquer*, shows the tensions between the practical and ideological purpose of surveying, representing the method as simultaneously a tool of oppression and of enlightenment. Later in the film, the citizens discovered that the surveys had been thrown away; an angry mob protested the government corruption and demanded town planning. The protest leader yelled, "They say we prefer our slums, do we prefer our slums" and the crowd yells "No!" Despite the failures of the survey to shape the

⁹⁵ Osborn and Rose, 23-26.

council's vision for town planning, the film's overall tone was hopeful, and the process of surveying produced an enlightened leader who can enact change. George Gribble became the town's new candidate for council who would improve housing conditions by listening to the people and enacting postwar planning. Depicted throughout the film as a common man, and a bumbling one at that, Gribble's experience in surveying transformed him into an enlightened leader of the people, described as "a man who knows the people, their lives, their hopes, their dreams." In the final scenes, Gribble stood up for the needs and desires of the people, exposed the true results of the survey, and helped to ensure town planning and better housing conditions.⁹⁶ The film showed the dual possibilities of the survey as a tool for awakening the 'political will' of a 'communicating public,' and as a bureaucratic tool wielded by leaders who neither understood nor cared to know the needs of their constituents.

Most of the surveys conducting in the 1940s served as earnest, if perhaps flawed, attempts at public consultation.⁹⁷ Professionals and politicians engaged in town planning experimented in harnessing the positive possibilities of the social survey as a tool for democratization. However, most surveys did not rouse the level of public interest or engagement depicted in the end in this film. Instead the survey often became a perfunctory tool of bureaucratic management. After the 1947 Town Planning Act crystallized planning techniques, the act of surveying became routinized and many of the discourses around the importance of surveys for democratization died away. The Act though requiring all towns to conduct a survey, provided no guidelines for the subject matter, techniques, or purpose of the survey.⁹⁸ Most surveys conducted under the Act followed Abercrombie, rather than Max Lock and Ruth Glasses survey techniques. Although the planning system had tried to reform itself to respond to public opinion, the dissonance between the 'public will' and the scientific expert meant that the surveys by Lock and Glass had little effect on postwar policy or plans.⁹⁹ While surveying, as defined by Patrick Abercrombie, became a standard step in the planning process during this period, the aims and extent of this survey remained limited due to expediency and cost. Post 1947 surveys instead focused on physical and statistical analysis, rather than public opinion polls about housing needs. Most surveys remained descriptive, collecting demographic data, rather than helping to collect and analyze public opinion, or to test planning theory.

This chapter has shown how planners integrated social science techniques in the process of town planning. Building upon the exploration of the birth of social and democratic concerns in planning, it showed what techniques planner used to bring social considerations into their work. However, the aim to making surveying scientific, and the politics of knowledge imbedded in the surveying process recreated the technocratic aspects of planning, which some of the more idealistic planners of the time had tried to overcome. Despite the difficulties in using the surveys as a tool for empowering the masses and accurately applying public opinion to the planning process, these surveying projects did briefly serve as a means for shaping the content of planning policies.

⁹⁶ Marcel Varnel, Director. *He Snoops to Conquer*. Columbia British Productions, 1944.

⁹⁷ For ways to measure the empowering affect of participatory strategies, see Sherry R. Arnstein, "A ladder of citizen participation." *Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute*. (April 1971).

⁹⁸ Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. 10 & 11 Geo. 6. Ch. 51. 5.

⁹⁹ Fielding, et al, 112.

4 Presenting Planning to the Public: Display Culture and the Wartime Exhibition

In 1952, the BBC Home Service aired a play titled “Not According to Plan,” in which an enthusiastic town planner tried to interest the inhabitants of a small Scottish burgh in his improvement plans for the town. Gathering at an exhibition in the town hall, visitors commented on the model and drawings displayed. A local landowner complained that the town centre looked like “a carbuncle,” the council members focused purely on compensation for private landowners, and the Ballie officer worried about his own prestige. This play painted a timely portrait of the planning exhibition, showing how planners struggled to develop displays to communicate their ideas to the public. Only the town planner showed interest in the plan itself. *The Journal of the Town Planning Institute* praised the shows humor, but also pointed out the “underlying tragedy” of the story that so accurately depicted the real difficulties that planners experienced in their attempts to excite local citizens about their schemes.¹

Over the previous decade, exhibitions like the one depicted in “Not According to Plan,” had become familiar a media for planners, who gave as much attention to exhibiting their plans as to creating them. In the 1940s, education became a major objective of planners, who aimed to create a spatially and politically literate public that could understand architectural ideas and the need for postwar planning. In this vein, planning agencies and organizations focused on developing successful exhibitions that would draw large popular audiences, communicate planning ideas in a legible way to laypeople, and make lasting impacts on public opinion. Architects and planners also experimented with new visual strategies, from display art and graphic design, to make urban planning more interesting and comprehensible to the public.

This chapter examines planning exhibitions from the 1940s in order to understand the way in which they served as tools for communicating planning ideas to laypeople. These events visualized planning using a variety of display techniques in order to help citizens understand and form opinions on the many urban reconstruction plans created during this period. In particular, it analyzes several case studies, including: the County of London Plan exhibition presented by the London County Council, exhibits by citizen organizations such as by the Stepney Reconstruction Group, and the nationally organized Live Architecture Exhibition at the Festival of London. Primary sources from the organizations hosting the exhibitions show their educational objectives and strategies, while media coverage, Mass Observation reports, and comment books show how the public received these exhibitions. Examining these events within the context of the changes in exhibition design and practice during this period reveals how architectural exhibitions evolved in response to modern visual strategies and political objectives. This research reveals the great effort that planners took to make their ideas legible to the public, and the struggles they faced in attracting public interest.

¹ George Scott-Moncrieff, “Not According to Plan—A comedy of Planners,” BBC Home Service (November 12, 1952). Reported in “Not According to Plan,” *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 39.2 (1953) 33.

Exhibition Culture

During the 1940s, the British developed a culture of exhibition making and going. Between 1938 and 1951, town planning was displayed at 87 place specific exhibitions and many other generalized traveling exhibitions in Britain. These exhibits depicted to public audiences the contemporary ideas of architects and planners for housing and neighborhood design.² A variety of exhibition types flourished at this time, with thousands of exhibitions organized by the Ministry of Information and other government agencies, local boroughs, professional associations, and ideological organizations that addressed wartime and home front issues. A large segment of the population attended exhibitions regularly, and in 1950 only 24% of Londoners had never been to an Exhibition.³

The wartime political culture of the 1940s enabled the government adoption of direct propaganda as a means to improve public morale and gain support for wartime programs. Many unemployed architects embraced unconventional design work for the government, using the opportunity to expand their own media for promoting urban planning ideas. This synthesis between designers and bureaucrats led to a new typology of exhibition that combined modern design with political agendas in the government-planning exhibition.

This period can be considered a late stage of the “exhibitionary complex.” The late 18th to mid 19th century witnessed the rise of interest in collecting and displaying previously private objects in public forums.⁴ These exhibits took the form of museums, fairs and festivals that aimed to educate and moralize the populace, cultivate consumers for industrialized products, and strengthen nation formation. The wartime exhibitions carried on a similar educational mission, but with a new emphasis on engaged citizenship and the cultivating public opinion regarding wartime and reconstruction policies. In order to fully understand the logic and methods of the wartime planning exhibition, it is useful to look back to the precedents of the 19th Century world’s fairs, early 20th century architecture and planning exhibitions, and the wartime displays by the Ministry of Information. These various forms of display shared common goals to educate the public, sell ideas, and promote the social reforms and government policies.

Ordering the World at Fairs and Museums

In the 19th century, exhibitions evolved as a tool for selling industrial goods and colonial projects as part of the new economic order of the capitalist industrial revolution. The fairs, organized to provide a modern system of mapping the progress of humanity for educational purposes, simultaneously encouraged commercialism and materialism, selling goods as well as ideas. The dream-like environments recreated the world as a microcosm that communicated clear dichotomies between east and west.⁵ These exhibitions served to enrapture the visitor, surrounding them in a carefully ordered and

² Keith D. Lilley and Peter Larkham, “Exhibiting Planning: Communication and Public Involvement in British Post-war Reconstruction,” Faculty of Law, Humanities, Development and Society Working Paper Series 4. (Birmingham University, Birmingham, 2007) 5.

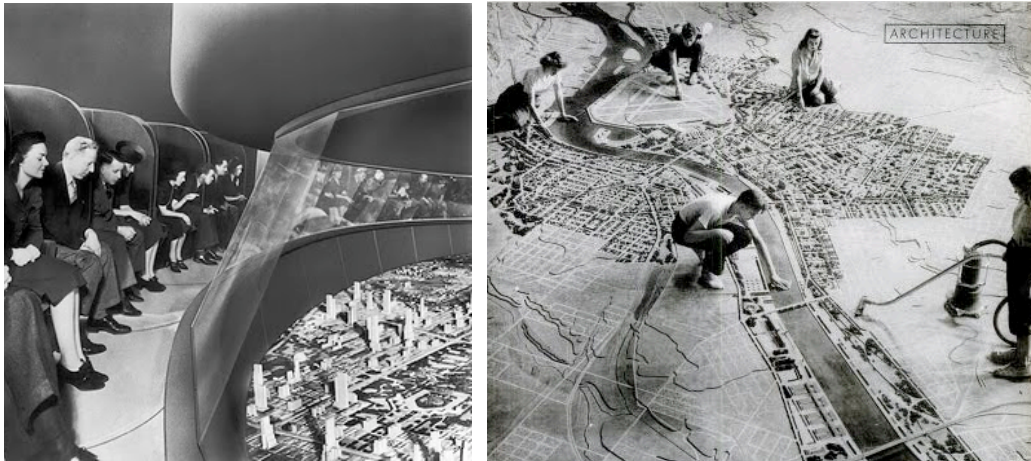
³ MO: File Report 2230, 2251. MO Bulletin 39, December 1950 “Exhibitions.”

⁴ Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988).

⁵ Zenep Celik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture and Islam at the Nineteenth Century World’s Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 1-5.

manufactured reality that focused their gaze to evoke specific interpretations of history and political reality. In the first of these large exhibits, the 1951 Great Exhibition in London, England positioned itself as modern, through industrial progress and colonial rule, creating 'a living picture' of the development of mankind. Later exhibits in Paris, Chicago, San Francisco, and New York continued the tradition of shrinking the world into a miniature stage set, creating urban environments ordered to instruct and simplified for easy consumption.⁶

World's fairs often featured architecture and urban planning, sometimes modeling new urban orders in their own site design as in the White City in Chicago in 1893, and other times depicting futuristic cityscapes in miniature displays. The 1939 Worlds Fair in New York featured several well-visited and memorable planning exhibitions including Futurama, a car-oriented utopian city model designed by Norman Bel Geddes.⁷ In this display, viewers sat in chairs that moved around the massive model, looking down as if from an airplane, while a narrator explained their view. (Figure 1) The scale of the model, filling the room to the edge of the visitors view, added drama to the display. The 'ride' attracted crowds who flocked to experience the spectacular show. This exhibit, sponsored by General Motors, focused on the optimistic portrayal of progress in the United States through the economic development under capitalism.



Figures 1 and 2: These photographs show models for exhibitions designed by Norman Bel Geddes. The left pictures visitors looking down on the Futurama Exhibit for the 1939 Worlds Fair in New York. On the right designers working with Geddes crawl on their hands and knees building a giant model of Toledo which appears as a stage set with which the designer could manipulate urban forms. Both images show the massive scale of the models and the way in which the viewer becomes surrounded by the model.

⁶ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 6, 9, 2-30.

⁷ Roland Marchand, "The Designers go to the Fair II: Norman Bel Geddes, The General Motors 'Futurama,' and the Visit to the Transformed," *Design Issues* 8:2 (Spring 1992) 22-40.

Architecture again became a major feature in the 1951 Festival of Britain in London. The South Bank featured massive modern cultural buildings, while the Live Architecture Exhibit at Lansbury showed the development of new housing designs and neighborhood planning. However this festival, celebrating the anniversary of the Great Exhibition, sold a different economic order. Held after the independence of key colonies such as India, it looked inward rather than outward, focusing the nation's own history and potential progress rather than its legacy of colonial rule. After six years of Labour Party leadership, clouded by economic stagnation, the festival also aimed to bolster the nation's optimism about the potential of democratic socialism. Party leaders hoped to bolster political support by showing how they had realized the social welfare policies and 'better Britain' they had promised during their campaign.⁸ These world's fairs set a tradition by which exhibitions served as a tool for bolstering national pride, celebrating technical and economic progress, and championing political ideas.

Exhibitions for Community Civics and Education

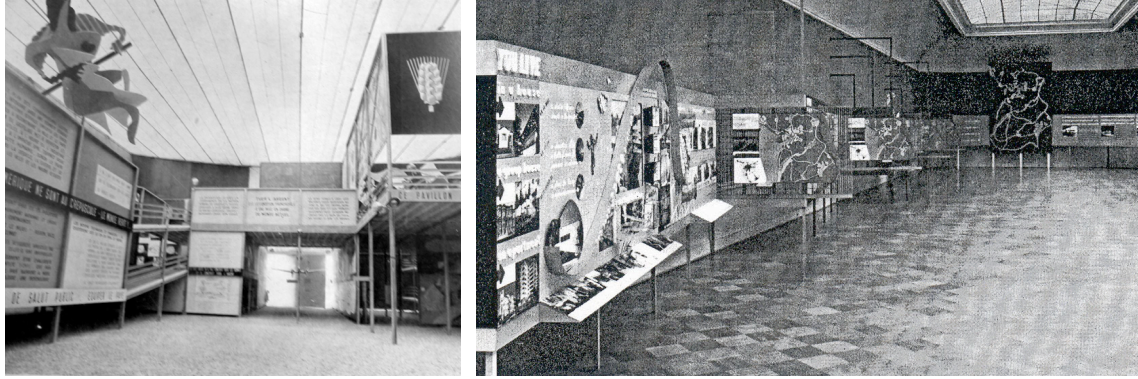
From very early on planners realized the importance of developing means and techniques for educating the public about the importance of town planning. In 1915 Patrick Geddes stated "our immediate need is educational" and thus promoted the civic exhibition as tool "to arouse city and citizen from their long torpor" raising public consciousness of the problems with cities and the need to apply social science to plan more functional cities. These exhibits were to be organized periodically by local citizen groups, and designed to show clearly both the "profusion and confusion" of knowledge, aimed to "appeal to the citizen" and to encourage "participation in town planning." The exhibitions served both as a process for democratizing the construction and attainment of knowledge, as well as a means of encouraging an "education of public opinion" by nurturing individuals to act as "responsible and thinking" citizens.⁹

Geddes organized exhibitions in Chelsea in 1911, which traveled to Edinburgh, Belfast and Dublin. Drawing upon Geddes' ideas of community civics, early planners embraced an expanded idea of using the exhibition as a site to educate the public and encourage civic involvement. Throughout the early 20th century, citizens and leaders created local history museums and planning displays, which aimed to display the past, present and future of the town. These early forms of planning exhibitions aimed to provide a forum for the community to understand itself through visual tools and analysis.¹⁰

⁸ Becky E. Conekin, *'The Autobiography of a Nation': The Festival of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003). 46-48, 80-85.

⁹ Geddes, Patrick. *Cities in Evolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950) vi, 70, 79, 80, 83.

¹⁰ Nat Council of Social Service. *Local History Exhibitions; How to Plan and Present Them*. Local History Series: No. 6. Plymouth, UK: Latimer, Trend, and Co. (1951).



Figures 3 and 4: The left image of the Le Temps Nouveau exhibit shows how a ramp guided the visitor up through the three dimensional space of the tented displays. On the right, the Telesis exhibit contained in a more constrained space that guided the viewer to each display through angled boards that projected into the room.

Architecture Exhibits as Spectacle and Promotion

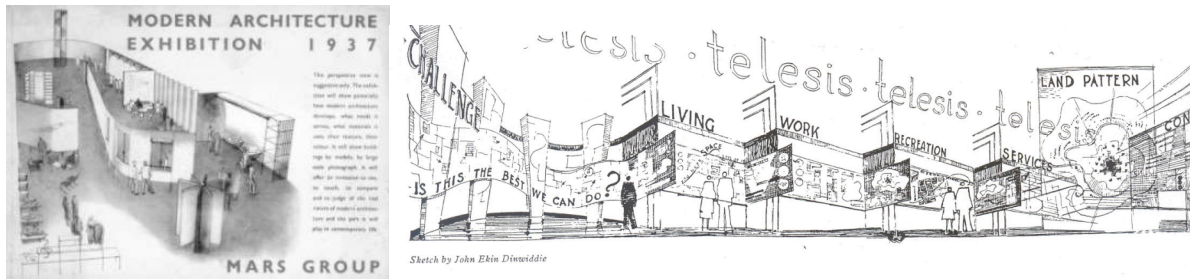
Architects and planners used exhibitions for more than civic education, but also as tools to promote themselves and their designs. During the interwar period, architects and planners used exhibitions as a means to reveal bold plans for the city. Le Corbusier developed sensational architectural displays for his Pavillon d' Esprit Nouveau in 1924. While this exhibition featured his housing designs, a side wing displayed his urban visions. Two models hung across from each other, an 80-square meter diorama of the Contemporary City for Three Million Inhabitants, designed for an abstract non-specific site, and a 60-square meter diorama of the Plan Voisin for Paris, applying the principles to propose a shocking clean-sweep plan of the Right Bank of Paris.¹¹ In his 1937 exhibit Le Temps Nouveau Le Corbusier further developed his display technique. In this exhibit display spaces progressed around a ramp, which guided visitors through the exhibit, ordering their experience of his narrative of progress from the old city to his vision for a new modern city. (Figure 3)

Photographs of Le Corbusier's models and exhibitions appeared in architecture journals and in publications such as in the 1938 book *Des Canons, des Munitions*, which depicted the ideas and displays from the Le Temps Nouveau.¹² Other architects embraced this medium organizing their own exhibitions of planning ideas. The Modern Architecture Research Group (MARS) hosted several smaller exhibits in the 1930s culminating in their 1937 exhibition, which proposed a dramatic modernization plan for London. G.S. Kallmann, an architect with display design experience, called the MARS exhibit "a dynamic synthesis of drama and lightheartedness." He praised the designers' efforts to please the public and yet "follow their aesthetic ambitions."¹³

¹¹ Maybeth Shaw, *Promoting an Urban Vision: le Corbusier and the Plan Voisin*. (Masters Thesis, Department of Urban Studies & Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June 1991) 1.

¹² Le Corbusier, *Des Canons, des Munitions? Merci! Des Logis ... SVP: Monographie du "Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux" a l'Exposition Internationale "Art et Technique" de Paris 1937* (Cannons, ammunitions No thanks! Give us homes, please: A monograph on the Pavilion des Temps Nouveaux) (Paris, 1938).

¹³ G.S. Kallmann, "The Wartime Exhibition" *Architectural Review*, 94, 562. (September 1943) 95, 106.



Figures 5 and 6: The left image depicts the MARS exhibition, showing how the curved walls guide the visitor through the exhibit in a circular pattern. The drawing on the right shows the Telesis exhibit as a more linear in design, directing the viewer through the displays in a straight progression while allowing the entire presentation to be seen in a single glance.

These European exhibits, which appeared in American journals, influenced design exhibits in the United States, shaping a trans-Atlantic dialogue about exhibition design, in which designers shared planning ideas and imagery to create a new international style of design graphics.¹⁴ Architect-planner groups formed in other cities, including the group Telesis that proposed applying modernist planning principles to the San Francisco Bay region. Telesis had collected and discussed photographs of the Le Temps Nouveau and MARS exhibits while planning their own exhibition in 1940 called “Space for Living.”¹⁵ (Figure 4)

In order to understand how these exhibitions fostered the emergence of a new visual language for expressing architectural ideas it is useful to examine the visual and organizational strategies of these displays. One shared design concern for these exhibitions revolved around how to move the visitor through space so as to guide their experience of the narrative. The MARS exhibit created a central round wall that swept visitors into the space, guiding them through the displays in a circular motion. (Figure 5) In the Telesis exhibit, the designers created pockets to catch the viewer. (Figure 6) A round wall at the entrance, highlighted by a waving banner asking, “Is this the best we can do?” guided the visitor into the space, toward the first display. A series of angular display boards projected into the space, catching the visitor in pools of information about the exhibit’s main themes—living, work, recreation and services. At the end of the room a large Land Map served as a destination to the planning journey, and a focal point for the exhibition. In the Telesis exhibit, the space flowed from one bay to another, creating a linear progression through the room, so visitors could take in the whole exhibit in one view.

¹⁴ For more on this new visual language, see Andrew Shanken, *194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the American Home Front* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Press, 2009) 23.

¹⁵ Peter Allen, “Progress Intentionally Planned: Telesis and the Modernist Agenda,” *San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR) Newsletter*, (2009).



Figures 7 and 8: These two photographs of displays show how planners used abstracted images and collage to communicate broad planning principles. On the left Le Corbusier depicts Housing and Recreation using a combination of architectural drawings and symbols. On the right a display at the 1934 MARS exhibit at Olympia uses tins cans in a row and a series of populations dots to portray the idea of crowding and urban growth.

These exhibitions also experimented with new visual techniques for attracting the viewer's attention and quickly communicating information. Le Corbusier's exhibit included a variety of bold new graphic techniques, which created abstract and diagrammatic representations of design ideas, rather than traditional plans, sections and elevations. In his portrayal of *Habiter and Recreer* (Housing and Recreation) he combines icons with plans, sections, and perspectives, breaking their scale reference to portray generalized ideas. (Figure 7) For example in his depiction of *Habiter* (Housing), Corbusier portrayed his proposal for a high-rise tower of domestic units. He then broke scale with a zoom-in of a single unit at a larger scale. Next to the window he drew an eye to emphasize the fact that these units allowed inhabitants to enjoy the views. The image read as a symbol, almost cartoon like in its simplicity, meant to represent a general type rather than a specific structure. However the image also communicated the information of an architectural section, showing the scale, form, and structural qualities of the design.

This display drew on the development of abstraction, drawing on techniques of collage, surrealism, and the invention of the ISOTYPE as a graphic display technique. The ISOTYPE, invented by Otto Neurath after World War I, then adopted by the Bauhaus, used a repeated image as a means to communicate quantity, visually representing statistics using legible 'universal signs.'¹⁶ Neurath moved to Britain founding the ISOTYPE institute. After his death in 1945, the Institute continued to use the new visual language to make maps and diagrams communicating data for analyzing social and economic policies. In the 1930s and 40s planners adopted the technique appearing in the work of Le Corbusier and MARS.

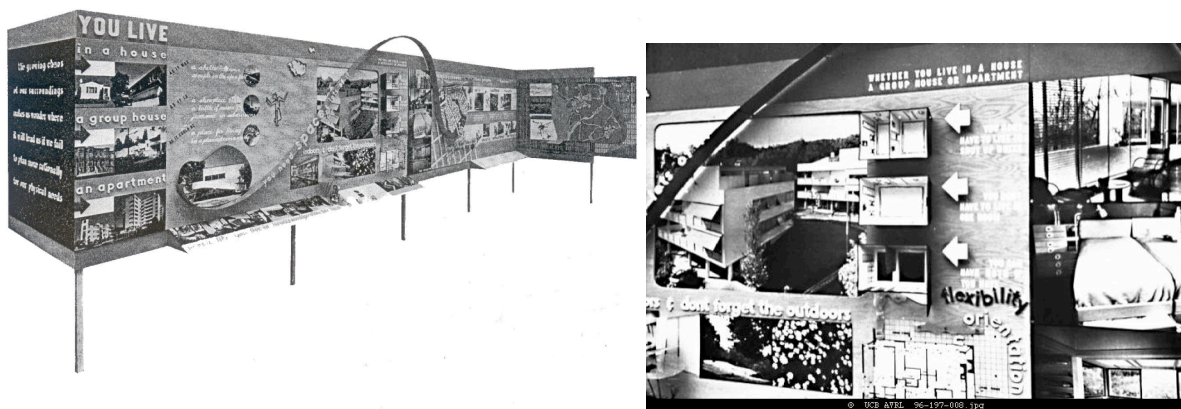
A MARS display for an exhibition in 1934 used a similar combination of abstractions to portray the idea of urban growth and crowding. (Figure 8) The text indicates that number of people sharing rooms in London, pointing to an illustration of rows of tin cans lined up flat an on end. This abstract reference recalls the idiom "packed like sardines." Below the growth of London appears as time-capture progression showing a single population dot grow, with successive dots being added to the edge, creating an

¹⁶ Shanken, 26, 29.

outward growing organism. These dots, as in ISOTYPE techniques, indicated the growth of population by the repetition of a symbol indicating a static population amount. Other diagrams used more standard forms of ISOTYPES to show population by the repetition of a figure shaped symbol. (Figure 35) In the displays by both Le Corbusier and MARS abstract imagery and iconic symbols to portray complex information in memorable ways.

Displays by Telesis adopted a collage technique, rather than abstraction, combining text and images to excite and educate viewers. The Telesis display “You Live” used sweeping arches, arrows and bold titles to anchor the viewer and move them through the display. (Figure 9) The housing ideas appeared in a collage of graphics which included photographs of various housing types, diagrammatic maps of neighborhoods, and the occasional model, popping out to illustrate the three-dimensional quality of the housing unit plans. (Figure 10) While certain displays, such as the large maps at the beginning and end of the room were meant to be viewed from afar, the displays used intricate imagery which drew the viewer in toward the display to understand the detailed photographs, drawings and diagrams.

These Interwar Period experiments in exhibiting urban plans led to a wide variety of new display techniques that gradually coalesced into new forms of architectural graphics. Designers found that displays could have a powerful influence on public opinion, promoting ideas, knowledge and attitudes.¹⁷ In the *Architectural Review*, G. S. Kallmann, an architect with exhibition experience, praised the modernists for their ability to use the media of the exhibition to ‘canvass’ for an idea effectively. Designers such as Le Corbusier, MARS, and Telesis charged to the forefront of both design and publicity of urban planning with their exhibitions setting the standard for future innovations.¹⁸



Figures 9 and 10: These photographs of the Telesis displays show how the designers used collage style techniques in their graphics, using arrows, sweeping arches, and bold text to guide the viewers attention. Up close the presentations combined photographs, models, and text loosely providing an information rich exhibit to engage the visitor.

¹⁷ Kenneth Luckhurst, *The Story of Exhibitions* (London: Studio Publications, 1951) 11.

¹⁸ Kallmann, 95, 104, 106.

Government Exhibitions as Propaganda

During the 1940s, the phenomenon of the exhibition spread from commercial culture into the government sector as a major tool for political propaganda and publicity. The formation of an Exhibition department in the Ministry of Information in 1939 responded to a perceived need to monitor and bolster home-front morale during the hardships of 'total war.' The Display and Exhibition Division created war and home front propaganda campaigns utilizing the expertise of a highly specialized set of exhibition designers. Architects, short on commercial work in their private practices gravitated to untraditional design work such as exhibitions and propaganda.¹⁹ These professionals drew from a growing body of precedent and literature about display strategies in order to develop increasingly effective publicity media. According to display designer Beverly Pick, the exhibition designs of the 1940s communicated "the advice, warnings, and threats of government departments" to "a very broad section of the population" generating "a far greater impact than many more established forms of advertising."²⁰ Although government agencies had used films, exhibits and storefront displays in the interwar period, these displays increased in size, quantity and attendance during the war, expanding their impact on public opinion.²¹ These exhibitions, which aimed to promote patriotism and give hope to suffering people, also served to influence and homogenize popular culture and public opinion during the war.

Misha Black, the principal Exhibitions Designer for the MOI commented on the display field's development, saying "'the use of exhibitions as a method of propaganda for ideas has suddenly blossomed from a frail plant...into a vigorous growth which now spreads its tendrils from Oxford Street...to...remote villages, and isolated army camps.'"²² Nonetheless, beyond propaganda, Black saw the exhibition as a tool "to persuade visitors to undertake actions, or accept conditions, often contrary to their natural appetites", "through...select visual stimulation." Black accepted the usefulness of propaganda uncritically. Julian Huxley, the founder of Mass Observation also proclaimed the importance of propaganda within a democracy based on "the principle of persuasion, consent, and participation" in order to create a "core of informed opinion."²³ While Black viewed exhibitions pragmatically, others at the time took a more idealistic stance towards these exhibitions. In *Architecture Review*, Kallmann praised the exhibition as not only a tool to serve short-term propaganda needs, but also a tool for cultivation, bringing culture to the masses. Exhibitions achieved long term goods such as "general education, understanding of world affairs, training for citizenship, and perhaps even a greater aesthetic sensibility."²⁴

The MOI produced hundreds of exhibitions that traveled widely and were seen by hundreds of thousands of people, creating a strong impact on public opinion. For example, the Charring Cross site housed 15 exhibits over 270 days in a single year,

¹⁹ Kallmann, 95.

²⁰ Beverly Pick, *Display Presentation, Exhibitions, Window and Outdoor Displays*. (London: Crosby Lockwood and Son Ltd., 1957) 12.

²¹ Nicholas Bullock, "Imagining the Post-War World: Architecture, Reconstruction and the British Documentary Film Movement." *Cinema and Architecture: Melies, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia*, Eds. Francios Penz and Maureen Thomas (London: British Film Institute, 1997) 53. Kallmann, 95.

²² Misha Black quoted in Lilley and Larkham, 97.

²³ Julina Huxley quoted by Lilley and Larkham, 4.

²⁴ Kallmann, 96.

visited by an average of 3,934 people per day.²⁵ These exhibitions varied in topic, including information about war technology and strategy, Britain's allies and enemies, photos and paintings of battlefields and destroyed cities, and home front policies and reconstruction.

One of the most exciting and acclaimed exhibitions put on by the MOI during the war was the traveling "RAF in Action" Exhibition. This exhibit included a "a large scale model of a German town...lit up by electric bulbs." Bombers appeared on a screen just above the model and a recorded commentator described the air raid illustrated by blasts of light and the sounds of explosions and sirens. In addition, the exhibit included a flight simulator, model aircraft, stereoscopic photographs of devastated German towns, and films of the Amiens prison raids.²⁶ This exhibit reached approximately 1.6 million visitors at 52 sites with an average of 30,617 attending at each site over an average of 12 days. A similar exhibit the New Army Equipment Exhibition in July 1943 had 60,000 visitors in the first 3 days, and over its 2 month display anticipated 1.25 million.²⁷ *Architectural Review* praised the MOI's design for the exhibit for using, "the most intelligent and progressive style of display and architecture" lauding it as a success of modern display techniques, appealing to critics and ordinary people alike.²⁸

The least successful exhibitions were those comprised primarily of photographs. Critics considered these shows static and two-dimensional, while visitors, over exposed to photographic displays, considered them banal. In their "Report on Government Exhibitions," the Mass Observation group advised the Ministry of Information on strategies for creating successful exhibitions in order to attract the most publicity, and create the most lasting educational or propaganda impact. In particular they noted the greater success of the exhibitions with interactive demonstrations, which boasted both a livelier atmosphere and higher approval ratings. Mass Observation advised the MOI to plan exhibitions in order to "stimulate hitherto unawakened interest" by creating interactive, three-dimensional displays located in high traffic areas frequented by people of all classes. They warned against obscurely located exhibitions in the back of public buildings warning that they limited their audience to "those who are already sufficiently interested to take the trouble."²⁹

In May 1945, the Display and Exhibition Division underwent reorganization. As they re-prioritized their future exhibition projects, they seem to have taken some of Mass Observation's comments in mind, cutting back on picture set exhibitions. In a letter to the Display and Exhibition Division, A.G. Highet, Deputy Director of the MOI Films Division, argued that the exhibition display techniques were not up to the standard of continental Europe. He criticized the flat unimaginative quality of British display design, and proposed that hiring civil servants as full time staff, rather than artist consultants, had discouraged the creative design process for exhibitions. "Civil Service training does not, as a rule, create an urge to experiment, nor does it, as a rule, stimulate originality...a good amateur in design is always beaten the good professional."³⁰ While

²⁵ NA: INF 1/133 Displays and Exhibitions.

²⁶ Mass Observation Archive. University of Sussex. MO file report 2230, 2251. "RAF Exhibition."

²⁷ NA: INF 1/133 Displays and Exhibitions.

²⁸ "Marginalia-The Equipment of a Division," *Architectural Review*, 94, 560. (August 1943) xl-xlii.

²⁹ MO: File Report 871. "Report on Government Exhibitions" 4-5.

³⁰ NA: INF 1/132. Reorganization of the Display and Exhibition Division. A.G. Highet. "A Note on Exhibition Display."

the MOI exhibitions varied greatly in quality and scale, they set the tone of display culture during the war and beyond, creating a new set of display experts and techniques that influenced the techniques of reconstruction planning exhibits.

Reconstruction Planning Exhibits

Architects and planners quickly embraced the wartime display culture, organizing their own exhibits for postwar reconstruction. Immediately after the air raids of 1940, many professional, civic, and government organizations began proposing plans for the damaged cities, and developing exhibitions to display these plans to the public. Although some of these exhibitions were specific to particular urban areas in need of reconstruction or redevelopment, other plans were more general recommendations for how the nation as a whole should address widespread town and country planning.

In London, a plethora of professional and civic committees formed in order to encourage immediate planning for the reconstruction of London. Among the many exhibitions organized by these groups, the most prominent included: the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1942, characterized by its Beaux Arts approach; the RIBA's *Rebuilding Britain* Exhibition, in 1943; and the London Regional Reconstruction Committee's *Greater London Plan* exhibition, in 1944. These plans appeared widely in media coverage, and sometimes included traveling exhibits.

Comparing these exhibits, an article in *Architectural Review* praised exhibitions such as London Regional Reconstruction Committee's small display at the National Gallery for being "straight forward in its layout and on the whole easily understood." The article rated these traits positively compared to the RIBA's *Rebuilding Britain* exhibition that they called "lavishly displayed but difficult to read and follow." They argued that the Utopian plans in the RIBA plan might alarm the 'man-in-the-street' who would be unable to tell from the exhibition when and how these changes would be enacted. In contrast the Royal Academy received public praise for its "wealth of pictures of future London, complete with Bloomfieldian facades." In this spectrum, the London Regional Reconstruction Committee's *Greater London Plan* exhibition struck the right balance between pragmatism and idealism.³¹

Overall the exhibits aimed less to propose viable, finished plans for reconstruction, than to display to the public the range of possibilities of what planners could achieve. None of these groups had any official responsibility or power to shape planning policies or designs directly. While some of the committees included influential figures such as Patrick Abercrombie, most of the plans were proposed by architects in private practice, not employed as planning officials at the local or national level. For this reason, the exhibition organizers aimed less to achieve public acceptance for that particular plan, and more to gain support for a particular style or approach to planning in general.

³¹ "Marginalia-The Greater London Exhibition," *Architectural Review*, 94, 559 (July 1943) xliii-xliv.



Figures 11 and 12: The photograph on the left shows the *County of London Plan* displayed in the large meeting room at County Hall in 1943. On the right, a plan of the exhibition shows the map placed in front the entrance, directing the circulation into the room in a clockwise manner, through the narrative of planning, ending with the view of the map. City of London, London Metropolitan Archives.

'Show and Tell' at the County and City Exhibits

One of the first major exhibitions of a plan prepared by a government agency appeared at the exhibition of the *County of London Plan*, organized by the London County Council (LCC). This exhibition differed from the other modernist planning and reconstruction planning exhibitions because it sought public consultation and approval. The exhibition not only showed the possibilities for planning, but also proposed an actual plan that the LCC would consider putting into action. Previous exhibits, presented by designers without authority or resources to implement their plans, remained purely hypothetical, meant to provoke interest in the planning ideas. In contrast, this exhibit proposed a practical plan for redevelopment, and actively sought public comment and critique from individuals, agencies, and local borough representatives. In this case, the exhibition served as more than an educational presentation, but aimed to become a public forum, engendering a public discourse planning policies in London.

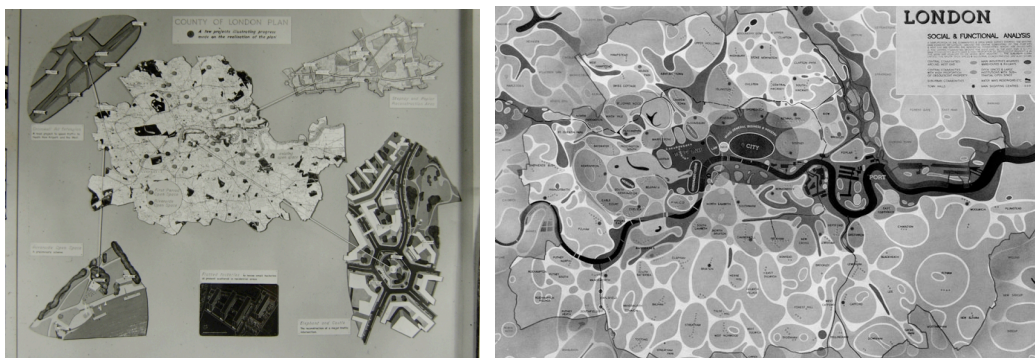
On July 14, 1943 the LCC opened a display at County Hall, the first of two exhibitions, which served to publicize the *County of London Plan* (1943). Located in a round room, the exhibition was set up as a continuous flow; it began by defining the problems of London, then showed their visions for community, industry, roads and open space, and finally displayed how these plans would reshape particular neighborhoods of London. (Figure 12) The exhibit ended with a huge plan of the proposed redevelopment, prominently mounted in the center of the room. (Figure 11) This layout, which illustrated the planning process by showing its various stages from fact finding to synthesis. Visitors were guided through the narrative by a descriptive pamphlet, available for 3 pennies, which allowed the visitors unable to afford the published book to take home a concise, simplified version of the plan.³² Overall, the exhibition borrowed its technique and narrative from previous planning exhibits both in the tradition of Patrick Geddes and Le Corbusier.

³² THA: P/MUN/6 London County Council, "Exhibition of the County of London Plan" (July 1943).



Figures 13 and 14: The photograph shows a low angle perspective drawing of a neighborhood unit plan and perspective sketches depicting the architectural quality of the housing and community buildings. City of London, London Metropolitan Archives.

Some of the displays reproduced the maps and diagrams directly from the *County of London Plan*, such as in the “Communities” display, which included larger versions of the maps of neighborhood units and various redevelopment proposals. While some of the more traditional maps and plans may have been difficult for the layperson to understand, the LCC artists aimed to make the neighborhood diagram more readable by adding perspective to the plan. (Figure 13) The image, drawn to appear as if seen from a plane or a low angle aerial image, showed the mass and form of the buildings rather than merely the footprints, allowing viewers to get a sense of the scale and density of the housing units. In the section on “Architecture,” perspective sketches portrayed the architectural character, materiality, and details of housing projects and community buildings, further enabling the visitor to envision the space that the planners proposed. (Figure 14) The LCC aimed to use these type of “imaginative perspectives” and “bold drawings” to catch the viewers’ eye. At the later showing of the exhibition at the Academy of Art, they added additional large-scale photographs and illuminated perspective views to improve the legibility of their ideas.³³



Figures 15 and 16: These photographs contrast the traditional plan drawings with the Social and Functional Analysis Diagram depicts the proposals for neighborhood units in an abstract map of community groups. City of London, London Metropolitan Archives.

³³ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/41 Letter from F.C. Mitchell, Deputy Managing Editor of the London Press Exchange Ltd. to T.G. Randall. (May 11, 1943).

The LCC also experimented with a variety of forms of maps. The section dedicated to “the Architect” included more traditional maps to depict the designs for road intersections in various parts of London. (Figure 15) In the display, a map of the county provides context and site locations, while lead lines guide the viewer to enlarged plans showing the intricacies of the specific intersection designs. This technical map contrasts with other images in the exhibition, such as the Social and Functional Analysis diagram of London. (Figure 16) Here the artist, Arthur Ling, deconstructs and abstracts the map of London to portray a particular idea, the idea of neighborhoods as discrete communities. Ling retained key features of the map of London, specifically the Thames, highlighting the river in black to catch the eye and orient the viewer. He then removed all other physical markers in the map, instead replacing roads and structures with irregularly shaped cells that indicated the discrete identifiable and namable communities of London. This diagrammatic map communicated spatial ideas which would be difficult to understand in text, and which could not be shown through traditional maps or other architectural drawing types.

Models also communicated ideas that would be difficult to understand in any other media, translating the technical plans and drawings into three-dimensional space, comprehensible to the layperson. The LCC displays included several smaller models and two large centerpieces, one of the South Bank of the Thames, and the other for a neighborhood unit at Stepney. (Figures 17-19) These models gave visitors a birds-eye view of the proposed changes to the city. Although expensive to build, they became the highlight of the exhibition. While cheaper collapsible and transportable models made using military techniques could be purchased for exhibitions, the *County of London* models were custom made.³⁴ Similar models at Middlesbrough had cost 810 pounds, and 12 by 12 foot model displayed the exhibition at Coventry had cost 1000 pounds.³⁵ The expense and effort taken to construct these models showed their importance as a means of communicating planning ideas.



Figures 17 and 18: The photo on the left shows a model of a traffic intersection. On the right, Lord Latham explains a model of the Stepney Neighborhood Unit to visiting political leaders. City of London, London Metropolitan Archives.

³⁴ NA: HLG 85/16 Correspondence on Proposed Model to Illustrate GLP.

³⁵ Lilley and Larkham, 13, 21.



Figures 19 and 20: In these photographs the Royal Family visit the *County of London Plan* exhibit. On the left the Abercrombie laughs as he shows the queen the model of redevelopment along the Thames. On the right the queen smiled approvingly as she views the Social and Functional Diagram of London.

The exhibitions generally included visits from various political leaders, as well as from the Royal family. The organizers scheduled photo shoots for press releases to coincide with these visits from the royal family and other famous leaders. Photos of the events often included images of the queen with the most photogenic models and drawings, as in the photograph of the queen been shown the model of the Thames waterfront by Patrick Abercrombie and Lord Latham (Figure 19) and the Social and Functional Analysis Diagram (Figure 20). These images, printed in newspapers, professional journals, and official brochures gave notoriety to the plans, lending the events the majesty of the royal presence.

Before each of the exhibits, the LCC organized publicity campaigns to inform the public about the event. The LCC publicists, the London Press Exchange, expressed a great concern for the legibility and accessibility of the exhibition to laypeople. Some of the publicity relied upon low-tech strategies using posters and Loud Speaker Advertising.³⁶ In addition, the LCC hung streamers prominently at County Hall and on several city bridges and placed posters on public buildings such as education offices, and canteens.³⁷ The posters emphasized the spectacle of the exhibition with its “arresting plans and photographs” as well as its legibility “expressed in practical detail and in the language of the everyday!” The poster legitimated the plan as the scientific product of “years of research and planning by experts.” However, it emphasized its interest to laypeople, calling it “a fascinating study for all thoughtful people.”³⁸ This poster, though a bit wordy and visually bland, tried to grab the attention and interest of the public.

The LCC aimed to ensure that the exhibition was accessible to as many people as possible. For this reason, the LCC decided to keep the exhibit free to the public, to carefully consider its location, and to extend its hours and dates. In their meetings, the

³⁶ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/41 “Country of London Plan—Notes of the Conference on Publicity, held in Lord Latham’s Room” (May 19, 1943) 2-3.

³⁷ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/41 “Letter to Mr. Randall from JAB. London Plan-Posters-Streamers” (May 27, 1943).

³⁸ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/41 “London County Council: Exhibition of The County of London Plan, Early Draft of Flier.”

organizers worried that the County Hall, located on the South bank, was far not ideal for bringing in laypeople; they considered an additional showing the West End as a means of attracting a larger attendance.³⁹ The success of the County Hall exhibit and the “interest shown by the public” led the LCC to extend the exhibition’s length from four to six weeks, closing on August 28. They also added a second exhibit at the Royal Academy of Art from November 3 to 28, 1943.⁴⁰ Between the two exhibitions, 76,597 people viewed the plan over the course of nine weeks, and of them 24,337 of them bought pamphlets.⁴¹ Compared to MOI exhibits, this attendance level was rather low, with around half as many visitors per day as the typical Charring Cross exhibition. In particular the popular Army Equipment Exhibition, which opened in London the same month, had nearly as many visitors in the first 3 days as the County of London Exhibit did in its nine weeks at its two showings.⁴² Nonetheless, the County of London exhibit received significantly more visitors than pre-war planning displays such as the famous MARS Exhibition in the New Burlington Galleries, which only had 7,000 visitors in its two and a half weeks in January 1938.⁴³ It was had the most visitors of any planning exhibit in the 1940s, with other high-attended events being Sheffield and Manchester, both with approximately 60,000 visitors and Coventry with 48,808.⁴⁴

The Exhibition was received well in the professional and popular press. The *East London Advertiser* praised the democratic nature of the public presentation of the *County of London Plan* and the invitation for constructive criticism.⁴⁵ The *East London Observer* also lauded the exhibition as “first class” and advised East Enders to visit the free event, saying “Citizens owe it to themselves to go and look at it. It is an education. The council are doing their best to act on democratic principles.”⁴⁶ However some critics questioned the plan’s accessibility to the public, and the ability of the public to make informed responses to the plan. The *East London Observer* feared that the “general” and “tentative” nature of the plan, lacking in current data would impede any useful “criticism that Lord Latham so generously invites.”⁴⁷ The *Observer* also expressed concern that despite the efforts of the LCC to develop graphic means of making the plan legible to laypeople, the use of technical architectural drawings still remained too complex for quick understanding in the exhibition environment.⁴⁸

In both its successes and failures, the *County of London Plan* Exhibition served as a model for later exhibits, setting a precedent that reconstruction plans would be displayed in similar exhibitions. As one of the earlier and more publicized town plan during World War II, the LCC played a prominent role in initiating a trend to both educate the public about planning, and actively seek feedback and support for government led planning projects.

³⁹ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/41 “Letter from F.C. Mitchell, Deputy Managing Editor of the London Press Exchange Ltd. to T.G. Randall” (May 11, 1943).

⁴⁰ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/42 “Information of the Press-London County Council-County of London Plan Exhibition-Extension of Period” (August 12, 1943).

⁴¹ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/43 “London County Council- County of London Plan Exhibition- Civil Defense and General Purposes Committee- Report by the Clerk of the Council” (November 29, 1943)

⁴² NA: INF 1/133. Displays and Exhibitions.

⁴³ www.designmuseum.org/design/the-mars-group

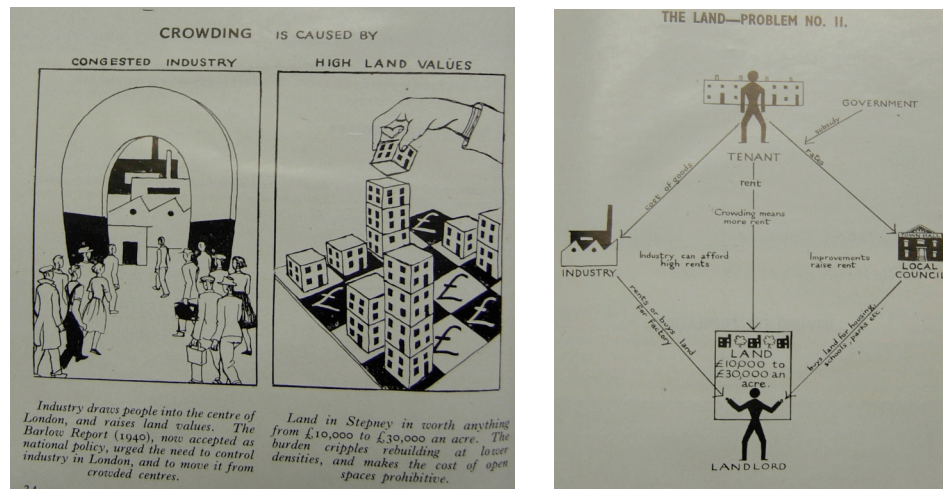
⁴⁴ Lilley and Larkham, 17, 23.

⁴⁵ “Transforming East London” *East London Advertiser*. (July 17, 1943) 4.

⁴⁶ “The Great New London Plan- LCC Approves Publicity” *East London Observer* (July 16, 1943) 1.

⁴⁷ “Town Talk,” *East London Observer* (July 16, 1943) 2.

⁴⁸ “The Future of East London, Stepney and Poplar,” *East London Observer* (July 16, 1943) 3.



Figures 21 and 22: These diagrams from *Living in Stepney* depicted how the congestion of industry, jobs, and people into the center of London raised land prices leading to high-rise construction, high rents, and crowding for tenants to the benefit of land lords. Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archive, Stepney Reconstruction Group. *Living in Stepney: Past, Present and Future* London: Toynbee Hall, 1943.

'Doing it Ourselves' at the Local Exhibits

Although the plans created by cities and towns attracted most of the media attention, local groups also initiated plans for their boroughs and neighborhoods. Soon after the blitz left East London in ruins, several groups of local residents, such as the Poplar Reconstruction Group, and the Stepney Reconstruction Group, formed to represent the needs and wants of their neighbors. In their charter, the Stepney Reconstruction Group stated their aim to "explain to the planners the needs of ordinary people and to interest the public in what planning means."⁴⁹ They aimed to "banish uniformed apathy in their area, to quicken feeling with regard to all stages of aspects of reconstruction."⁵⁰ This 'unofficial' group worked out of Toynbee Hall, a local center for social service policy research.

In October 1943 the group prepared an exhibition *Stepney Today and Tomorrow* at the Whitechapel Gallery, later touring other locations in Stepney. The group also created a book publishing the content of the exhibition entitled *Living in Stepney*, which sold out its original printing of 1500 copies.⁵¹ Using clear cartoons and diagrams, with ISOTYPE-style icons, the book showed how planning issues such as the location of industry and economics of land prices affected the working class residents of Stepney.⁵² (Figures 21 and 22) The Stepney exhibit included maps, models and photographs from the *County of London Plan* with those created by Stepney's Borough Engineer, to depict the

⁴⁹ "Local Participation in Planning- Stepney Reconstruction Group," *Architect's Journal* (December 2, 1943) 412.

⁵⁰ "Stepney Today and Tomorrow- Whitechapel Exhibition and Housing Problems," *East London Advertiser* (October 22, 1943) 2.

⁵¹ THA: P/MUN/5/1 Minute Book of the Stepney Reconstruction Group "Minutes of Meeting" (February 14, 46). Stepney Reconstruction Group. *Living in Stepney: Past, Present and Future* London: Toynbee Hall, 1943.

borough's existing defects, particular needs, and how the area would be affected if the LCC implemented the *County of London Plan*.

Although small, the exhibit received positive coverage in the media. *The East London Observer* praised the "beautifully made model." The *Architect's Journal* praised the event saying it "goes a long way towards closing the gap between the expert's plan and the men and women for whom it is produced." The journal lauded the use of local amateur talent organize the event, which citizens perceived "to be closer to themselves" than professional exhibitions. According to the journal, this event proved the ability of "all sections of a community to take part in the solution of their local problems."⁵³ Minister of Town and County Planning, Lewis Silkin celebrated the event as an example of public input on the LCC plan. He said he was "interested to know what the people of Stepney thought" and that "the LCC would bear their views seriously in mind."⁵⁴

At the exhibition, the Stepney Reconstruction Group left a book in which visitors could leave comments about both the content of their plan, as well as suggestions for the exhibition. Over the two-week exhibition, several dozen people signed the book. Many visitors commented on the effectiveness of the group and their exhibition in encouraging public engagement in the planning process. Several responded positively to the presentation saying, "The exhibition really woke me up" while others called it "intelligent," "penetrating," "interesting and stimulating." Some respondents commented on the exhibitions successful displays, noting its "forceful presentation," and appropriate length "which one does not get tired of." A couple of respondents complained about the venue, saying, "we feel your exhibition is not getting to the masses of the Stepney inhabitants," and "many people do not take the trouble to visit the Whitechapel Art Gallery." Respondents encouraged a wider circulation of the exhibition saying "if the public won't come here, take it to them" for example through mobile exhibits, or display at the public library, or encouraging student tours and school presentations.⁵⁵ While the majority of the organizers and commenting attendees seem to have been educated professionals, political organizers or philanthropists, these laypeople showed an active interest in both planning policies and display techniques. This exhibit, organized by local activists, offered a rare example of the ways in which citizens organized themselves to engage in the planning process.

'The Shop Window': Post War Commercial Culture and Housing Exhibitions

After the war ended the number of government exhibitions of all kinds decreased. The Ministry of Information reorganized and cut their budgets, limiting the staff and resources available for exhibitions about reconstruction organized by the central government. Although the MOI continued to produce small exhibits of photos and plans, they ceased to produce special displays for large-scale exhibitions.⁵⁶ While local agencies continued to have exhibitions for their individual plans, the number of exhibitions promoting planning in general decreased. Nonetheless, the exhibition

⁵³ "Local Participation in Planning- Stepney Reconstruction Group," *Architect's Journal* (December 2, 1943) 412.

⁵⁴ "Stepney Today and Tomorrow- Whitechapel Exhibition and Housing Problems" *East London Advertiser*, October 22, 1943. 2.

⁵⁵ THA: P/MUN/5/2 "Stepney Reconstruction Group Exhibition, Autumn 1943- Suggestions and What Sort of House do You Want?"

⁵⁶ NA: INF 1/152. Reorganization of the Campaigns and Exhibition Division. "Note of Meeting in DDG's Room to discuss Possible Reductions in Campaigns and Exhibitions Division" (May 22, 1945).

culture carried on into post war life. Commercial housing fairs, which had flourished before the war, returned with renewed vigor, showing consumers what household innovations they could expect in the postwar era.

In the late 1940s, exhibits such as the 1946 Daily Herald Modern Homes Exhibit, the 1946 "Britain Can Make it" Exhibition, and the 1947 Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition, featured the new technology and commercially available products that would increase the standards of living and the comfort of the British home. They focused primarily on the interior of the home or its architectural style, rather than on larger scale neighborhood planning issues, which had figured more prominently in government and professional exhibitions. Nonetheless a few displays such as the Housing Centre exhibit at the Daily Herald Post-war Homes Exhibition, included a "link between the individual home and town planning."⁵⁷

In terms of design, many of the exhibits in the immediate post war period, such as "Britain Can Make It," featured elaborate displays, which expressed optimism for the future, and emphasized the spectacle of the media rather than the content of the message. Although the technology was not particularly new science, the displays educated the public about new design aesthetics, developing the consumer's taste "to buy what is well designed."⁵⁸ However, the austerity caused by the postwar economic crisis made the exciting new products and ideas on display 'forbidden fruit' that would not be available on the domestic markets for several years. By the end of the 1940s, the displays at the housing exhibitions had become simpler reflecting the sober reality about the slow speed and high cost of reconstruction, and the commercial and social Utopia it has promised.⁵⁹

Many of these commercially sponsored housing exhibitions received prominent media coverage. High attendance numbers dwarfed the professional and government housing and planning exhibitions during the war. In general these exhibitions had great public appeal drawing large and diverse crowds over long running times; housing exhibits such as the Ideal Home Exhibition had 100,000 visitors. "Britain Can Make It", though a relatively small exhibition attracted 1.5 million visitors.⁶⁰ Mass Observation reports about the postwar housing exhibitions showed that these events were of great interest to many groups, including young people, members of the middle and artisan classes, married women, couples, and service men interested in buying a home.⁶¹ Surveys at the 1946 "Modern Homes" Exhibition showed that most of the visitors were not "habitual exhibition goers," and came for "specific and personal interests" rather than for "professional interest."⁶² In general people were attracted to exhibitions for social reasons and interest in learning about the topic. However most people preferred to attend exhibitions on topics with "some practical relation to their own lives and interest." Housing exhibitions had high popular appeal as "few can deny domestic interest of one kind or another."⁶³

⁵⁷ Walter Segal, "Up Your Street Exhibition: The Neighborhood In Relation to Housing," *Architect's Journal*. (August 9, 1945).

⁵⁸ Kenneth Luckhurst. *The Story of Exhibitions* (London: Studio Publications, 1951) 181.

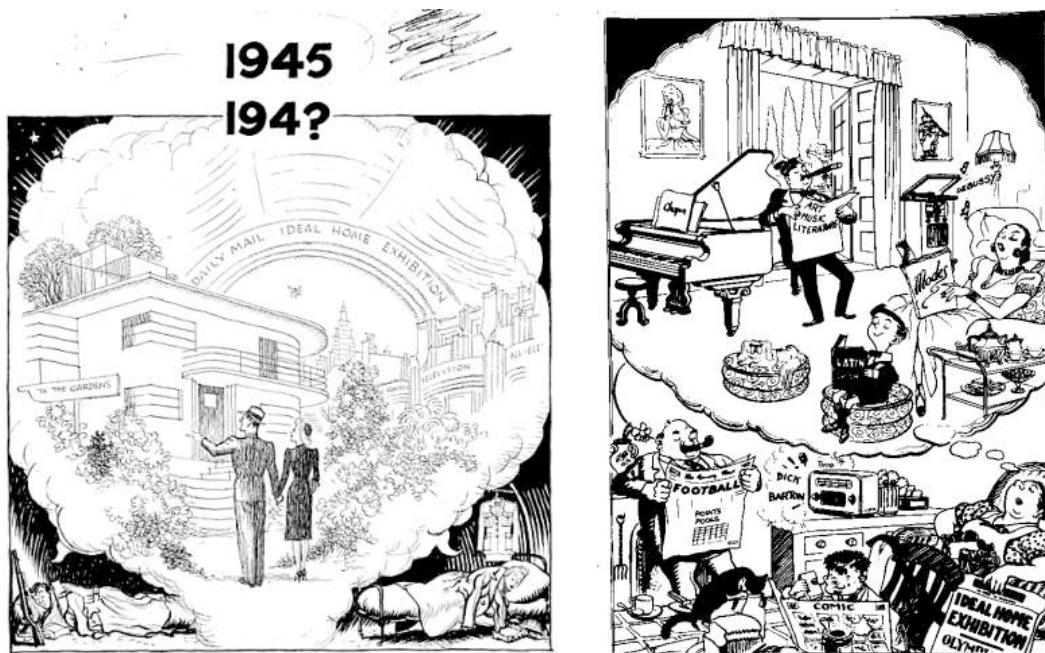
⁵⁹ David Dean The Architect and Stand Designer: Building Exhibitions 1895-1983. London: Scholar Press, 1985. 14, 83.

⁶⁰ MO: File Report 2230, 2251. MO Bulletin 39, December 1950 "Exhibitions"

⁶¹ MO: File Report 2270. "Report on the Post War Homes Exhibition" 14.

⁶² MO: File Report 2360s. "Modern Homes Exhibition"

⁶³ MO: Bulletin 39, December 1950. "Exhibitions"



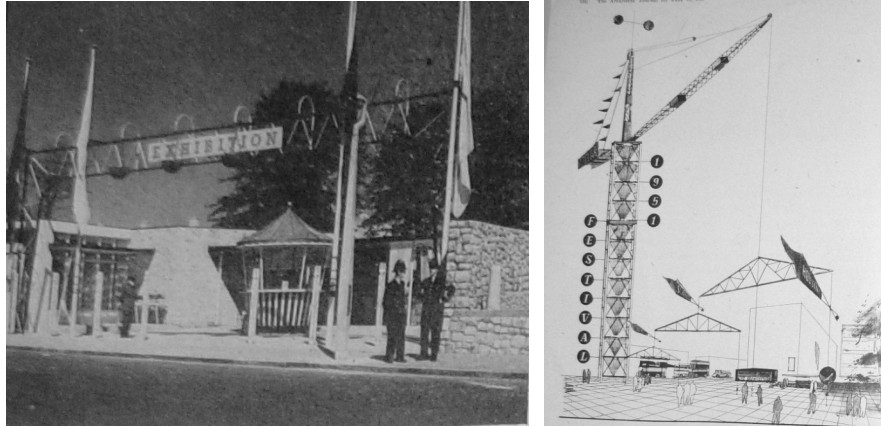
Figures 23 and 24: These cartoons show how the newspapers advertised their housing exhibitions, portraying ideal homes as escapes from the realities of their own lives, where modern architecture and good design, could transform visitors into the ideal family.
 British Cartoon Archive, Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, *Daily Mail*, April 12, 1944. ILW0706
 British Cartoon Archive, Joseph Lee. *Evening News*, March 2, 1948. JL3731

These exhibitions, unlike their wartime government counterparts, successfully tapped into the public's postwar desires by focusing on planning issues close to home, such as modern kitchens. The high popularity of the events also derived from their value in providing an escape from the grim realities of real life. The theme of escape appeared in several cartoons from 1947 and 1948. One cartoon showed a doctor consulting his patient, who suffered from the anxieties from the post-war economic crisis; he advised, "I can recommend no better tonic at the moment, than a visit to the ideal home exhibition."⁶⁴ In 1944, another cartoon by Leslie Gilbert Illingworth helped advertise the Housing Exhibition by the Daily Mail. (Figure 23) The image depicted two people sleeping in bomb shelters dreaming about a sleek modern house surrounded by nature. This imagery drew upon the desire of the British people to escape the hardships of war and improve their lives by moving into a better house after the war.⁶⁵ Over the next few years many others cartoons, such as one by Joseph Lee in the *Evening News* in 1948, depicted women enjoying the fantasy of a perfect home and husband, in contrast to the less than ideal conditions of their current home life.⁶⁶ (Figure 24) The proliferation and success of these exhibits reflected the way in which display culture shifted back to a commercial focus as life returned to many of its prewar patterns.

⁶⁴ Ronald Niebour, "I can recommend no better tonic at the moment, than a visit to the ideal home exhibition." *The Daily Mail*, March 4, 1947.

⁶⁵ Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, *Daily Mail*, April 12, 1944.

⁶⁶ Joseph Lee. "London Laughs: Dreams of an Ideal Home." *Evening News*, Mar 2, 1948. See also Joseph Lee, *Evening News*, Nov 15, 1946 and Joseph Lee, *Evening News*, March 4 1947.



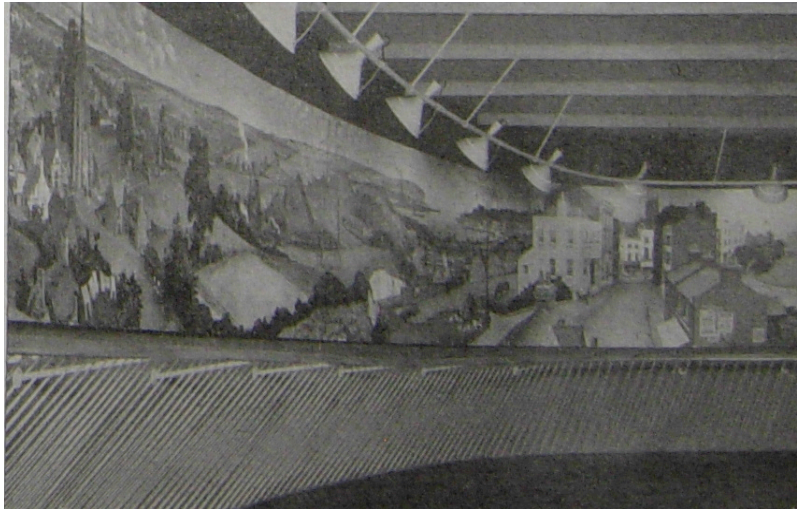
Figures 25 and 26: These images show the Lansbury Neighborhood, set up for display at the Live Architecture Exhibit. The photo of the left shows the main gateway to the exhibition. On the right is a drawing of the crane used as a 'vertical element' as a landmark for the exhibit, and a place from which visitors could view the site from above. Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, *Architects Journal*, Sep. 6, 1951, 278, *Architect's Journal*, June 15, 1950, 738.

'A Festival for Planning' at the National Exhibits

As the period of postwar reconstruction drew to a close, the national ministries teamed up with the London County Council to host one last grand exhibition at the Live Architecture Exhibit for the 1951 Festival of London. This event, capped off the planning exhibitions of the previous decade by demonstrating the physical products of reconstruction, rather than merely displaying paper visions. In August 1948, the Ministry of Work's Council of Architecture, Town Planning and Building Research began planning the Festival of Britain's Live Architecture Exhibit. This exhibit showcased a completed example of the new planned neighborhood unit, which had been a corner stone of post war planning policy. The construction of the neighborhood unit at Lansbury in the Poplar borough of East London, served as a positive model of the progress of the reconstruction plans under the Labour Government.⁶⁷ The exhibition was composed primarily of housing and other neighborhood buildings, allowing the exhibition to take advantage of existing plans for a project already in construction. The Council aimed to use the Live Architecture Exhibit as an example of realistic and economical construction of projects at the local scale, and to demonstrate what was possible for national reconstruction projects. Although quality was important, they did not want to give people a false impression of what homes would be like in a 'low rent district.' Early on, the committee chose Poplar as the site for this exhibit, as ideal in both its location along the river in London, and its projected time of completion in 1950, both of which fit the needs of the festival.⁶⁸ Despite this economic and publicity advantages of using an existing reconstruction site, some committee members worried that the typical neighborhood architecture would be rather common place by 1951 and would not necessarily relate to the themes and style of the rest of the exhibition, or impart the intended impression of revolutionary progress.

⁶⁷ NA: WORK 25/49 Stepney and Poplar Reconstruction Area Progress Schedule "Festival of Britain 1951, Council of Architecture, Town Planning and Building research, Minutes of Meeting" (Sep 30, 1949) 2.

⁶⁸ "Festival Exhibit at Lansbury- Architect's Talk to Rotarians' *East End New and London Shipping Chronicle*, May 4, 1951.



Figures 27 and 28: These photographs of the New Town Exhibit show how large images engulfed the viewer. On the left visitors are drafted by a massive aerial photograph of London. On the right a mural depicts idyllic rural life. Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives. *Architects Journal*, Sep. 6, 1951, 280.

The indoor exhibits included an exhibition on New Towns that aimed to portray the planning for Greater London as a model for reconstruction developments on a national, versus local scale. The tented display included models of New Towns, a model called the “The Heart of the Town” showing redevelopment plan for an imaginary site, and photographs of King and Queen visiting the Lansbury under construction.⁶⁹ The focal point of the display, a giant aerial photograph. (Figure 27) Covered one entire side of the tent, the image drew the visitors’ attention from anywhere in the room. As the viewers approached the map they experienced the illusion of floating above the city, able to perceive the entire region in a single glance. The map, pentagonal in shape to fit into the irregular form of the tent, focused the viewer’s attention on the upper central area of the map, where central London appeared as a dark mass of buildings. Radiating from this point the arterial roads stretch like out to the edges of the map drawing the gaze out into the suburbs, where new housing estates blanket the landscape. On another wall of the exhibit, a vast mural wrapped around the space engulfing the viewer in a quaint rural scene that recalled the nostalgic visions of Britain’s imaginary past.⁷⁰ As in other festival exhibits on the South Bank, this exhibit simultaneously looked forward and backward, depicting the progress toward a ‘better Britain’ as linked to the traditions of a lost idyllic past.⁷¹

Outdoors, the Live Architecture Exhibit displayed the newly constructed buildings of a neighborhood unit, demonstrating how a working class neighborhood could be modernized and reformed while still creating a familiar sense of community life. Buildings on display included several types of housing units, shops with attached apartments, a market, a school, a church, and other public amenities. The school and church both received architectural interest as models of how modern design could

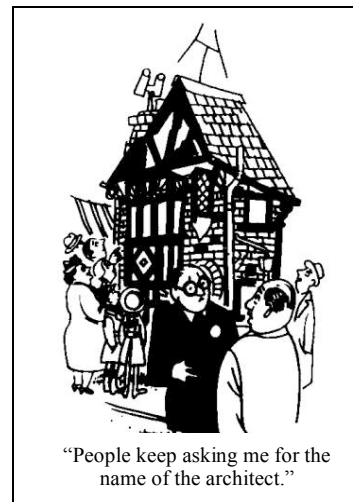
⁶⁹ NA: WORK 25/49 Festival of Britain 1951, Council of Architecture, Town Planning and Building research, Minutes of Meeting November 2, 1950. 1, 4.

⁷⁰ The Festival of London. *The Architect’s Journal* (September, 1951) 280.

⁷¹ For more on the themes of the Festival see Conekin, 80-81, 253.

create more efficient and appropriate spaces for community life.⁷² Visitors could purchase a pamphlet with photographs for two shillings (24 pennies), which would guide them through the displays and provide additional information they could study at home.⁷³ Nonetheless, The organizers, expressed concerned that these structures, at various levels of completion, might confuse visitors. Hence they had organized the indoor displays, such as a scale model of the entire Lansbury site, to help visitors interpret the neighborhood plan as a whole. In addition, they placed a rented crane at the site, from which visitors could gain an “aerial view of a town under construction” to help them understand its organization.⁷⁴

In contrast to this positive model, the exhibition also included an exaggerated ‘jerry built’ house called Gremlin Grange that demonstrated “all the evils of shoddy building.”⁷⁵ (Figure 29) This fake brick structure with a gabled roof, bay windows, irregular projections, and odd windows and doors, represented what designers perceived as the design flaws of typical British houses. Clearly off kilter and leaning precariously, the house appeared poorly constructed, showing the dangers of private, self-built construction. However its quaint form also closely fit the British ideal of home, which viewers often admired rather than criticized. A cartoon by Arthur Horner in the *News Chronicle* depicted a perplexed administrator complaining, “People keep asking me for the name of the architect.” (Figure 30) This drawing poked fun at the displays’ failure to educate the design sensibilities of the lay viewer.⁷⁶



Figures 29 and 30: On the left, a photograph of Gremlin Grange designed to depict ‘jerry building’ practices and bad taste. The cartoon on the right pokes fun at the fact that many visitors viewed the structure with admiration as a model of the quaint home.

City of London, London Metropolitan Archive.

British Cartoon Archive, Arthur Horner, *News Chronicle*, May 4, 1951.

⁷² BBC Sound Archives: 16931 “Lansbury Exhibit” 9CL0012802

⁷³ NA: WORK 25/49. Stepney and Poplar Reconstruction Area Progress Schedule. “Festival of Britain 1951, Council of Architecture, Town Planning and Building research, Minutes of Meeting” (November 2, 1950) 4.

⁷⁴ WORK 25/49- Stepney and Poplar Reconstruction Area Progress Schedule. “Festival of Britain 1951, Council of Architecture, Town Planning and Building research, Minutes of Meeting.” (February 24, 1949) 1, 2.

⁷⁵ “‘Typical Lansbury Family’ with an L10-L12 Income: Festival Showhouse Designed for Them” *East London Advertiser* (May 4, 1954) 7.

⁷⁶ Arthur Horner, *News Chronicle*, May 4, 1951.



Figures 31, 32, and 33: These photos show buildings at the Lansbury neighborhood unit reconstruction project in Poplar. The housing included at the site included row houses, flats, and apartments over shops. While the neighborhood planning received great acclaim, the architecture, practical and banal received mixed reviews, particularly as a showcase for modern architecture at the Festival of London Live Architecture Exhibit. Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, *Architect's Journal*, Sep 6, 1951, 292.

Attendance at the Live Architecture Exhibit in Lansbury remained disappointingly low throughout the Festival of Britain in comparison with the more glamorous architecture and exhibits of the South Bank. After a quick start, with three thousand visitors touring the site in the first two days of the exhibition, attendance slowed down, lagging through the early summer.⁷⁷ Between May 3 and September 30, the exhibit attracted a total of 86,646, with an average of average of only 577 visitors per day. This turnout, approximately the same as the County of London Plan Exhibition but spread over twice the running time and connected to a major Festival, showed the lackluster response by the public to the Festival's planning exhibitions.⁷⁸ The committee expressed disappointment with the attendance, which the press had attributed to poor publicity, transportation, and signage.⁷⁹

The exhibit received mixed reviews in the press. The mayor of Poplar and Stepney complimented the project as an example of what can be achieved to improve the living conditions in the East End.⁸⁰ One article in *The East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* praised Lansbury as "a heart-warming achievement for the greatest need of the hour."⁸¹ However, another article in the paper called the architecture of the exhibit "very disappointing," "soulless" and lacking in "cheerfulness and bustle," comparing its sober orderliness to the suburbs.⁸² (Figures 31-33) An article in the *Journal of RIBA* criticized the exhibition for being "serious and heavy" and overly complicated. It complained about the organization, saying, "There is an official route to be followed...but you soon lose it." The article also criticized the visual presentation of the survey and planning techniques as "guaranteed to confuse the nimblest witted."⁸³

⁷⁷ "Mayors Tour the Festival Exhibition" *East London Advertiser* (May 11, 1951) 9.

⁷⁸ NA: Work 250/31. Management: Poplar Exhibition of Live Architecture "Official Diary, Attendance Record."

⁷⁹ "Poplar Exhibition- Not Proving as Popular as Was Hoped," *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* (June 22, 1951).

⁸⁰ "Mayors Tour the Festival Exhibition" *East London Advertiser*. (May 11, 1951). 9.

⁸¹ "New Village of Lansbury" *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* (Aug 10, 1951) 2.

⁸² "Planning of Lansbury- Mr. P Benson's Criticism" *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* (Aug 17, 1951).

⁸³ Gordon Stephenson. "Lansbury, Poplar: The Live Architecture Exhibition." *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. Vol. 59. No. 10. August 1951. P. 380, 382.

Although the exhibit did not receive the hoped for popular attraction and commercial success, the planning policies applied at Lansbury received critical success, amongst planning professionals around the world, who showed great interest in the site for years to come. *Architect's Journal* praised it as “a first glimpse of the neighborhood planning principle in practice.” They lauded its realistic portrayal of postwar architecture, saying, “Whereas the planning and architecture on the South Bank give a hint of an architectural Utopia, a world outside economic restrictions, Lansbury shows us a world we *can* build in spite of these restrictions.”⁸⁴ It also demonstrated the ability of local councils, with the help of the national government, to realize their plans, even under the constrained economic conditions. *Architectural Journal* noted, “We now have planning machinery in place of the old haphazard methods of development. And the acceleration of the growth of Lansbury, so that it should be ready for display during the Festival Season, has shown us that the machinery not only works, but can, in fact, work fast and efficiently.”⁸⁵

The planning exhibits at the Festival grew out of the lingering optimism that planners, under the rule of the Labour party, could excite the public about planning ideas. However, its ideological plea for planning was now in discord with public sentiment, which viewed the promises of postwar reconstruction with pessimism in the face of slow progress and economic constraints. In the twilight of the Labour Party rule, this exhibit became one of the last of the large-scale exhibitions of planning ideas. With legislation passed, and budgets and resources tight, local and national government agencies shifted their focus toward building rather than planning. As the need for cultivating public support for planning came to an end, so too did the impetus for large government organized planning exhibitions.

Challenges to Designing Planning Exhibitions for the Public

Throughout the 1940s, exhibition organizers had tried to create legible, educational, and persuasive displays that would be interesting to the public, and would generate support for town planning. Professional exhibition designers developed many strategies to achieve these goals. In the interwar and post war period, as exhibition design grew as an industry, several exhibition designers and critics reflected on the goals of display design and how to improve their effectiveness.⁸⁶ Many of these designers and critics emphasized that the point of the exhibition was the display of information in a dramatic and appealing manner. Exhibitions traditionally included a combination of pictures, text and three-dimensional exhibits. Nearly all of the designers and critics proposed ways to enliven these traditional media, focusing on ways to attract the casual viewer, guide circulation to tell a story, to make architectural images attractive to viewers, and proving visitors with holistic views of regional plans.

⁸⁴ The Editor's 'Lansbury: A Principle Put Into Practice' *Architect's Journal*. September 6, 1951. p. 275

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Kenneth Luckhurst. *The Story of Exhibitions* (London: Studio Publications, 1951); Beverly Pick. *Display Presentation, Exhibitions, Window and Outdoor Displays* (London: Crosby Lockwood and Son Ltd., 1957); G.S. Kallmann. 'The Wartime Exhibition' *Architectural Review*, 94, 562 (September 1943); MO File Report 871. "Report on Government Exhibitions"; British National Archive; INF 1/132. Reorganization of the Display and Exhibition Division. A.G. Highet "A Note on Exhibition Display."

Attracting the Casual Viewer

One of the main concerns was ensuring that a significantly large public audience would view the exhibition. The need to attract visitors raised questions about where the events should be held, how they should be publicized, and how to make them appealing to a mass audience. While many of the planning exhibitions took place in public buildings, halls, libraries, and museums, many commentators noted that these spaces did not necessarily attract working class citizens or walk-in visitors. Instead these exhibitions tended to be frequented by those already interested in and informed about the topic, or those people, who frequented exhibitions at these sites.⁸⁷ For this reason, exhibitors also experimented with traveling exhibitions that could be moved to many local commercial spaces where people shopping on the street might be attracted in spontaneously. The problem of location arose time and time again, as government agencies and professional organizations, including the LCC and the Stepney Reconstruction Group, gravitated towards using public institutions to house exhibitions. They found that these sites attracted a wealthier and more educated class of citizens, rather than a full spectrum of the public. Some exhibition organizers, such as those for Charles Reilly's estate plan for Bilston, chose unusual locations such as a 'slum shop' to heighten the experiential qualities of the exhibition. There, standing in the heart of the problem area of the city, the contrast between the degradation of the surrounding neighborhood and the clean, modern images of a possible alternative worked as a vivid display of the need for town planning.⁸⁸

Often it was difficult to interest people in visiting the exhibitions, which could not compete with more enjoyable recreational activities. One cartoon depicted this conflict, showing a Labour politician and a union organizer trying to convince a group of coal miners to go to the "Britain Can Make It" exhibition instead of the horse races.⁸⁹ (Figure 7) This cartoon poked fun at attempts by politicians and planners to divert the masses from their less wholesome pursuits into the edifying exhibitions. For some exhibitions, planning professionals tried to drum up interest by recruiting people to attend the exhibitions. In order to attract visitors, exhibition organizers developed extensive advertising campaigns promoting their events. However, Mass Observation noted in their reports that posters and similar media had a negligible affect on encouraging people to attend an exhibition; most visitors learned of the event through word of mouth or press coverage.⁹⁰ Attendance figures show little correlation between the size and expense of the event and the number of visitors. Some towns had very high attendance rates, such as Exeter in which one-third of the population visited in the first two weeks of the exhibition, while others had more disappointing showings, such as Warwick where only six per cent of the population visited.⁹¹ Despite the organizers' awareness of the problems in attracting and accommodating laypeople of all classes to the exhibitions, most organizers ended up using traditional and less effective sites and promotional media.

⁸⁷ MO: File Report 871. "Report on Government Exhibitions" 4-5.

⁸⁸ Lilley and Larkham, 4.

⁸⁹ David Low, "Britain can make it" - If...." *Evening Standard*, Sep 25 1946.

⁹⁰ MO: File Report 2361: "Modern Homes Exhibition."

⁹¹ Lilley and Larkham, 17, 23.



Figure 34: This cartoon shows leaders trying unsuccessfully to persuade workers to attend the Britain Can Make It exhibitions.
British Cartoon Archive, David Low. *Evening Standard*. September 25, 1946.

Making Architectural Images to Attract and Abstract

Exhibition planners also expressed concern about how to communicate planning ideas and make architectural images legible to the lay viewer. Architecture exhibits relied heavily on technical architectural drawings, plans, sections and elevations, and photographs. However, many of the exhibition designers and critics called these forms of representation “static”, “dense”, or lacking in dramatic appeal. *The Journal of RIBA*, emphasized the difficulty of reading technical drawings, saying, that many well-educated viewer cannot “grasp a building in two dimensions.” It advised, “By the help of perspectives we try to impress upon such people something of the probable appearance.”⁹² Architects increasingly chose to depict their designs using dramatic color perspective drawings from birds eye or exaggerated perspective, or as three-dimensional axonometric drawings which they hoped would represent space in a way more understandable and interesting to laypeople.⁹³

While these drawings displayed three-dimensional space in a more attractive and accessible way, many observers criticized the ability of architects to balance the factual and representational aspects of these media. In *Architect's Journal*, the editor noted that the growing importance placed upon presentation in architectural practice meant that perspective drawings were appreciated more for their artistic qualities than for their ability to factually communicate the architectural design. He argued,

⁹² T.P. Bennet. “The Architect and the Organization of Post-War Building” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.3. (January 1945) 64.

⁹³ *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53. 8 (June 1946) 325.

Presentation, as it is called, for exhibitions or for hooking clients, has become to-day almost the monopoly of those fashionable architectural beauty specialists who, with their cleverly chosen viewpoints, stormy skies and judicious use of Chinese white, can make a passable entertaining picture out of the dulllest building...the architect is often as misled by skillful 'presentations' as are his clients.⁹⁴

In *The Journal of RIBA*, architect T.P. Bennet agreed, that perspective drawing can hide errors "leaving our clients without a precise knowledge of what we are offering."⁹⁵ On the other hand, *The East London Observer* criticized the LCC's use of accurate to scale axonometric drawings as more technical than accessible, criticizing that "which cannot be grasped in one sitting...and perhaps not at all by laymen."⁹⁶ This struggle between the aesthetic and the informational qualities of architecture visuals grew from the demands for exhibitions to address the democratic and technocratic aspects of planning.

This debate also carried through in the presentation of statistical information. When trying to convey complex data, many designers advised using visual strategies to replace long-winded text or bland charts. Weaver warned, "Statistics introduction in diagrammatic form are almost a waste of wall space."⁹⁷ Adopting the modern visual techniques such as icons and ISOTYPES allowed display designers to quickly communicate facts in a visually interesting manner. Designers also utilized modern visual techniques such as icons and ISOTYPES to The County of London Plan included ISOTYPE images in their 1943 publications and exhibitions to show statistics such as population, housing needs, and room to occupant rations in housing.⁹⁸ In their diagram showing the correlation between family size and dwelling units, the visual correlation between the figures on one side and the number of rooms of the other makes a persuasive argument for the need for a variety of dwelling sized in public housing projects. As in the earlier use by MARS, these diagrams made statistics more legible, memorable and persuasive to the public. (Figure 35 and 36)

Nonetheless, some commentators, such as in a article in the *Journal of RIBA*, criticized the use of diagrams as "often clever and colorful," yet "incomprehensible to the layman and something of weariness to the technician."⁹⁹ Another, Ely Devons, noted the growing obsession with publishing figures, saying "Once the figures were called 'statistics' they acquired the authority and sanctity of Holy Writ."¹⁰⁰ The emphasis on figures indicated that despite efforts to make planning, legible, planners continued to be tied to and seduced by the technocratic nature of planning.¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ Astragal, "Notices and Topics-William Woolcott," *Architect's Journal*. (Feb 10, 1944) 113.

⁹⁵ T.P. Bennet. "The Architect and the Organization of Post-War Building," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 52.3. (January 1945) 64.

⁹⁶ "The Future of East London, Stepney and Poplar," *East London Observer* (July 16, 1943) 3.

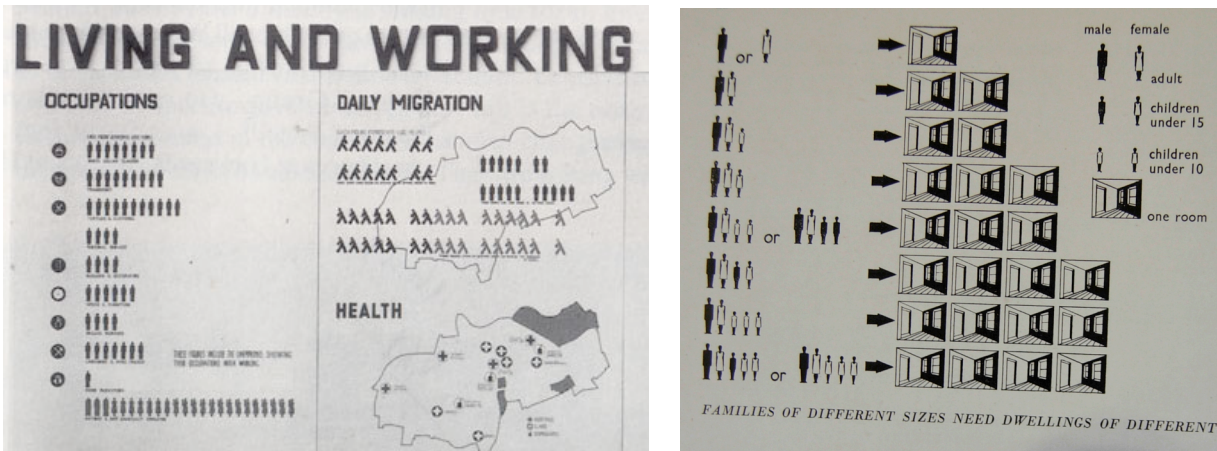
⁹⁷ Sir Lawrence Weaver. *Exhibitions and the Arts of Display*. (London: Country Life Ltd., 1925) 101.

⁹⁸ E.J. Carter and Erno Goldfinger. *The County of London Plan*. (1944)

⁹⁹ "Knutsford Planning Exhibition" *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.6 (April 1946) 245; "Forthcoming Exhibitions," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.7 (April 1946) 242-245.

¹⁰⁰ Ely Devons, 1950 quoted in Lilley and Larkham, 13.

¹⁰¹ Lilley and Larkham, 13.



Figures 35 and 36: On the right the diagram by MARS displays statistics about daily commutes by showing ISOTYPE figures standing, moving toward or moving away from the city center, showing how housing and work patterns affect transportation needs. On the left a diagram in the *County of London Plan* shows the relationship between family size and house size by using icons to depict male and female figures of various ages next to icons for the number of necessary rooms. Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archive, E.J. Carter and Erno Goldfinger. *The County of London Plan*. (1944)

Although designers embraced accessible imagery such as perspectives and ISOTYPEs, the majority of exhibits and publications still consisted of photographs, technical drawings, and statistics. Montage, though highly praised by designers, rarely appeared in government exhibitions. These new forms of images augmented rather than replaced traditional display media, as designers strained to meet their tight budgets and short time frames.

Providing a Holistic View from Above

Exhibition designers also looked for ways to help the lay viewer to understand the big picture of plans using maps, plans and models that would engage the viewer and give them a holistic view of the proposed developments. Many planners worried that visitors would have difficulty in reading intricate maps often included in planning publications and exhibitions, arguing that for public displays, “a flat map is of little value.”¹⁰² Even if laypeople could orient themselves in the map and understand the scale, the use of shading to indicate different land uses and housing densities gave little idea of what the new proposed developments would look and feel like.

Many critics and designers advocated the use of photography or topography to enliven these maps. In 1925, display designer Weaver had suggested that designers use two offset aerial photographs in unison to create a stereoscopic image to show relief and create topographic models.¹⁰³ In 1945 the *Architect's Journal* echoed the ideas, arguing in favor of using aerial photography combined with a relief model as a replacement for presentation maps, because “photography...can sharpen the sense of reality which the

¹⁰² Weaver, 101.

¹⁰³ “The Application of Air Photography to Architecture and Town Planning.” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. 53.8 (June 1946) 319.

model creates.”¹⁰⁴ The aerial view became more prevalent as air travel became more common in the in the 1920s to 1940s for both civilian and war use.¹⁰⁵ *The Journal of RIBA* noted the benefits of air photography as a tool to map blitz areas and conducting large scale planning. While planners, such as Le Corbusier, had used aerial photography before the war, these images had remained limited to oblique angles. The wartime surveys and military technology had advanced this method of photography, providing a collection of high altitude vertical aerial images for many parts of the country. Planners often requested access to these images, which provided detailed information that could be used both for planning statistics and reference maps, as well as for presentations. By using aerial photography or topography, planners enhanced and replaced maps to help laypeople visualize the space experientially through familiar references. The bird’s eye view became a staple in urban planning drawings, bringing the survey map to life and highlighting the larger scale issues in planning.

In addition to aerial imagery, models more generally became a staple of planning exhibitions, augmenting, becoming the highlight of many wartime exhibitions.¹⁰⁶ While models did not replace traditional two-dimensional architectural imagery, designers increasingly viewed these media as old fashioned, instead embracing three-dimensional depictions of their designs.¹⁰⁷ Exhibition designers and critics in the 1940s emphasized the public appeal and accessibility of models as a representational form. Nonetheless, some exhibition visitors and critics challenged their usefulness. One visitor at the “Modern Homes Exhibition” expressed frustration with understanding the models, preferring full-scale mock-ups. He complained, “I didn’t bother with the little models. They’re not a scrap of use to the ordinary person. What do I know about scale and measurements? I like to see the house and walk around in it, and then I’ll tell you if I like it or I don’t.” Accordingly, Mass Observation reminded designers, “Though it is easy for those used to working with scale models to visualize the real thing, for the ordinary person it is often a long job....”¹⁰⁸ These comments warned designers that no form of architectural representation could be guaranteed to be legible to lay viewers.

Exhibition designers greatly improved their model making techniques, and it was the quality of the model, above all else, which determined the success of an exhibit in the public’s eyes. Both aerial photography and models allowed the viewer to comprehend the plan in total by allowing them to view it from above. Together the visual innovations of the 1940s made planning more accessible than it had ever been before. Nonetheless, the technical nature of planning work and the limited budgets of the exhibitions constrained the ability of designers to create exhibitions that could successfully meet their goals of democratizing professional knowledge.

¹⁰⁴ “The Camera Helps the Planner,” *Architect’s Journal* (April 5, 1945) 308.

¹⁰⁵ M. Christine Boyer, “Aviation and the Aerial View: Le Corbusier’s Spatial Transformations in the 1930s and 40s,” *Diacritics* 33.3-4 (Fall-Winter 2003).

¹⁰⁶ Lilley and Larkham, 13, 21.

¹⁰⁷ Jean-Luis Cohen, “Models and the Exhibition of Architecture” *The Art of Architecture Exhibitions*. Ed. Kristin Feireiss. (NAi Publishers. Rotterdam.) 26, 32.

¹⁰⁸ MO: File Report 2270. “Report on the Post War Homes Exhibition” 14.

Conclusion: The End of the Exhibition?

Analyzing the exhibitions of the 1940s has shown how planners tried, and often failed, to use exhibitions as a tool to educate and consult the public about town planning. The 1940s marked a brief period in which designers and government officials embraced the power of exhibitions to serve a positive role in shaping planning policy. The rich display culture, with growing professional expertise and available labor from unemployed designers, allowed for experimentation and the use of new visual media to communicate planning to the public. The media and marketing strategies, which had been developed by the commercial sector, had been employed by government agencies to persuade the public about policy ideas.

However, once planning legislation had been past in 1947, and the public support (however passive) had been gained for planning, the purpose for exhibitions ceased, and so did the resources to organize them. The Festival of Britain marked the last attempt, to 'sell' the public on the idea of planning. After that event, local agencies focused on getting their plans built. The few exhibitions that did take place were small and technical, lacking the attempts at visual experimentation that had been present in the best of the wartime exhibitions.¹⁰⁹ The exhibition did not become as important step in the process of statutory planning, but a perfunctory legal obligation to make planning information publicly available.¹¹⁰

The 1978 radio comedy and novel, *The Hitchhikers Guide*, depicted how negligent bureaucracy increased the problem of facilitating public access to town plans in the post war period. The novel began as the protagonist Arthur Dent tried to prevent a bulldozer from destroying his house for a highway bypass project. When he complained, the local council member leading the project responded, "The plans have been available at the local planning office for nine months." Arthur responded, "You hadn't exactly gone out of your way to call attention to them, had you. I mean, like actually telling anyone or anything...On display? I eventually had to go down to the cellar to find them...with a flashlight." To which the council members countered, "You found the notice didn't you." Arthur replied, "Yes I did. It was on display in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet..."¹¹¹ This scenario poked fun at the bureaucratic hurdles that inhibited the public from knowing, influencing, or contesting planning decisions made by the local or national government regarding their towns, and their private property. By the 1970s, planning critics had recognized the failures of experts to make their planning documents legible and accessible to the public. This type of extreme inaccessibility of expert knowledge, though an exaggeration, pointed to the problems of communication between planners and the public under post war planning bureaucracies.

Although planners in the 1940s had made more enthusiastic efforts to create a forum for public discourse on planning, this communication was for the most part one-way, with

¹⁰⁹ LMA: LCC/AR/TP/1/71. *Stepney Poplar Reconstruction Area*. "Town and Country Planning Act 1944. Section 1 (7) Stepney Poplar reconstruction Area."

¹¹⁰ Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. 10 & 11 Geo. 6. Ch. 51. 11.

¹¹¹ Douglas Adams, *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1980) 7-8.

planners educating the public, who were seen as “relatively passive consumers.”¹¹² While planners and politicians often invited criticism at the exhibitions, besides the occasional presence of a planning official or guest book, there was little structure for interaction or criticism at these events. The exhibitions served an unabashedly propagandizing purpose to gain support for the idea, rather than the details of planning. Nonetheless, comparing the critics of planning communication as represented in *The Hitchhikers Guide* with those in “Not According to Plan” from the beginning of the chapter, the failures of the 1940s exhibition organizers to inspire popular appeal appear dwarfed by the complete lack of effort shown by planners to publicize controversial plans in the 1960s and 70s.

Although planners did not continue to invest the same effort and enthusiasm in planning exhibitions after 1951, this brief period cultivated optimism in the profession that planners could use exhibitions as a tool for democratic education. The 1940s saw an explosion of planning and architecture exhibitions, and germination of a new form of planning display by local authorities to gain public approval for their proposals. Despite planners efforts to produce quantity of exhibitions with a high media profile they struggled to make their technical ideas legible to laypeople, even with the help of their new visual language. This difficulty to realize their idealistic vision for a democratic forum for planning continued as they worked to solicit and react to citizen feedback as they enacted their plans.

¹¹² Keith D. Lilley and Peter J. Larkham. “Exhibition Planning: Communication and Public Involvement in British Post-war Reconstruction.” Birmingham City University: Faculty of Law, Humanities, development and Society. Working Paper Series, no. 4, 2007. 26.

CH 5 The Triumph of Bureaucracy: Crystallizing the Public Consultation Process

In the publicity film *The Plan and the People*, two soldiers recently returned home from war assess their chances at finding a home for themselves and their families in their old neighborhood in Islington, London. Meanwhile the local council tried to decide whether to tear down the old houses and build flats, and how to prioritize short term and long term planning issues, such as housing versus open space. In the final scene, the soldiers Tom and Alfie asked their neighbor on the council, Jack, how the work of rebuilding is progressing. As Jack explained the council's progress and obstacles, the soldiers exclaim, "Obstacles! I don't know what you mean by obstacles...Look what we did when we invaded France...Yes, building a few houses is child's play compared to that." Jack and the soldiers discussed the differences between the army and the work of the council. "When you're in the army you must obey orders—somebody else makes the decisions....With us there's about a dozen people trying to push us into different directions." Jack advised the soldiers, "You're the people who should be giving us the orders—you're the public—if you'll take a bit of interest, find out what's going on, make your decision and then tell us to get on with it, you'll get the job done soon enough. But if you leave it to somebody else, well, you've only got yourself to blame." When asked how they can get involved Jack recommended that they take an interest in the upcoming council election.¹

This film portrayed planning as a democratic process in which citizens could get involved in the decision-making. However, it warned that democracy is less simple than the authoritarian structure of the military, often slowing down planning progress. Nonetheless, the film's tone is optimistic, identifying the system of representational democracy and the election of the town council as the means by which citizens can ensure they can get the 'better Britain' that they have been hoping for after the war.

This chapter reveals the problems with the representational democracy and legal structures in place for instituting citizen involvement in planning. It highlights how planning legislation passed at the end of the 1940s mandated planners to notify citizens about plans and allow for legal appeals, while undermining the more rigorous forms of public consultation practice. The work of historians and planning policy analysts shows the extent to which these programs failed to accommodate democratic input from the public.² This research builds upon these studies by examining the way in which the robust public consultation for the *County of London Plan* actually shaped the planning policies of the London County Council (LCC), particularly in East London. Analyzing the public commentary, the correspondence of planning officials, and the content of the revised plans shows how little citizen input affected the evolution of the plan during its development. Overall, the chapter demonstrates that the increasingly bureaucratic and perfunctory methods of consultation eclipsed the idealism of early experiments, diminishing the level of democratic debate on planning policies.

¹ NA: INF 6/67. Realist Film Unit Limited. "The Plan and the People-Commentary and Dialogue," October 22, 1945.

² David H. McKay, and Andrew W. Cox, *The Politics of Urban Change*. London: Crom Helm, 1979; Aldridge. *British New Towns: A Program without a Policy*. Routledge and Keegan Paul: London, 1979; Dunleavy, Patrick. *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, 1945-1975: A Study in Corporate Power and Professional Influence in the Welfare State*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1981.

Legislating Public Consultation

During the late 1940s Parliament passed several pieces of legislation that created the structure for post-war planning in Britain and shaped the way in which local authorities would consult citizens regarding land-use decisions. The New Towns Act of 1946, Planning Act of 1947, and the Housing Act of 1949 reveal the way in which legislation curtailed voluntary experimental consultation processes that had been in use, replacing them with a system of legally binding procedures for 'notice and appeal.' Together these Acts formalized the consultation process, and in doing so tempered much of its revolutionary fervor and democratic spirit.

The Autonomous Development Corporation in New Town Development

The first of the Acts passed during this period was the 1946 *New Towns Act*, which for the first time centralized planning powers, giving the national Ministries the power to guide planning and housing development. This act allowed national government to set up development corporations to create town plans and build housing in suburban New Towns using state funds. The structure of the new towns administration and financing gave the national rather than local government the power to decide on the location, scale, and timeline for new town development. The Act empowered the Minister of Town Planning to oversee all decisions about planning the New Towns, and included appointing the committee for the Development Corporation, and approving their plans. The Development Corporations also received sanction to make all sorts of specific local planning decisions, including compulsory purchase of land, determining land use, constructing houses, building community structures and installing infrastructure. Empowering the corporation to act as a housing association and to receive funds from the Treasury and the Ministry of Health infringed on the duties of the local authorities, which usually led these projects. Once the New Town had been completed, the Development Corporations could transfer ownership to the local authority, which would then be responsible for maintenance of the development.³

This structure removed planning and housing decisions, usually made by locally elected officials, to the realm of the national government and the appointed rather than elected Development Corporation committees. This system bypassed the usual power of local planning agencies to act as housing associations, planning and developing council housing with local or national funding and decreased the power of citizens to affect planning decisions. While local authorities instigated some New Towns, many New Towns often did not align with local planning and housing policies, or the preferences of local residents. Although many of the local authorities expressed hostility toward the Development Corporations, demanding a role in the planning of New Towns, the Ministry consistently refused to allow local authorities to have a position on the boards of the development corporations.⁴ Instead, the Minister made his decisions based on his perception of "national interests," after voluntary "consultation with any local authorities who appear to him to be concerned."⁵ The Act did not give the local citizens and landowners affected by the plans any power to shape the plan; it lacked

³ New Town Act, 1946. 9 & 10 Geo. 6. CH 68. P. 2, 4, 6, 8, 11.

⁴ Meryl Aldridge. *British new Towns: A Program without a Policy*. (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul: 1979) 40, 47.

⁵ New Town Act, 1946. 9 & 10 Geo. 6. CH 68. P. 1.

both the political means to shape the plan through council elections, or legal means to make objections to compulsory purchase or changes in land use. Unlike the Town and County Planning Act, the New Towns Act did not even require the Ministry or the Development Corporation to follow 'notice and appeal' requirements. Many residents perceived corporations to have nearly omnipotent powers and complained that the corporations did not respond to the concerns of local residents.⁶

The Ministry of Information (MOI) acknowledged these concerns in the 1947 script draft for the film "New Towns," which depicted a farmer unwilling to sell his land and an elderly man worried that his house will be torn down. However, later drafts removed these concerned citizens from the script, instead inserting a narrator saying, "The formidable activity of the new Town site sometimes provoked fears that the traditional life of the countryside might be threatened" or "In a democracy like Britain this meant headaches, for everyone had to be satisfied...if possible." All versions of the script tried to reassure the public, saying that "The public enquiries... were subject to the fierce light of press publicity" in order to uphold democracy and protect citizens against pressure from the government. The scripts claimed that these concerns disappeared and that everyone lived happily ever after. The scriptwriters received criticism for the inaccuracies in the script and for glossing over the public concerns about the New Towns.⁷ Officials working in the Ministry of Town and Country Planning worried that any film in favor of New Towns would be perceived as propaganda in the face of the recent conflicts at the first new town project at Stevenage.⁸

At Stevenage, one of the first and most controversial New Town planning projects, the Development Corporations took a strong role as urban managers, usurping the role of local government without any representative accountability through democratic elections. Disgruntled at the development of the New Town, the previous residents of Stevenage fought to stop the project and express their desire to remain a small town. When the Minister of Town Planning, Lewis Silkin visited Stevenage the residents changed the sign to read 'Silkingrad' as an expression of anger at the undemocratic process of planning, which they equated to Russian socialist precedents. When the crowd jeered at Silkin's speech, he replied, "It is no good your jeering: it is going to be done."⁹ This scene epitomized the lack of influence that citizens had in shaping planning decision under the New Towns Act. By the time they faced a public figure notifying them about the plan, all decisions had already been made, and could not be changed. Under the New Towns Act citizens had no democratic means for affecting planning decisions.

Public Notice and Appeal in the Town and County Planning

After years of debate, the Parliament passed the Town and County Planning Act in 1947, creating a new bureaucratic and legal infrastructure for the creation and implementation of town plans. This system revolutionized the way in which

⁶ Silkin quoted by Aldridge, 39.

⁷ It is unclear if the MOI ever produced this film. See, NA: INF 12-671 New Towns 1957, April 1957-Dec 1957. "Shooting Script. Working Title 'New Towns.'" April 25, 1957.

⁸ HLG 90/34 Publicity: Films General, "Letter from THS to Mr. Dobbie. July 25, 1946," "Letter from Mr. M.M. Dobbie to Mr. Tenet. July 27, 1946," Letter from M.M. Dobbie to Deputy Secretary THS, August 1, 1956."

⁹ Nicholas Deakin, "Vanishing Utopias: Planning and Participation in Twentieth Century Britain." *Regional Studies*, 19.4, 294.

government agencies could enact positive planning and redevelopment, as opposed to the restrictive zoning allowed under previous Acts. The Act required all local authorities to develop comprehensive development plans, and expanded their power to enact plans for redevelopment zones on any land with “extensive war damage,” “bad layout or obsolete development,” or for the “relocation of population of industry. This new power of redevelopment expanded the powers of the central government and local authorities to undertake comprehensive planning of large swaths of the city. Use zoning codes and planning permits, these agencies could restrict the freedom of landowners to develop their land and ensure that land uses served the public, rather than individual good. The Act crafted a system in which a Central Land Board would determine the compensation for land bought under compulsory purchase and collect taxes from land owners who benefited from redevelopment projects or changes in land use zoning.¹⁰ This system legalized many of the planning ideas and techniques proposed during the interwar and wartime periods, facilitating a radical shift in the power of local governments to purchase land and build housing.¹¹

This legislation, while empowering the government to plan, also created a legal structure by which citizens should be informed and consulted about government plans. Advocates of landowners’ rights emphasized the importance of insuring that applications for land use be made publicly available.¹² The Act required clear notification of the public about zoning changes, projects, or compulsory purchases in an “advertisement in the London Gazette and in at least one newspaper circulating in the area.” In addition authorities had to provide “copies of any such plan...available for inspection by the public...at a reasonable cost.” Citizens had the right to appeal planning decisions, and the local authority had to ensure that the objections “be considered...before such a plan be approved.”¹³

The Act built upon existing legal structures of appeal that had been developed since the 1875 Public Health Act, in which citizens or developers could challenge land-use restrictions and comprehensive planning proposals in a Ministry hearing. In the case of an inquiry, both the appellant and the planning authority were required to post notices at the site, notify neighbors, and make announcements in the newspapers, allowing any interested parties to speak at the hearing. The system of appeals created by the 1947 Act enabled the loosening of the procedures, allowing more flexibility in the types of testimony and evidence taken into consideration. However, it also led to lengthy inquiries and bulky, sometimes irrelevant evidence. In the year 1947, the Ministry heard over 1,000 appeals, most regarding specific land-use permit decisions made by a local authority.¹⁴

In 1947, law school professor Charles M. Harr praised the system in *Public Administration* for taking the public into its confidence,” ensuring that the “most appropriate use for the particular piece of land,” and providing a check to “any rash or overdone step by a local planning officer.” He also emphasized the public relations

¹⁰ Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. 10 & 11 Geo. 6. Ch. 51. 1, 5.

¹¹ Richard C. FitzGerald, “Planning and Development under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.” *The Modern Law Review*, 11.4 (Oct., 1948), 401, 411.

¹² FitzGerald, 425-6.

¹³ Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. 10 & 11 Geo. 6. Ch. 51. 11.

¹⁴ Charles M. Harr, “Appeals Under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.” *Public Administration*. 27.1 (March 1949) 43.

aspect of the appeals, saying the inquiries served to “combat any impression that the planning mechanism is a ruthless use or misuse of powers.” The system of appeals fulfilled what he called the “objective in a democratic society...at least to appear to do justice.” He acknowledged that these inquiries were not the most efficient means of preventing bad planning practice, instead placing the power to protect public interest with the Parliament, “responsible to the electorate.” However he asserted that the inquiries “preserve the strength of the institutional decisions” and assist in “reconciling the public interest...with the equally public interest...of the rights of the individual.”¹⁵ Harr’s analysis of the political effects of the act highlight the challenges of developing a forum that goes beyond the appearance of consultation, but rather ensures a process of decision making that respects both the individual rights and the collective good.

While allowing for landowners and renters to protect their rights and preventing excessive use of state power by reversing the decisions of planning authorities, this system of ‘notice and appeal’ did not create a system for the public to provide useful input *before* planning authorities made decisions. During reconstruction planning in the early 1940s, this consultation had been achieved through social surveys, public opinion polls, exhibitions, and town hall meetings. Although the Act required that the local planning authority must “consult with the council” and gave them “opportunity to make representations” on behalf of the interests of their constituents, it did not require that the local council hold any town hall meetings, or other forum for assessing the interests of the citizens they represent. In regards to the survey, the act required that all towns “shall carry out a survey of their area” before developing their development plan. However, the Act did not provide any guidelines for the survey, stipulating whether it should be focused on physical or a social issues, and whether it be represented as a map or as statistics. This lack of clarity allowed local authorities to decide the extent and purpose of their survey, and thus did not require that the survey include an assessment of the wants and needs of the citizens. Similarly, the requirement to notify the public of the “place or places where copies of the plan...may be inspected” did not require that this plan be exhibited publicly, or in forms legible or engaging to the lay-viewer. The legal structure of the 1947 Act did not discuss specific goals for public education or consultation, which had been prevalent in planning literature over the past decade. It set the standards for consultation far below what most agencies had been practicing in their reconstruction plans in recent years. For this reason, planning under the 1947 legislation often lacked the subtlety and variety of the forms of public engagement that had flourished in wartime planning.

The Public as Client in Council Housing and Slum Clearance

Another influential piece of legislation, the Housing Act of 1949, greatly expanded the role of local councils as landlords. It empowering them to increase the scale of their projects beyond slum clearance and low-income housing to include accommodation for all classes and neighborhood planning for open space and amenities. From these policies Councils were empowered to rebuild, replace and supplement their existing housing stock with council housing. Under the Labour Government from 1945-1951, local authorities built over 800,000 dwellings. These homes, often called “Bevan” houses after Minister of Health and Housing Aneurian Bevan, were built according to the

¹⁵ Harr, 43.

Ministers high standards and were often 40 percent larger than the prewar council homes. In 1951, the Conservatives won the election, promising to increase housing production to 300,000 new houses per year. However, in order to speed up the construction of council houses, the party advocated lowering the space standards for dwelling units. In addition, policies under the party encouraged 'site cramming' by increasing subsidies for high-rise and dense developments. Council housing development shifted towards urban flats, and private developers took the lead in filling the demand for suburban houses. In 1951 85% of council houses had been built as houses, however, by 1971 67% of council houses in London were flats. The Conservatives kept the momentum of council housing, building at least 100,000 per year, but changed the goals and outcomes of the program regarding who should be housed by councils, how and where. In 1957 the Rent Act removed rental controls in an attempt to restore profitability of rental housing. However freeing the market failed to stimulate private provision of rental housing. These policies exacerbated housing problems throughout the 1950s and 60s, leaving many areas with housing shortages, waitlists of councils housing, and lack of affordable housing for the lower end of the working classes.¹⁶

Problems with the housing policy led to unrest among many citizens, especially those unhappy with their council housing experience. However, as with the other legislation, the Housing Act had made few provisions for the way in which local authorities should consult their tenants or the public at large in their decisions about slum clearance, construction of new council housing estates, or allocation of housing units. Planning councils often made decisions about slum demolition or rehousing projects without public consultation, leaving many residents anxious and confused about their housing options and rights. Although the laws required that councils inform and compensate landowners, it required no consultation with the many renters living in these 'slums'.¹⁷ A lack of consultation also appeared in decisions about where new housing projects would be placed and what form the housing would take. Planners often made only cursory efforts to understand and meet the needs of the public, and even ignored largely accepted public preferences such as the desire for homes rather than flats. Many surveys of the general public, and specifically of women living in slum areas, showed that most people wanted to live in their own home with their own garden, and often wanted to remain in their same neighborhood or community. Tenants reacted negatively to high-rise housing and expressed little or no interest in communal amenities.¹⁸ Architects and planners often ignored this information, saying that the people did not know what was best for them.¹⁹

'Participation' exercises, such as the unveiling of plans, often focused more on celebrating the plan than on helping the public to understand its affect on their lives, or allowing them to question or challenge the plan. A councilor from Newsome

¹⁶ Dunleavy, Patrick, *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, 1945-1975: A Study in Corporate Power and Professional Influence in the Welfare State* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1981) 34-36.

¹⁷ Dunleavy, 29.

¹⁸ NA: AIR/2/6661 Women's Ad House Council- Post War Housing of Women-Auxiliary Air Force "Report from The Women's Advisory Housing Council on The Younger Women's Needs in Future Housing." 1, 3; THA: P/MUN/2/1 Women's Advisory Housing Council, "Report from the Women's Advisory Housing Council- Need in Future Housing." For more information of housing surveys see Chapter 3.

¹⁹ Jane Darke, "Local Political Attitudes and Council Housing" *A New Century of Social Housing*. Stuart Lowe and David Hughes, eds. Leicester University Press: Leicester, 1991. 166.

complained about the limitations of the public's personal engagement in planning, arguing that citizens did not express interest in debating the merits of housing plans, but only wanted to know how the plans would affect them, and where and when they would have to move. The inability of councilors, such as this one, to empathize with or understand the profound affects of slum clearance on working class communities made their efforts at consultation useless, as they could not relate to those with whom they aimed to consult. However, consultation of any form was the exception, rather than the rule, occurring rarely between the 1950 and 1970.²⁰

Housing authority employees in charge of assigning unit to families also ignored these preferences, saying that people should not be too picky. In their housing placements, many councils took dismissive attitudes to the desires of their tenants, making housing assignments at random, with disregard to the housing location, size and type needs and preferences. Although residents of council housing paid rent to the councils, the councils did not treat them as 'clients' to be catered to, but as beneficiaries of philanthropy who should take what they can get. Most council estate residents had little influence over the type, size or location of the housing in which they were housed. The councils did not treat the job of matching housing supplies to housing demands as an opportunity to allow tenants choice, or to ensure that their needs and wants were met. Instead councils made assignments at random, or through their own calculations of what they thought tenants would need or could afford. Although councils allowed tenants to reject an assignment, and request another placement, they often limited the number of housing offers which any family could receive before losing their place on the waiting list.²¹

When tenants did complain, housing councils often took a dismissive attitude toward them, sometimes dismissing them as subhuman, or chastising them for their assumed entitlement to government services.²² The Newham Director of Housing, for example, explained why his council made only one offer of housing, saying,

When [people] are offered an accommodation we endeavor to make the offer as reasonable as we can in accordance with requirements. We endeavor to spell out to people that if they think they are going to get a house they're going to be jolly unlucky, so they'd better be prepared to take something else... generally speaking people ought really to accept. Because we can't afford too much picking and choosing.²³

Overall, the tenants had very little power to choose their housing preferences. While some residents did try to form groups to protect their interests and influence local authority decisions, few could organize this type of coordinated campaign due to their lack of clear information about redevelopment schemes, their vulnerability to housing loss, and the disruption to social ties during relocation. Organizing people on the housing waitlists posed a particular challenge, due to their geographic dispersal and lack of leverage for making demands.²⁴

²⁰ Dunleavy, 29.

²¹ John Westergaard and Ruth Glass, "A Profile of Lansbury" *Town Planning Review*. 25.1 (April 1954). 45; Dunleavy, 27, 29-30. Anne Power, *Property Before People: The Management of the Twentieth Century Council Housing*. (London: Allen and Unwin: 1987). 91.

²² Dunleavy, 29.

²³ Interview with planner conducted and quoted by Dunleavy, 30.

²⁴ Dunleavy, 30, 32. Also see Jon Gower Davies, *The Evangelistic Bureaucrat: A Study of a Planning Exercise in New Castle upon Tyne*, (London: Tavistock, 1972).

This analysis of the various pieces of planning legislation shows how the legal structures for planning emphasized the rights of citizens to protest specific planning decisions, rather than creating a structure that they could use to participate in making decisions. This legal form of protection superseded earlier voluntary methods of consultation that had been applied to the design process. While these structures did not inhibit local authorities from developing tools to encourage democratic decision-making, it did not built these procedures into the legal or procedural structure of planning practice. In consequence, planning consultation lost ground in the 1950s as planners shifted from voluntary experimentation with consultation to merely following the letter of the law.

Consultation in Practice and the LCC's Plans for East London

In order to understand how planning legislation functioned in practice, it is necessary to follow a case study of a particular planning project, examining how local planning agencies engaged in democratic consultation before and after the passage of the planning legislation. This section will examine the reconstruction planning of East London under the London County Council (LCC) beginning with the preparations for the County of London Plan in 1943, and following the planning process through the completion of the first reconstruction project at Lansbury in Poplar in the early 1950s.

The Call for Participation

From the beginning of its work on the County of London Plan, the LCC had expressed a commitment to engaging the public in the planning process.²⁵ After publishing the County of London Plan, the LCC asked for observations and criticisms from the councilors and planning officers of the local agencies and boroughs that it would affect. These observations would be presented and considered by a committee, so that the LCC would be aware of "the views of the citizens as represented by churches, political and other organizations, and business houses."²⁶ *The East London Observer* praised the LCC for its extensive consultation for its plans for East London, which involved collaboration with local boroughs, and included features and ideas from earlier plans by the Stepney Borough Engineer, Mr. Stuttle.²⁷ *The East London Advertiser* encouraged the public to get involved in planning, arguing that if the people of East London wanted to achieve their goals for postwar life, then they needed to become "familiar with the problems," "decide for themselves what they wanted" and ensure that "leaders carried out the definite wishes of the people."²⁸ The Mayor and Council of Bethnal Green emphasized that the people of Bethnal Green should "get a good knowledge of the Plan" and "ridicule or criticize it where necessary" in order to ensure that the County Council "meet the demand of the public."²⁹ All these public calls for participation led to a spirit

²⁵ NA: BBC Sound Archive 5928-5929 Lord Latham "LCC Plan Speech" 1943 9CL006809, PCL006811; LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/41-44 County of London Plan, 1943, Exhibition-General papers "London County Council, County of London Plan. Speech by the Right Hon. Lord Latham, Leader of the Council to a Press Conference at the County Hall on July 9th, 1943."

²⁶ "The People and the Plan- Town Meetings in Poplar," *East End New and London Shipping Chronicle*, October 3, 1943, 3.

²⁷ "Stage I," *East London Observer*, October 15, 1943, 2.

²⁸ "Lansbury Memorial House Saturday's Opening and Bow," *East London Advertiser*, October 1, 1943, 19.

²⁹ "Bethnal Green and the London Plan," *East London Observer*, October 22, 1943, 1.

of consultation, laying the groundwork for creating a public forum for discussion of the plan.

Despite the enthusiasm for the public consultation process, some commentators expressed concern that the power to plan had not been sufficiently democratized, worrying that planning power remained centralized rather than localized. *The East End News* lamented that the borough of Poplar did not hold the authority to produce statutory plans but only to offer “observations” on plans which the LCC would “consider” but would have no legal obligation to follow. The consultation process served more as a means to garner the support of the boroughs of the *County of London Plan* than as a means to decentralize planning powers.³⁰ Some local advocates, such as D.L. Munby, technical advisor to the Stepney Reconstruction Group, criticized the centralized power of the County officials to make planning decisions for Stepney about which many of the officials knew very little. He called for “devolution” of administrative power to the local level in order to insure more careful and flexible consideration of “delicate social problems.” He argued that remoteness of the LCC from the public for which they planned hampered their research and understanding of the needs and desires of the people. He instead proposed a Local Advisory Council made up of local people and working on the spot in Stepney. He hoped that his work and that of the Stepney Reconstruction Group would mobilize local citizens to ensure that their needs would be considered and that they would be given the postwar borough they deserve.³¹

Public Meetings and Exhibitions

Several official and unofficial groups organized public meetings as a way to arouse public interest in planning and consult with citizens about their planning goals and policies. LCC officers and local officials appeared at public meetings to inform the residents of those areas most affected by war damage and living within reconstruction areas, how they would be affected by the *County of London Plan*. The *East End News and Observer* announced the meetings, saying that they aimed to ensure “that public opinion can be heard and any suggestions embodied in the Borough Council’s observations to the LCC on the plan for reconstruction.” The Mayor of Poplar, Alderman C.W. Key, appeared at four meetings in each of the four subdivisions of the borough in October 1943, where local organization, business, and religious leaders and “citizens were to be invited to voice their observations and criticisms of the County of London Plan.” He promised that this feedback from the citizens, rather than the analysis of the Council, would be the basis for the comments he would send to the LCC.³² The *East London Observer* praised the Council for “taking of the ordinary people into confidence” and opening up the “confidential and private discussions and consultations” between the councilors and the LCC.³³

³⁰ “Planning without Money or Land” *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*. Sept 10, 1943, 1, 3.

³¹ D. L. Munby. “Industry and Planning in Stepney : A Report Presented to the Stepney Reconstruction Group, Toynbee Hall,” (1951) 10, 392-393.

³² “Your criticism Invited: Poplar Plans Discussions on L.C.C. Plan,” *East London Advertiser*. October 8, 1943. 5.

³³ “Poplar People and Re-construction-Public Consultation,” *East London Observer*, October 15, 1943. 1.

Attendance at these public meetings varied. While the *East End New and London Shipping Chronicle* reported “large attendance,”³⁴ the *East London Observer* called the attendance “insignificant” and lamented that the meetings might “have been better attended” but were poorly timed on evenings with early blackouts. The *Observer* also regretted that the meetings could have been more accessible for laypeople, noting that public officials showed difficulty in explaining the plan concisely, leaving the public confused as to how Poplar would change if the plan was put into practice.³⁵ On the other hand, another paper argued that the low attendance at the meetings showed the skeptical attitude of the East Enders as “almost amounting to indifference in the whole thing.”³⁶

In addition to these meetings organized by councils, several citizen groups organized their own meetings, lectures and exhibitions to discuss the planning proposals. The *East London Advertiser* reported that two Reverends gave lectures mourning that the people of East London, “used to be interested in public affairs and keen to listen to talks on them, but that had gradually died out.” The Reverends emphasized the responsibility of the community to open channels of communication and get involved in decisions that affect their own lives. In a warning to the public, they identified “a movement of the centers of power, further and further away from the ordinary person.” The Reverends expressed concern that “plans have apparently already been made for the East End, in which we have no say.” They advised citizens to get involved in Reconstruction Groups that were forming in many places, to express their opinions and exert pressure on those in authority.³⁷

The Citizens' Comments

At the public meetings, the exhibitions, as well as the editorials in the media, the public had opportunities to express their views on planning. One of the early forums for public responses to planning in East London came from the Stepney Reconstruction Group. This group organized an exhibition displaying the LCC's County of London Plan, as well as additional plans and models by the group and the borough engineer.³⁸ In the exhibition's comment book, the group received both positive and negative feedback on the plan, and the process of implementing it. Most of the negative comments expressed anxiety toward the utopian nature of the plans, and the need for decisive action. One exclaimed, “Get down and do something!...It's all very well for people to stand on a stage and say what ought to be done. Stop all that!! And do something practical.” Another emphasized the importance of the Council taking action saying, “We want people that practice what they preach.” Others requested that the public, or certain interest groups be more involved in the planning process, noting that educating and involving everyone will lead to decisive action. One stated, “when the people are aroused they will cooperate with you in the building a Stepney they have always wanted, and a Stepney they will be proud of!!” Another prodded, “Call the people who have filled in the questionnaires together and let them work out the details. Man is a

³⁴ “Town Meeting at Poplar on Re-planning,” *East End New and London Shipping Chronicle*, Oct 22, 1943

³⁵ “Policy and Programme” *East London Observer*. October 29, 1943, 1; “Marksman: Poplar's Future, What People Think,” *East London Observer*, October 29, 1943, 3.

³⁶ “Poplar,” *East London Observer*, November 5, 1943, 2.

³⁷ “Plans for Post War East London- Will Ordinary People Have a Say,” *East London Advertiser*, June 26, 1943, 3.

³⁸ THA: P/MUN/5/1 Minute Book of the Stepney Reconstruction Group “Minutes of Meeting” (February 14, 46). For more info on this exhibition, see Chapter 5.

creative animal at heart and in this way a natural creative demand for a better London would be achieved." Many people expressed hope that the younger generation would be the most likely to be open to education and encouragement to achieve these goals. One commentator worried, "the younger generation are not and won't be sufficiently interested in your plan unless you go outside and bring them in." A more optimistic observer argued, "As the young people grow up they will *demand* better conditions for themselves realizing the appalling results of an 'un-planned' society.' Is not this our responsibility to show them what can be done?"³⁹ These comments showed that the people of Stepney wanted to have influence in the rebuilding of their borough, and expressed discontent with Utopian top-down planning which did not address their immediate housing and infrastructure needs.

In public meetings and news editorials, residents of East London also expressed specific concerns about the planning decisions embodied in the *County of London Plan*. Two of the main issues raised with the plan for East London were the decisions about housing type and the extent of decentralization. While social reform groups such as Toynbee Hall in Stepney, recognized that either decentralization or the use of flats would be necessary to ensure adequately low density levels in the borough, these groups struggled with which would be most appropriate.⁴⁰ In 1942 as part of the survey for the County of London Plan, a conference of leaders from Poplar had emphasized that their residents would prefer houses to flats, and questioned the reduced population during the war.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the LCC plan had included mostly flats (60%) and had planned to decrease rather than increase the population of the area. The residents of Poplar's worried whether they would be rehoused in flats or houses, and if they and their families would all be able to be accommodated at the lower density levels, or if they would have to move to the suburbs as part of decentralization.⁴² The Poplar Reconstruction Group expressed concern about the LCC's plan, particularly the 'flat policy' in which the majority of the new housing would be built as flats, instead of houses.⁴³

Similar critiques arose in Stepney. At the opening of the exhibition "Stepney To-day and To-Morrow," Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and County Planning, asserted that in order to provide more open space and improve living conditions, the LCC needed to decrease Stepney's population from 200,000 to 94,000. However the Mayor of Stepney spoke in favor of increasing this number to accommodate the soldiers returning from war who wanted to return to their old neighborhoods.⁴⁴ He said he had received letters from soldiers asking to be able to come home to Stepney, and asserted that their voices should be heard and considered before following any plans for depopulation.⁴⁵ In 1945, The Stepney Reconstruction Group also criticized the plan for its excessive use of flats, which people did not want, and for failing to address the decentralization of industry in

³⁹ THA: P/MUN/5/2 "Stepney Reconstruction Group Exhibition, Autumn 1943- Suggestions and What Sort of House do You want?"

⁴⁰ "Flats or Houses- Toynbee Hall Statement," *East London Observer*, Nov 26, 1943, 1

⁴¹ LMA: LCC/AR/TP/2/152. *Consultation with Poplar Borough Council, 1934-1950*. "London Plan 1941, Poplar-Conference at County Hall, Dec. 9, 1942"

⁴² "Town Meeting at Poplar on Re-planning," *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, Oct 22, 1943.

⁴³ "Poplar Reconstruction Group," *East London Advertiser*, November 25, 1943, 4.

⁴⁴ "Stepney's Postwar Population LCC Plan Suggests 94,000, 'Can you Increase it? Asks Mayor,'" *East London Advertiser*, October 15, 1943, 1.

⁴⁵ "Stepney Today and Tomorrow- Whitechapel Exhibition and Housing Problems," *East London Advertiser*, October 22, 1943, 2

East London.⁴⁶ These comments from the citizens expressed a support for planning, but a concern with specific aspects of the plans. Their public criticism aimed to influence changes to the plan before implementation to ensure that their neighborhoods and homes met their needs and values.

The Council's Response to the LCC

After many public meetings and exhibitions, the borough councils compiled their responses to the LCC, stating local views on the plans' proposals. In December 1943, the Stepney Borough Council sent their comments to the LCC, asking for several modifications. They expressed concern about depopulation of the council down to 94,000 residents, asking instead for a return to pre-war population levels of at least 130,000. In addition they criticized the proportion of houses to flats, emphasizing, "people generally prefer a house with a small garden attached to a flat" and thus advised the LCC to reverse the allocation from 40% houses and 60% flats, to include 60% houses.⁴⁷ They hoped that this housing type change would be accompanied by a shift to lower density levels, from 136 to 100 people per acre. They hoped to achieve these changes through cutting back on open space and industrial properties to accommodate the additional land for these houses.⁴⁸ Technical advisor D.L. Munby noted that these proposals defied mathematics and logic, noting the impossibility of decreasing density while increasing population. However, he surmised that the conflicts in the recommendations arose from the councils' clash in priorities between keeping the public happy by endorsing houses over flats, and maintaining full population in order to protect tax revenues.⁴⁹

The Poplar Borough Council also approved an observation report to the LCC in December 1943, "representing the views of the borough and outlining schemes to the advantage of the new Poplar." This report asked for the power to plan, and that new legislation be made a priority. It also emphasized that in reconstruction, the residents would prefer for houses not flats.⁵⁰ The *East London Observer* praised the Poplar Council for challenging the LCC planners, and for making their reply to the LCC public, "in accordance with its high democratic traditions." They emphasized that the Poplar Council aimed to give "the people most concerned ample opportunity for expressing their own requirements."⁵¹ The Town Clerk of Poplar, H.E. Dennis, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to express an opinion, but reserved the right to be consulted again when the LCC prepared a statutory, rather than advisory, plan for the borough.⁵²

These letters served as the means by which the residents of Poplar and Stepney's voices were heard through the means of representative democracy of their elected councilors.

⁴⁶ Stepney Reconstruction Group, Toynbee Hall. *Living in Stepney: Past, present and future*. (Pilot Press Ltd: London, 1945) 60.

⁴⁷ THA: L/SMB/A/1/44 *Minute Book of the Metropolitan Council of the Borough of Stepney*. "Stepney Borough Minutes, February 9, 1944." 2803-2806.

⁴⁸ LMA: LCC/AR/TP/1/71 Stepney Poplar Reconstruction Area. "Borough Council's Observations on the County of London Plan, 1943."

⁴⁹ Munby. 379.

⁵⁰ "Draft Report on London Plan," Dec 17, 1943.

⁵¹ "Experts Ideals Challenged," *East London Observer*, Dec 10, 1943, 1.

⁵² LMA: LCC/AR/TP/2/152. *Consultation with Poplar Borough Council, 1934-1950*. "Letter from HE Dennis, Town Clerk of Poplar to The Clerk of the London County Council, Dec. 8, 1943."

Whether these depictions of public opinion accurately reflected the opinions of the citizens is unclear, and probably varied by borough. However, the call for houses over flats corresponded to most housing surveys conducted at the time. The system for representation served to inform the LCC of the wishes of the people of East London, however it did not insure that these opinions affected the shape of the plan.

Following the Letter of the Law

After the LCC had received the comments from the borough and had approved *The County of London Plan*, the LCC moved forward with revising and enacting the plans. This process continued to include forms of exhibition and consultation. The LCC requested that boroughs where they were planning immediate projects, such as Poplar, send a representative to their meetings to act as liaison.⁵³ They also occasionally consulted the boroughs on revisions to their plans. However, after receiving their support and feedback on the 1943 plan, they did not ask for holistic commentary on its revisions. They also decreased the scale of their consultation with the public, holding smaller exhibitions, if at all, for revisions of the plan. In 1946, the LCC exhibited additional drawings and documents showing bomb damage and zoning maps for *The County of London Plan*. This display took place in County Hall, similar to the first exhibition held for the plan in 1943. However, in contrast to the well-publicized event of 1943 in the central lobby of the building, this exhibition received only a brief announcement and an obscure location in Room 82. Likewise, instead of attracting 76,597 people, this exhibit was visited by 178 people.⁵⁴ While local authorities, such as the Stepney Borough Council, still voiced the importance of continuing to share the reconstruction plans with the public, their publicity techniques, such as releasing copies of their rather dry policy statements, lacked the dramatic flair and ideological significance of the publicity during the war.⁵⁵

This deflated consultation process continued to shrink after the passage of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. The LCC continued to cut back their publicity and consultation efforts, with most publicity serving merely to meet legal standards for informing the public before compulsory purchase. The LCC posted notices in newspapers following the letter of the law to ensure that the public had access to information about planning decisions. A 1950 notice to purchase a piece of the Stepney and Poplar Reconstruction Area exemplified the dull legal language of these notices. It also demonstrated the change in the way planning authorities exhibited their plans. The notice announced that the purchase order and a map of the land it pertained to would be “deposited” at County Hall and in the offices of the Metropolitan Borough Council of Stepney, and that “any objection must be made in writing...and should state the grounds of objection.”⁵⁶ This notice of purchase order demonstrated the shift in the tone of public consultation from one of exhibiting plans and inviting a public discussion,

⁵³ THA: L/PMB/A/1. *Minutes of the [Poplar] Council- 1943-1945*. “July 1, 1946,” 241

⁵⁴ LMA: LCC/AR/TP/1/71. *Stepney Poplar Reconstruction Area*. “Town and Country Planning Act 1944. Section 1 (7) Stepney Poplar reconstruction Area.”; LCC/CL/TP/1/43 London County Council- County of London Plan Exhibition- Civil Defense and General Purposes Committee- Report by the Clerk of the Council, November 29, 1943.

⁵⁵ THA: L/SMB/A/1/46. *Minute Book of the Metropolitan Council of the Borough of Stepney*. “Stepney Borough Minutes, Oct. 30, 1946,” 515-518.

⁵⁶ THA: P/MUN/1/2 Postwar Housing-St. report and News Articles, “Public Notices London County Council: Town and Country Planning Act, 1947 and Acquisition of Land (Authorization Procedure) Act, 1946: The Stepney and Poplar Reconstruction Area (Ocean Street Extension, Stepney) Compulsory Purchase Order, 1950.”

toward depositing plans and allowing legal objections. While the changes in the tone and scale of publicity may have arisen from the shift in the stage of planning from persuading the public to enacting the plan, it also denotes a more fundamental shift in the attitude of the LCC planners from their early idealism about their public image to a more practical focus on pushing the plan through legal and bureaucratic hurdles.

However, on certain occasions, the LCC embraced publicity and pomp in exhibiting their plans. The neighborhood redevelopment project at Lansbury in Poplar, which was going to be displayed at the Live Architecture Exhibit at the National Festival, received frequent media coverage. Key stages in the planning and construction process received concerted publicity, including royal visits, press releases and brochures of site photographs.⁵⁷ (Figures 1 and 2) In 1950, the LCC yielded to public interest, holding a press conference exhibiting the drawings and models for the Stepney Poplar Reconstruction Area, and making the exhibits available for display in the boroughs.⁵⁸ However, these publicity activities, when compared with those of only a few years earlier to exhibit *The County of London Plan*, show how the enthusiasm for publicizing plans had diminished after the 1947 Act. Now the LCC focused more effort on implementing plans than on gaining approval. While this step necessarily reflected a shift from advisory to statutory planning, it also demonstrated the LCC's waning interest in participation, and reversal from recent statements asserting the importance of public consultation.



Figures 1 and 2: These photographs show LCC administrators explaining the Lansbury plans to local residents of Poplar. On the left a meeting is held at an outdoor setting on the construction site, while the right shows an indoor exhibition. City of London, London Metropolitan Archives.

⁵⁷ NA: WORK 25/49 Stepney and Poplar Reconstruction Area Progress Schedule, "Festival of Britain 1951, Council of Architecture, Town Planning and Building research, Minutes of Meeting December 14, 1950." ; LMA: LCC/AR/HS/3/30 Lansbury Estate- East India Dock Road 1949-1951; THA: P/MUN/5/4. For more information of the Live Architecture Exhibit at Lansbury, see Chapter 5.

⁵⁸ THA: L/PMB/A/1/450. 1950-51. "Stepney Poplar Reconstruction Area." July 17, 1950, 38.

The Outcomes of Consultation

The LCC started reconstruction in the East End at Lansbury, in Stepney / Poplar, one of the areas worst damaged in the blitz. This area, and one of the most hotly debated reconstruction zones regarding issues of population density, housing type, and industrial land uses, provides insight in evaluating the consultation process for planning projects in the 1940s. After many challenges from the councils, local associations, and industrial users, the plan was built using, for the most part, the same assumptions and objectives published in the *County of London Plan*. As the LCC began to implement their London plans under the 1947 legislation, the planners made small modifications to address technical, political and economic issues. However, the revised plans did not directly address the concerns of East Enders about housing density, housing type, and the location of industry, which seem to have made minimal impact on the shape of the plan.

The LCC's "Housing and Town Planning Committee" expressed a commitment that "the Borough Council's views will, as far as possible, be taken into account in considering the detailed planning of the Area."⁵⁹ Despite calls from Poplar and Stepney to reconsider the density, population and housing proposals of the County of London Plan, the LCC continued to pursue their original policies. In 1948, the *Stepney and Poplar Reconstruction Report* retained proposals for a population of 92,000 at 136 people per acre. Technical advisor, Munby noted that the new schemes released since 1943 had continued to adhere to the controversial density proposals of the *County of London Plan*, taking no heed of the criticisms of the Stepney Borough Council.⁶⁰ In 1949, while developing their plans for Lansbury in Poplar, the LCC planned for a population total of 9,500, which would create a density of 142 people per acre across the residential areas of the neighborhood. This density, slightly lower than the *County of London Plan*, still exceeded the densities called for by the borough council.⁶¹ In decisions about housing type, density, and population levels, the LCC overruled the wishes of the local boroughs in favor of the policies of the National government, which endorsed high density housing for lower population number in East London as part of their decentralization policies under the Greater London Plan.⁶²

Throughout the process of developing the *County of London Plan* and the *Greater London Plan*, interests groups had debated the ideal density rations for cities such as London, and the relationship between city and country. Garden City planning advocates such as Frederick J. Osborn promoted decentralization of urban populations, moving populations from high-density working class neighborhoods into lower density new town developments that would create urban environments close to rural natural resources.⁶³ On the other hand, E.F. Bramley of the Communist party, argued against decentralization, instead supporting high-rise construction in order to allow working

⁵⁹ THA: L/PMB/A/11/8. *Minutes- Special Housing and Town Planning Committee 1949-50*. June 29, 1949. P. 489-490.

⁶⁰ Munby. 404-405.

⁶¹ THA: L/PMB/A/11/8. *Minutes- Special Housing and Town Planning Committee 1949-50*. "June 29, 1949," 489-490.

⁶² London County Council. *Stepney and Poplar Reconstruction Area Report*. (1948) 17.

⁶³ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/40 *County of London Plan, 1943, Observations of Interested Bodies*, "Letter from F.J. Osborn of Secretary of the Town and Country Planning Association," September 16, 1943.

class people to continue to live in the city, close to their work.⁶⁴ Abercrombie's proposals in the two plans for London tried to take a middle ground, maintaining the urban density of London, while proposes some level of decentralization to new towns in order to accommodate population growth. However, the plan did not meet the calls by citizens for houses rather than flats, and for the plan to accommodate pre-war population levels.

Similar disregard for citizen objections to the plan manifested at the appeal hearings for the compulsory purchase orders. In 1946 the LCC applied for a declaratory order that would allow them compulsory purchase powers for all the lands identified as damaged or dilapidated in the *County of London Plan*. During the inquiry many property owners came forward to protest the inclusion of their lands in the compulsory purchase, because they had not been subjected to war damage, or were unlikely to be immediately replanned. A year later in 1947, the Minister of Town Planning approved the plan and granted the application for compulsory purchase of 1,300 out of the proposed 1,960 acres without regard to the appeals.⁶⁵ Overall, consultation seemed to have little influence on the outcome of the plans. Although the LCC solicited, collected, and responded to criticism, they did not give it much weight in their planning decisions.

Post occupancy surveys by Ruth Glass showed that residents of Lansbury did express satisfaction with the way that the LCC rebuilt the area. The quick rebuilding, and relatively similar class and density characteristics of the new neighborhood meant that the community was able to reestablish itself without too much disruption.⁶⁶ However residents of East London complained about the high rents at Lansbury, which they believed reflected a lack of understanding of working class budgets and housing needs. An article in the *East London Advertiser* announced that the Lansbury neighborhood, designed by the LCC, aimed to meet the needs of the typical East London family. They designed the housing to accommodate a family of six, living on a dock worker's salary of ten to twelve pounds a week, paying 30 shillings (1.5 pounds) a week for rent. They believed this would be more than sufficient for most Lansbury families, which social surveys showed had an average of 2.5 children.⁶⁷ However, the *Advertiser* received several angry letters to the editor from workers earning six to seven pounds a week, who were "not lucky enough to be dock workers."⁶⁸ These letters claimed that if the neighborhood was to be a memorial to George Lansbury, "friend to the worker," then it should use a "typical factory worker" as the guide, and "support the truly poor" making under 6 pounds a week.⁶⁹ In 1959, residents made similar complaints, noting that rents were too high, and that the houses seemed to be assigned by random, regardless of income or family size.⁷⁰ These unresolved debates about rent levels, housing type, density, and population remained part of citizen concerns with

⁶⁴ LMA: LCC/CL/TP/1/40 County of London Plan, 1943, Observations of Interested Bodies, "E.F. Bramley, Memorandum on the County of London Plan Submitted to the London County Council by the London District Committee of the Communist Party," February 4, 1944.

⁶⁵ Munby, 382.

⁶⁶ Westergaard and Glass, 33-51. For more on Ruth Glass's surveys, see Chapter 3.

⁶⁷ "'Typical Lansbury Family' with an L10-L12 Income: Festival Showhouse Designed for Them," *East London Advertiser*. May 4, 1954, 7.

⁶⁸ "Letters to the Editor: 'Typical Lansbury Family,'" *East London Advertiser*. May 18, 1951, 10.

⁶⁹ "Letters to the Editor: 'Typical Lansbury Family,'" *East London Advertiser*, May 25, 1951, 7.

⁷⁰ JWestergaard and Glass, 45.

government planning projects, eventually festering into active revolt in the housing protests of the 1960s and 70s.

Public and Professional Attitudes Towards Consultation

While the LCC and the boroughs of East London had embraced the importance of consultation in their promotion of the County of London Plan, in practice this consultation lacked the teeth to make substantive changes to the plan. While planners' rhetoric about democratic planning appeared sincere in the early 1940s, by the 1950s many planners had become more practical and cynical in their approach to consultation. Several years of 'inform and appeal' procedures had soured the relationship between planners and the public.

In 1953 retired Minister of Town Planning, Lewis Silkin spoke at a general meeting of the Town Planning Institute, criticizing the heavy handedness of many administrators in making people feel "remote" from the "bureaucratic administration of planning." Blaming this remoteness for the public's lack of interest in planning, he said, "Where people do not understand they are inclined to be suspicious." He emphasized the importance of conducting planning decisions out in the open, rather than in secret. Silkin criticized the fact that consultation did not give the public the power to influence planning, noting that most people viewed the 'public inquiry' as a means of allowing the public "to let off steam" without influencing any real changes in plans. According to him, planners often defended rather than adapted their plans when faced with public critiques, hurting the overall quality of the plan.⁷¹ In the post speech discussion, Patrick Abercrombie defended planners, saying that even with extensive consultation before a plan, many people would still object to the final plan. Abercrombie proposed that the process of inquiry, rather than being too autocratic, actually should be much more strict, saying, "the inquiries were too gentlemanly in their conduct of the proceedings!" He reported, that while at an inquiry, his son had asked, 'Why doesn't he shut the blighters up?'" referring to citizens objecting to slum clearance or limitations on the use of their land.⁷² In this discussion, the planners appear frustrated with the public's challenges to their plans and disillusioned and cynical about the role the public can play in the planning process. Their conflicting ideas about public consultation showed their ambivalence; on the one hand they wanted to encourage participation and promote the democratic nature of their work, but on the other they believed in their own technical expertise and did not want democracy to inhibit their ability to push forward their plans.

⁷¹ Rt. Hon. Lord Silkin, "Planning and the Public," *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 39.2 (1953), 26-7.

⁷² Patrick Abercrombie quoted in "Planning and the Public." *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 39.2 (1953), 29.

Conclusion: Technocracy Trumps Democracy

Take me away from the planner
Away to the Isle of Man
I had rather be free under 18b
Than part of a post-war plan.⁷³

This anonymous poem, published in the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, reflected the concerns by planners that citizens resented the increasing power of planners in their lives. The poem stated in jest that an ordinary British person would have more freedom in an enemy internment camp than under postwar planners.

As the government increased the power of planners in the late 1940s, these experts exerted larger controls over the development of land, the location of industry, the density of neighborhoods, and the form of homes. These planners shaped many factors of peoples lives, including where they could live, work, and relax. Early in the 1940s, planners had acknowledged the concerns of the public about these extensive powers, and the importance of exercising this technocratic power carefully. They developed techniques to ensure that their decisions would be made democratically and would benefit the public. However, as planners gained and enacted new powers at the end of the 1940s, their excitement and frustration to realize their plans dulled their sensitivity to their democratic responsibilities. The profession turned inward, neglecting the previous efforts at creating a public forum to encourage planning consultation.

The passage of the new planning legislation played a key role in this professional shift. The legislation turned back the clock, reaffirming the 'inform and appeal' techniques that had existed before the 1940s under earlier legislation. These laws protected the rights of citizens to be informed about and to contest plans affecting them directly. This process handled citizen concerns individually after the completion of plan, rather than through communal discussion during the creation of the plan. This level of consultation may have been adequate under the earlier planning laws, which pertained to local planning projects at a smaller scale. However the new legislation failed to expand these rights and procedures to accommodate the much larger scale of planning which the new acts enabled. Instead of a housing project affecting a few hundred people, plans now set long-range goals for entire regions affecting millions of people. As planning had shifted from the local to the regional scale, it necessitated a broader forum for consultation to ensure democratic participation of the public. The legislation did not prevent planners from continuing to apply the types of voluntary consultation they had practiced during the war. However, by setting minimum standards, the acts set a lower bar for planners than they had set for themselves, discouraging further experimentation and expansion of consultation techniques. Without a means of integrating the commentary of the public as a whole into the planning process, planners retained ultimate control of planning decisions, thus technocracy trumped democracy.

The implementation of planning legislation under the Conservative government after 1951 further undermined the application of consultation techniques. As the conservative government aimed to increase the speed of reconstruction, privatize the

⁷³ F.A.C. Maunder, "A Factual Basis for Reconstruction," *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 31.2 (Jan.-Feb.1945) 47.

construction of single family homes, and maximize the density and profitability of slum clearance projects, they set national policies for housing types, heights, and density which trumped local interests. The increased speed, strict building constraints, and centralized decision making constrained the ability of local planning agencies to involve the public in planning decisions.

The case study of East London narrated in this chapter reveals how voluntary public consultation, enthusiastically embraced by planners in the early 1940s, devolved into bureaucratic and autocratic planning procedures by the 1950s. It highlights a narrative of failure and decline in democracy, showing the very temporary and exceptional nature of the public consultation of the 1940s. This decline continued into the 1950s and 60s as planners enacted large scale slum clearance and new town planning. This devolution of consultation practice techniques led to poor relations between planners and the public, and eventual rebellion against the planner in the 1960s. This legal language and method of applying the planning legislation of the 1940 had lasting affects on the legacy of modern planning into the 1960s and beyond.

Epilogue: The Legacy of 1940s Planning Consultation

Reflecting on the story of planning in Britain in the 1940s, this dissertation has explored how planners sought to create a democratic forum for consulting the public about planning ideas and policies. Examining the intentions, actions, and outcomes of planners as they developed this forum shows that they made substantial advances in the development of techniques for informing, educating, and consulting the public, developing a level of communication with the public far beyond what they had previously achieved.

One of the main projects of the 1940s was attaining the power to plan, both for government agencies, and for planners as a profession. However, as planning advocates aimed to expand planning powers, they acknowledged that within a democracy this would require both public support of planning, and a means to involve citizens within the planning process and insure that the state did not infringe upon their rights. As planning agencies applied their powers to enact planning, they aimed to mobilize the local communities and gain their support. While advocates and professionals worked to centralize planning powers, much of the rhetoric emphasized the importance of promoting the agency for local communities to shape land-use decisions. While planners in the 1940s aimed to improve the social welfare of all citizens, they also hoped to extend government powers and bolster the role of the expert in making technocratic land-use planning decisions.

The 1940s can be seen as a time of voluntary experiments by government officials and planning consultants to develop new modes by which to communicate planning ideas to the public in order to persuade them to extend planning powers. Planners during the 1940s had embraced public input in planning and had created forums to inform, educate and consult the public. This period nurtured the growth of new methods of planning imagery, dialog, and information gathering, including the development of surveys, exhibitions, and planning publicity. By combining publicity tools with public consultation techniques, planners developed a forum for public discussion of planning, bringing the idea of planning into the forefront of public consciousness as a necessary means of ensuring postwar reconstruction and a 'better Britain.'

Once planning legislation had passed, the ideological vigor and idealistic goals behind these techniques faded along with their practical necessity. Once the state and planning professionals had gained new powers, they proceeded to implement their plans as 'business as usual,' down grading the scale of their publicity, education, and consultation efforts. After the passage of legislation in the late 1940s, as a result of the shift from prospective planning to statutory planning, many of the techniques developed in the 1940s fell into disuse, or shrunk in scale and importance. The phase of experimentation ended, and the malleable tools for consultation hardened. The need for expediency meant the steps of public participation became perfunctory.

Modernist planners of the 1950s and 60s received criticism for their lack of attention to democratic principles in their planning. In the 1960s in Britain, the public began to express concern about the undemocratic planning decisions made by government officials without adequate attention to the interests of the people affected by the decisions. Rent strikes broke out in London, Glasgow, Sheffield and Liverpool. Other

protests fought against slum clearance and redevelopment. In these kinds of anti-planning and anti-government protests, disgruntled citizens from the right and left made a variety of demands, including lowering rents, ending slum clearance, and allowing tenants to buy their homes from councils.¹

These protests mirrored similar social movements in the US and France which protested the undemocratic power of planners. In France, student protesters produced a poster that criticized insincere planning consultation practices. Their poster read, "I participate, you participate...they profit."² In the United States, citizens fought against the destruction of urban neighborhoods to construct freeways, such as San Francisco in 1964 and in New York in 1965.³ A range of social activists and anti-modernist planning critics, such as Sherry Arnstein, Jane Jacobs and Robert Goodman in the United States, and J.G. Davies in the United Kingdom, criticized postwar comprehensive planning and reconstruction projects as being undemocratic, and called for greater input for citizens and the local level.⁴ The British government responded by organizing the Skeffington Committee to restructure their planning process to accommodate public consultation. Their report recommended keeping the public informed, publicizing plans, encouraging citizens to share their input in surveys and public meetings, and explaining to the public how their input affects planning decisions. These familiar proposals, which had been principles and standard practices during the 1940s, had been ignored in planning practice in the previous decades. These changes, instated in the Planning Act of 1969, attempted to increase the consultation requirements of local planning agencies. However, in 1976 planning historian J.B. Cullingworth commented on the legislation that "public participation is much more than adherence to formal procedures." and encouraged local planning authorities to go beyond these minimum requirements to ensure deeper forms of public participation, or risk public opposition to their work.⁵ This legislation represented a return to the forms of top down efforts to create public forums for consulting the public about planning as a means to dissipate opposition to planning projects. Grassroots organizing led to new forms of activism and participation that challenged traditional techniques of public engagement. Both government planners and planning activists adapted the consultation tools from the 1940s, such as surveys, town hall meetings, neighborhood committees and exhibitions, to meet the new political and social challenges of the civic rights era.

This narrative of the decline and rebirth of public consultation illuminates the shifting political and professional landscape of planning. It depicts the way in which planners shifted from idealistic exploration of consultation for planning in the 1940s, towards neglect of the public, merely following the letter of the law in the 1950s. Revealing the roots of participatory planning within the planning culture of the 1940s complicates the traditional depiction of modernist planners as merely deciding, announcing and defending (DAD) their work to the public. It shows how the political conditions of war

¹ Peter Shapely, *The Politics of Housing: Power, Consumers and Urban Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 72-76, 157, 167. Peter Shapely, *Social Housing and Tenant Participation*. At <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-71.html>.

² Poster depicted in Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." *Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute*. April 1971; Eric Reade, *British Town and County Planning* (Open University Press: Milton Keynes, 1987).

³ Susan Hanson and Genevieve Giuliano. *The Geography of Urban Transportation* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2004) 347.

⁴ Arnstein; Reade; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961); Jon Gower Davies, *The Evangelistic Bureaucrat: A Study of a Planning Exercise in New Castle upon Tyne* (London: Tavistock, 1972); Robert Goodman, *After the Planners* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972).

⁵ J. B. Cullingworth. *Town and County Planning*. 6th ed. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1976).

and postwar reconstruction fostered a climate in which planning could thrive, fostering the impetus for state control and public support for large-scale redevelopment. However, it also explains how modernist planning went wrong. The legal structures, created in the 1940s set the tone for high modernist planning practice in the 1950s and 60s, encouraging a combative legalistic methods of consultation in which the public had to contest the planner in court in order to affect planning decisions. The legacy of the 1940s is then both the technocratic planning structures that allowed for authoritarian planning in the 1950s and 60s, as well as the roots of democratic reforms in the 1960s and 70s. Publicity served as a double-edged sword, simultaneously offering a democratic forum for the public discussion of planning, and acting as propaganda to empower the government to execute technocratic planning projects. In the 1940s and today, planning is two-faced, both idealistic and pragmatic, public and professional, and democratic and technocratic.

Selected Bibliography

Abbreviations for Archives

BBC: BBC Written Archive, Reading, England
BCA: British Cartoon Archive, University of Kent, England
BL: British Library, BBC Sound Archive, London, England
LMA: City of London, London Metropolitan Archive, London, England
MLA: Max Lock Archive, University of Westminster, England
MO: Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex, England
NA: National Archive, Kew, England
THA: Tower Hamlets Archive and Local History Library, England

Journals

Adult Education
Architect's Journal
Architectural Review
Journal of the Institution of Municipal Engineers.
Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects
Journal of the Town Planning Institute
Public Administration
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
The Modern Law Review
The Property Owners' Journal
Town and Country Planning
Town and Country Planning

Newspapers

Daily Express
Daily Express
Daily Mail
East End News and London Shipping Chronicle
East London Advertiser
East London Observer
Evening News
Evening Standard
News Chronicle
The Times

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