



Centre for Environment and Society Research  
Working Paper series no. 8

# The post-war reconstruction planning of London: a wider perspective

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**The post-war reconstruction planning of London:  
a wider perspective**

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Working Paper Series, no. 8  
2011

ISBN 978-1-904839-54-5

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Published by  
Birmingham City University  
Centre for Environment and Society Research  
Faculty of Technology, Engineering and the Environment  
City Centre campus, Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham, B4 7XG, UK



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## **Abstract**

Although much has been written on the complex history of replanning London (at all scales from districts to the Greater London region) in the immediate post-war period, most attention has been focused on the greatest plans and the best-known planners, especially Professor Sir Patrick Abercrombie and Sir (later Lord) William Holford. This paper seeks a broader perspective across the scales of activity and range of plan authors, from formal to very informal. It explores the development of ideas of planning, especially the larger-scale regional perspective, at a crucial time for the development and implementation of planning practice (and coincidentally at a time when regional scale has been removed from contemporary practice). It covers the problems of scale and lack of “joined-up thinking” perhaps inherent in what was described as probably the largest job of planning in the country. It closes by considering the problems of implementation, or more accurately its lack, thus positioning the London replanning activity more squarely in the wider context of post-war reconstruction planning.

**Key words:** *London, post-war reconstruction planning, planning history, theory and practice of planning*

## **Acknowledgements**

A shorter version of this paper was presented at the “London Blitz” conference jointly organised by the University of Westminster and Birmingham City University, held in London on the 70th anniversary of the Blitz, September 2010. We would like to acknowledge comments and suggestions from a number of colleagues and conference participants. The archival research was supported by the Centre for Environment and Society Research of Birmingham City University.





# The post-war reconstruction planning of London: a wider perspective

Peter J. Larkham and David Adams

"... it is fortunately a fact that most of it [air raid damage] has either removed property that cried aloud for redevelopment, or has opened up hidden beauties which we hope will not be needlessly obliterated. There is thus presented to London a unique stimulus to better planning" (*County of London Plan*)

"When we are discussing the planning of London we must be sure in our minds which 'London' we mean" (Abercrombie, 1941, p. 329)

## Introduction

The classic histories of planning often reiterate the bomb damage of the Second World War as the spur to reconstruction:

"But the greatest stimulus brought by war to town planning came through the shattering of cities by bombing, from the autumn of 1940 onwards. ... Since so much rebuilding was inescapable the most favourable opportunity was presented for planning the improvement of other city districts, which had long been shabby or inconvenient ..." (Ashworth, 1954, p. 227).

These same standard planning histories focus on these 'great plans' and 'great planners' to the virtual exclusion of all other forms of reconstruction planning: one might think that Abercrombie alone was responsible for post-war reconstruction planning! (Table 1). Moreover, it seems that all of this replanning activity, of which a tremendous amount was packed into a relatively short timespan, was the result of male planners of a particular socio-economic group: in fact most were architects, and with a specific educational background deriving from the Liverpool University schools of civic design or architecture and their graduates, of whom Abercrombie had moved to be Professor of Planning at the University of London.

In the case of London the influence of Abercrombie and his plans is, apparently, inescapable. This body of work has shaped the history of planning, and the contemporary approaches to planning. Yet there was much more to the replanning of London, and this paper explores a hierarchy of plans, a range of planners, and a large degree of inertia and inaction in the 1940s and into the 1950s. In this London as not atypical; but the scale of the task, and the prominence afforded to one individual, are unusual.

London, by far the UK's largest city, was both its worst-damaged city during the Second World War and also was clearly suffering from significant pre-war social, economic and physical problems. Yet London was also one of the world's largest cities; the focus of an empire, of international trade, and a national capital. Solving these problems was one of the world's largest and most complex tasks. . Much has been written about London's replanning and rebuilding (for example Hobhouse, 1989; Garside, 1997; Hasegawa, 1999; Mort, 2004) and, although attempts to provide general accounts of London often drown in detailed data, there are significant

**Table 1: reconstruction plans cited by standard histories of planning**

History	Reconstruction plans cited
W. Ashworth (1954)	Watson & Abercrombie (1943) <i>Plymouth</i> Forshaw & Abercrombie (1943) <i>County of London Plan</i> Abercrombie (1944) <i>Greater London Plan</i>
G.E. Cherry (1974)	Coventry (in general) <i>Reconstruction in the City of London</i> (1944) Forshaw & Abercrombie (1943) <i>County of London Plan</i> Abercrombie (1944) <i>Greater London Plan</i> Royal Academy London exhibition (1942) Watson & Abercrombie (1943) <i>Plymouth</i> Adshead & Cook (1942) <i>Southampton</i> Abercrombie (1945) <i>Hull</i> (no name credit for Lutyens)
S.V. Ward (1994)	Forshaw & Abercrombie (1943) <i>County of London Plan</i> Abercrombie (1944) <i>Greater London Plan</i> Watson & Abercrombie (1943) <i>Plymouth</i> Lutyens & Abercrombie (1945) <i>Hull</i> Gibson (c. 1942) <i>Coventry</i>
H. Meller (1997)	passing reference to MARS Group and Royal Academy Abercrombie (1944) <i>Greater London Plan</i> "Abercrombie's plans for Greater London and its region"

factors that can only emerge from such an attempt. Most studies have focused on one plan or author, or compared a small number of plans: this paper attempts a wider overview.

As in many places, the wartime damage was seized upon as the opportunity to replan, sometimes radically, at all scales from the City core to the county and region. The scales of planning were in part determined by existing administrative boundaries; however

"It is almost inconceivable that any country in the world save our own would in devoting itself to redevelopment planning recognise or allow to be recognised a boundary in the heart of its Metropolis and so consider the future layout of the Capital in two parts" (Beaufoy to Pepler, 18/2/1943, HLG 71/117).<sup>1</sup>

London attracted a significant number of plans and planners; substantially more so than any other UK bomb-damaged city (Figure 1). Not only was a large number of plans produced, albeit concentrated into a short period, but they ranged from formal

<sup>1</sup> References to Government departments in the National Archives, Kew, are indexed and here referenced with a Departmental acronym (here, for example, Housing and Local Government). George Pepler (CBE 1944, knighthood 1948) was Chief Technical Advisor to the Ministry and "an itinerant activist, enabler and promoter of town planning" (Cherry, 1981, p. 133) although his contribution is problematic: Cherry also notes that "these were confusing years" and that his personal office files were destroyed on his retirement (pp. 137, 148). S.L.G. Beaufoy ARIBA MTPI was, by 1947, Assistant Secretary to the Ministry; and by 1953 President of the Town Planning Institute.

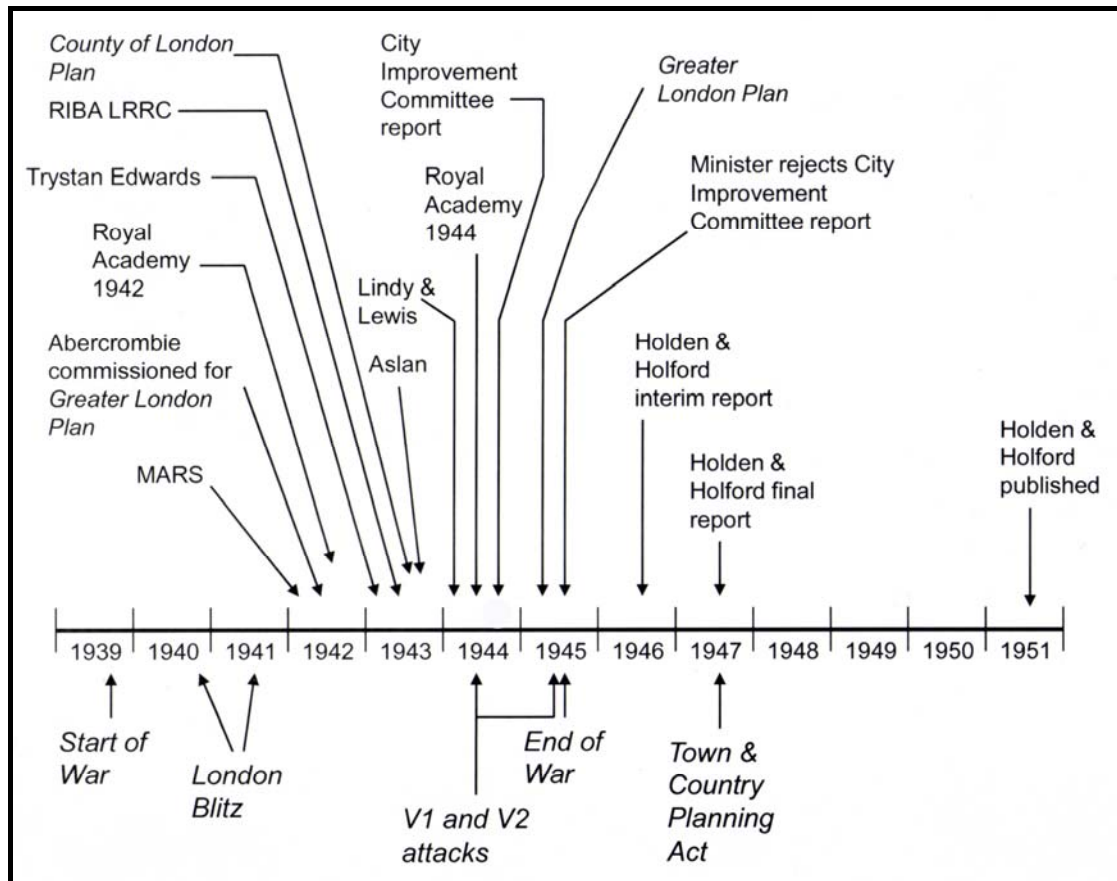


Figure 1: Schematic representation of clustering of London-related planning activity

to very informal, and from regional scale to the smallest local level. The hierarchy of plans thus produced, especially those involving Professor (later Sir) Patrick Abercrombie, is often celebrated as an exemplar of contemporary planning practice, cited as being highly influential in shaping post-war planning thought and practice, and innovative. But much critical attention has also focused on the proposed physical product, especially the seductively-illustrated but flawed *beaux-arts* street layouts of the Royal Academy plans.

Reconstruction-era replanning has been the focus of much attention over the past two decades, and it is appropriate now to re-consider the London experience in the light of our more detailed knowledge of processes and plans elsewhere in the UK. This paper therefore evaluates the London plan hierarchy in terms of process and product, examining exactly what was proposed, and the extent to which the different plans and different levels in the spatial planning hierarchy were integrated; and impact, particularly in terms of how concepts developed (or perhaps more accurately promoted) in the London plans influenced subsequent plans and planning in the UK. It draws on three sets of sources: the contents of the plans themselves; what was written about them at the time, including reviews and archive sources; and what has been written about them and their authors more recently.

We are far from the first to consider and compare various London plans. This was a preoccupation even at that time (*Architect and Building News*, 1943; *Building*, 1945; Kent and Samuely, 1944); and more recently a number of scholars have been attracted by the complexity of metropolitan planning and the iconic status of some of

its plans and planners (Marmaras and Sutcliffe, 1994; Gold, 1995). Individual plans and planners have attracted even more attention (Hall, 1994; Higgott, 1991-2). In 1944 Kent and Samuely, for example, compared four plans: that by MARS, the Modern Architecture Research Group; the first of two plans by the Royal Academy; the London Regional Reconstruction Committee of the RIBA; and the London County Council's County of London Plan, principally by Patrick Abercrombie. Their direct comparison is informative – they consider that any plan should fulfil six criteria, and systematically explored a series of questions for each one. They suggested that a successful plan should:

- Fit into a national and regional pattern of reconstruction
- Preserve and develop the individual character of a town
- Establish an organic pattern for development
- Provide for the private life of the citizen
- Cater for the collective needs of the community
- Be practicable (Kent and Samuely, 1944, p. 101)

They did not come to overall conclusions – after all, this is really comparing the incomparable! Yet their analysis suggested that no plan was practicable, although the County of London Plan scored best overall, and the MARS and Royal Academy plans scored poorly in many instances. But did this just betray partiality in the phrasing of the questions (although Samuely was personally very involved in the MARS plan<sup>2</sup>)? We, however, aim to review some of the issues surrounding the multiplicity of plans, the processes of replanning, and the products.

But before we do so we should recall that planning as an activity was in great flux. There were unintentional and deliberate misunderstandings. Damage meant that replanning was necessary, but then unbombed towns (and, in the London context, lesser-damaged boroughs) jumped on the bandwagon, perhaps to reposition themselves in the changing urban hierarchy of post-war Britain (Larkham and Lilley, 2003). Then there were misunderstandings about what planning could, and could not, do; what was realistic, and what was achievable. And who should do this replanning – qualified planners were few, and both architects and surveyors laid claim to this territory. This led to critical comments from the Ministry:

“It has become apparent that a number of local authorities’ engineers and surveyors both in big and small areas lack entirely the necessary imagination and foresight to prepare bold and comprehensive town reconstruction schemes; their outlook appears to be mainly conditioned by consideration of drainage and roads. They understand little of the social and functional organisation of towns and have no appreciation of aesthetic considerations. Without expert guidance it is unlikely that these people will make best use of what powers are going to be available” (Memo, ‘Greater London Plan’, January 1944, HLG 85/2).

### *The context of regional-scale planning*

London, and the concept of a greater London, has long been associated with the emergence of planning and of regional planning (Hewitt, 2011, pp. 553-558). Pepler had long held the view that London as a whole (however defined) required a “definite, bold, comprehensive scheme” (Pepler, 1911, p. 612). The London Society had

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<sup>2</sup> Felix Samuely was Chair of the MARS sub-committee on transport and economics.

produced an unofficial *Development Plan for Greater London* during the First World War (Hewitt, 2011, pp. 559-561).

During the inter-war period there was growing support for planning at the regional scale, deriving from Geddesian region-wide surveys and American influence. An explicit regional perspective, and the commissioning of regional plans, had established a firm foundation for planning activities: this was a period of active experimentation, not cautious consolidation (Wannop and Cherry, 1994, p. 31). It is worth here quoting a contemporary text on regional planning:

“At the present time there are two schools of thought. Those who adhere to the teachings of Raymond Unwin consider planning to be a section of architecture. The remainder attaches importance to regional study and considers that land should be devoted to the use for which it is best fitted in the interests of the community” (Escritt, 1943, chapter 1).

The Unwin view was in the minority amongst many consultant practitioners and in the Ministry of Health, which had responsibility for planning issues at the time, and where Pepler was, from 1919, Chief Planning Inspector. The rise of interest in garden cities and concern for environmental protection and against suburban sprawl encouraged a wider approach to planning than local authority boundaries traditionally allowed, although there was no support for regional government *per se* (Chelmer, 1931). Yet there was a rise of Regional Advisory Committees, in which Pepler's hand is often seen: in fact their formation “was often stage-managed by Pepler at inaugural meetings of local authority representatives (Cherry, 1981, p. 136). A series of major reports produced for such Joint Planning Committees in the 1920s and 1930s was where “the fundamentals of planning objectives in strategic terms were developed and tested” (Cherry, 1981, p. 137).

The structure and contents of regional plans became virtually standardised: “zoning, open space, roads, satellite settlements, the preservation of (largely rural) beauty, and the need to maintain a distinction between town and country” became prominent features in these plans, which were produced by a small group of professional planners (Wannop and Cherry, 1994, p. 33).

Abercrombie, who features very heavily in the following saga of London's replanning, had a long-standing interest in regional planning (Dehaene, 2005). He was directly involved in no less than 18 of the key inter-war regional plans, a ‘senior consultant’ in the pioneering Doncaster plan (of 1922), and it is suggested that

“The series of regional planning reports reflects a constant effort to push the boundaries of what could readily be implemented, often surpassing that boundary in order to show the need for additional instruments” (Dehaene, 2005, p. 134).

He was also an influential planning educator, at the Universities of Liverpool and London teaching many of those who later wrote reconstruction plans; and he also wrote a standard planning textbook (Abercrombie, 1933). His view of planning clearly derived from the Geddesian survey; his concerns are a conservatism in terms of landscape and land use.

In the London context,<sup>3</sup> a wider planning dimension was plain soon after the First World War with the formation, promoted by Neville Chamberlain, of an Advisory Joint Planning Committee for Greater London (roughly defined as the area within a 25-mile radius of Charing Cross). The Committee appointed Sir Rymond Unwin as its technical adviser (Wannop and Cherry, 1994, p. 32). Despite publication of a First Report in 1929 and Second Report in 1933, little progress was made; and the Joint Committee was reconstituted to be more active; although this itself led to LCC opposition. Hence the Minister of Health (who had most responsibility for planning in the inter-war period) induced the Committee's replacement with the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning, with E.G. Culpin, a former LCC Chairman, at its head: nevertheless the LCC still showed "no enthusiasm for it".

Despite this the Conference appointed a technical committee comprising the planning officers or engineers of the counties, county boroughs and the City, plus other technical advisers including the London Divisional Road Engineer from the Ministry of Transport. It was chaired by Harry Stewart, Pepler's deputy. However the Conference's final meeting was in April 1939; war halted further work and all plans and papers were retained by the (unenthusiastic) LCC (Pepler, undated note, HLG 71/116).

Despite all of the attention on regional planning and the place of London within it, there is a telling comment in a memo to Whiskard (forwarded to the Minister) that "Regionalism' is particularly thorny in London owing to the controversies on London local government. This feeling may not extend to the City, which is a special territory and hardly a democratic community" (undated, c. 1942-3, HLG 71/116).

### *The hierarchy of planning for London*

First, then, what was this hierarchy? The London County and Greater London plans stand out, but even formally there was competition between the much-criticised plan of the City of London's Improvements and Town Planning Committee, and the replacement by consultants Holden and Holford. Even locally, there were Borough and lesser formal plans, and some much less formal, by individuals and local groups. The City itself attracted many informal proposals, as well as the quasi-official proposals of the Royal Academy (we call them 'quasi-official' because of the standing of those involved, including Lutyens and Bressey, who had reported on London roads in 1937). And there was the larger-scale MARS plan, of equally problematic status.

Underpinning this multiplicity is the variety of damage (Table 2; see maps in Woolven, 2005; 2010 [for Middlesex]). Let us not forget its variability: local damage was locally calamitous and often spurred a plan response, but was rarely of regional or national significance; and that local plan often conflicted with regional proposals even when these were already available. On a larger scale, though, the damage was scattered and much less intense than was suffered in bombing later in the war or by ground warfare in Europe and the Far East.

### **A hierarchy of planning**

One problem with exploring the plans as a hierarchy rather than a chronology is that there was no structural (ie hierarchical) logic in their timing. Plans were

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<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is drawn from a Historical Note prepared by Pepler in April 1942: HLG 61/116.

**Table 2: Scale of war damage in London boroughs**

London	War damage <sup>1</sup>	Declaratory Order granted <sup>2</sup>	Number of houses destroyed <sup>3</sup>
All 18 LCC boroughs		1,312	47,314
Beckenham	20	6	
East Ham	60		
Erith	14	9	
Finchley	15	6	
Hornsey	20	10	
Leyton	45	25	
Thurrock	20	4	
Tottenham	60	39	
Twickenham	25	21	
Walthamstow	20		
City of London		231	

1 Estimated figure, in acres, from HLG 71/34

2 In acres, from HLG 71/2222 and HLG 71/34

3 CAB 87/11 unless otherwise specified. "Houses" was taken to mean most types of dwelling, including accommodation over commercial premises.

commissioned, delivered and commented upon in no logical order; in fact the highest in the hierarchy, the regional plan to which logically all others should be subordinate, was one of the last to appear. This is one of the greatest problems in dealing with London's replanning, and is largely a function of the gradual evolution of historical boundaries and responsibilities coupled with some clear reluctance on the part of various individuals and authorities to coordinate and collaborate.

### *Greater London Plan*

"Let us deal with the planning of Greater London as a great adventure ... what is being attempted is nothing less than the creation of conditions in which ugliness and dreariness are ended" (Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning, quoted without source in Ziegler, 1995, p. 338).

"perhaps the most colossal work of planning of all time" (Adshead, 1945, p. 17).

In planning historiography, Patrick Abercrombie's ideas for the refashioning of London are most prominent for their investment in zoning principles and for their grand plans to remove over a million Londoners from the dreary and overcrowded city, largely into eight new satellite towns to be built beyond the Green Belt (Hall, 1988; Ward, 1994; Cherry, 1996; Meller, 1997) . The *Greater London Plan* was planning on the grand scale. This was a Ministry commission, this being desired by the County authorities as this would "take the matter out of the range of local politics"

(Whiskard<sup>4</sup> to Barlow [Treasury],<sup>5</sup> 14/3/1942, HLG 71/116). Abercrombie was the prime author. Not only was Abercrombie Professor of Planning at London University, but he had a long-standing interest in the complexities of planning for the capital (Abercrombie, 1912). However, as will be seen below, Abercrombie had been identified by, and strongly promoted, by the Ministry even at Ministerial level. It was felt that

“a Committee is an inefficient instrument for drawing up an plan, which should, in the first instance be ... a ‘one-mind job’. The proper function of a Committee is to criticise, amend and build upon such a first draft” (note to the Minister, HLG 71/116).

The Minister (Lord Reith) promoted this view at a meeting with the “outer Counties” on 21 January 1942 and it was agreed in principle to appoint Abercrombie (Note of meeting, HLG 71/116) being strongly “steered” by Reith “so that the request to appoint Abercrombie should come from the representatives” (Historical Note, HLG 71/116). Even so, Abercrombie’s name had been raised in a letter from the Clerks of the Home Counties and County Boroughs to Reith in October 1941 (Historical Note, HLG 71/116). The Ministry would have to pay for this first draft plan, although there was subsequent discussion on costs and staffing. The Treasury was asked to agree to a fee of £3000 plus staffing and other costs of £2000 (Whiskard to Barlow [Treasury], 14/3/1942, HLG 71/116). The perceived urgency of this was that

“the LCC plans were nearing completion and ... the Home Counties were afraid of being faced with a fait accompli or that there might be indiscreet utterances from members of the LCC” (Historical Note, HLG 71/116).

Here we see significant problems, not least over Abercrombie’s identification and appointment. At least one influential local individual complained over the perceived preferential treatment of this key individual, noting that there were other consultants, himself amongst them: “Abercrombie is not the only planning expert” (Alderman E.G. Culpin, Chairman of the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning: Memo, 29/1/1942, HLG 71/116).<sup>6</sup> And there was clear preference in the Ministry for Abercrombie: he was promoted by the Ministry to the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning, which agreed in May 1942 to appoint a consultant “who might well be Professor Abercrombie” (Memo, Saunders to Pepler, 12/5/1942, HLG 71/116). He was even suggested, by Pepler, for the City of London Plan – “the obvious choice, although he has far too much on his plate” (manuscript addition of 13/1/1944 to memo from Beaufoy, HLG 79/973).<sup>7</sup>

Abercrombie proposed to start work on 10 August 1942 and proposed completion “within the year” (Abercrombie to Whiskard, 31/7/1942, HLG 71/116). The plan was circulated in 1944 and published in 1945. Although the entire Plan was produced quickly, and with input from the Standing Conference and the affected local

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<sup>4</sup> Sir Geoffrey Whiskard was Secretary of the Ministry – the role later being termed Permanent Secretary.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Montague Varlow, Chairman of the Royal Commission producing the Barlow Report (1940).

<sup>6</sup> Culpin was then recovering from ill-health and wanted something to do “to keep my own sanity”, feeling that this was “the sort of thing I am fitted for, particularly with my intimate knowledge of all the authorities in the Greater London area” (letter, Culpin to Pepler, 16/2/1942, HLG 71/116).

<sup>7</sup> He was appointed at a personal fee of £3000, higher if the plan were completed early (Beaufoy to Pepler, 18/2/1943, HLG 71/117).



authorities, there was no absolute unanimity in responses. One of its key features was its heavy reliance on accurate data collection and presentation: this was a technocentric planning approach, and indeed Abercrombie referred to himself and other planners in various places as “technicians” (Abercrombie, 1941, p. 329; 1949, p. 10).<sup>8</sup> The plan’s fundamental concerns were to control the haphazard growth of the capital city, to introduce a measure of decentralization, and to introduce controlled development of housing, industry and communications.

Modifying the ideas of Raymond Unwin and the Garden City Association earlier in the century, Abercrombie argued that a vibrant and healthy community was founded on the intermingling of different social groups. To this end, the *Greater London Plan* denounced the interwar speculative building of suburban estates for its removal of young middle class families from the city centre (Horney, 2008). Indeed, the ideas of growth and decentralization were fused together: In Abercrombie’s *County of London Plan*, unchecked suburban building was to be halted and growth was to be limited to a population density of 136 persons per acre, and 618,000 would be decentralized. The *Greater London Plan*, however, added 415,000 to this total. These would be housed in eight new satellite towns (later known as New Towns) (383,250), to be located outside the green belt ring; additions to existing towns (261,000); ‘quasi-satellite’ towns in the inner London built-up area, recognised as less than ideas (125,000). The remaining people would be moved to locations far from London. Industrial location was felt to be “in some respects the most important part of the plan” (Robson, 1945, p. 113). It followed the recommendations of the Barlow Report (1940), assuming that new industry would not be permitted to locate in London, and that “the pre-war drift from the depressed areas and other places of low prosperity to South-East England and London [would] not be permitted to continue (Robson, 1945, p. 113). It begins to explicitly suggest a distance-decay factor in metropolitan influence and planning. More significantly, perhaps, in terms of the transferability of planning ideas, here we see the emergence of new towns and a more coherent green belt.

There was also some criticism emanating from the Ministry<sup>9</sup> regarding Abercrombie (HLG 79/58; 85/2). It was felt that Abercrombie’s text was incomplete and inappropriate; the whole thing was inadequate for publication.

“The text had to be very considerably re-cast by our officers who could be ill spared, and the maps to make the Report intelligible have had to be prepared and are still not finished. Whatever allowances are made for the Professor, we have, I think, strong grounds for complaint” (undated memo to the Ministry Secretary, HLG 104/3).

The letter from Beaufoy, who had done much of this reading and editing, to Abercrombie was forthright but conciliatory: nevertheless he said that

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<sup>8</sup> It is worth quoting Abercrombie’s description of plan-making: “in the first instance a plan is prepared independently and almost in secret by the technician. He is given complete freedom to prepare a plan on whatever lines he thinks fit, having access to whomsoever he thinks it necessary to consult. He does not submit that plan, at any stage, to any local authority or Government department for their scrutiny or approval”. It is also worth contrasting this with Meller’s comment on contemporary institutional structures and planners: they had “the role of political manipulator, the committee man able to coordinate local authorities, architects, and local vested interests, and help them agree on some specific objective” (Meller, 1990, p. 292).

<sup>9</sup> In fact the Ministry was very critical of many of those involved in any capacity with planning at this point, including those who had once worked for the Ministry (such as Thomas Sharp) or were later employed by it (K.K. Parker): see Larkham (2011).

“the fact that the Report bears the imprint of so many hands, hands of so divergent a character and ability, and occasionally of accuracy, [makes] publication of the Report in its present form impossible ... Chapters 5 and 7 require a great deal of revision and even amongst the many comments I have made, I have foreborne to draw attention to the many inelegancies of the style. The effect of these chapters has been to lessen my confidence in other parts of the Report” (Beaufoy to Abercrombie, 28/6/1944, HLG 85/2).

One critical review commented that the plan “indicates an over-emphasis of the circle. The author seems to be obsessed with rings” (Adshead, 1945, p. 16) and, accepting that a plan of this scale must necessarily be diagrammatic, there is a point in the extent to which reality and ideal geometry are here superimposed.<sup>10</sup>

In exploring wider responses to potential implementation of the plan, it is interesting to note a Ministry comment that in some towns the “individual ambitions of Council Officials or one or two forceful [elected] members” were pushing the growth of those towns as extensively as possible, and “it is very essential that a curb should be put, by the Regional Authority for London, on this approach to town planning” (note, Greater London Plan, January 1944, HLG 85/2).

## MARS

The MARS plan, by contrast, was for a wholly radical restructuring of the city and region. Thought-provoking but wholly impractical, it was developed as the culmination of the Modern Architecture Research Group’s interest in London,<sup>11</sup> and was delayed owing to the 18-month internment of Arthur Korn as an enemy alien. Its principal publication was as a 10,000-word ‘description and analysis’ in the *Architectural Review* (Korn and Samuely, 1942) and a public exhibition: the full plan *per se* was never published. It is interesting in that it was accepted by MARS on the basis that “we fight for an *urban* feeling, not a suburban”, and that it was exploratory and not for formal submission to the LCC (RIBA Archives, Ar0/2/10/1/ii, cited in Gold, 1995, p. 258).

As with the *Greater London Plan*, the published report drew heavily on data and statistical analysis and it could be reasonably argued that there was a technical planning basis as much as a modernist doctrine underlying the proposals. The plan envisaged that the historic core should remain (thus retaining its functions), although more radically, it proposed an extended linear east-west spine and lateral extensions serving as ‘Districts’ (smaller-scale linear cities) for a total proposed population of ten million. The plan’s comb-like linear structure (Figure 2) prioritised rail transport rather than road; reorganised industrial location; and suggested a hierarchy of social units. In fact, the published documentation (the full content of the exhibition boards is unknown) arguably eschews any direct correlation with the layout of the city it sought to represent; instead, it focused on movement and communication rather than the

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<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, there are some much more strict, smaller-scale and one must assume serious geometric circular plans, for example the semi-circular rebuilding of Coventry city centre proposed by F.W. Woolworth in March 1941 (Coventry City Archives) and papers in the same archives show Gibson using idealised circle diagrams of urban form for public lectures.

<sup>11</sup> The MARS Town Planning Committee, constituted in late 1937, included Arthur Korn (Chair), Maxwell Fry, Graham Holford, Thomas Sharp, and Ralph Tubbs.

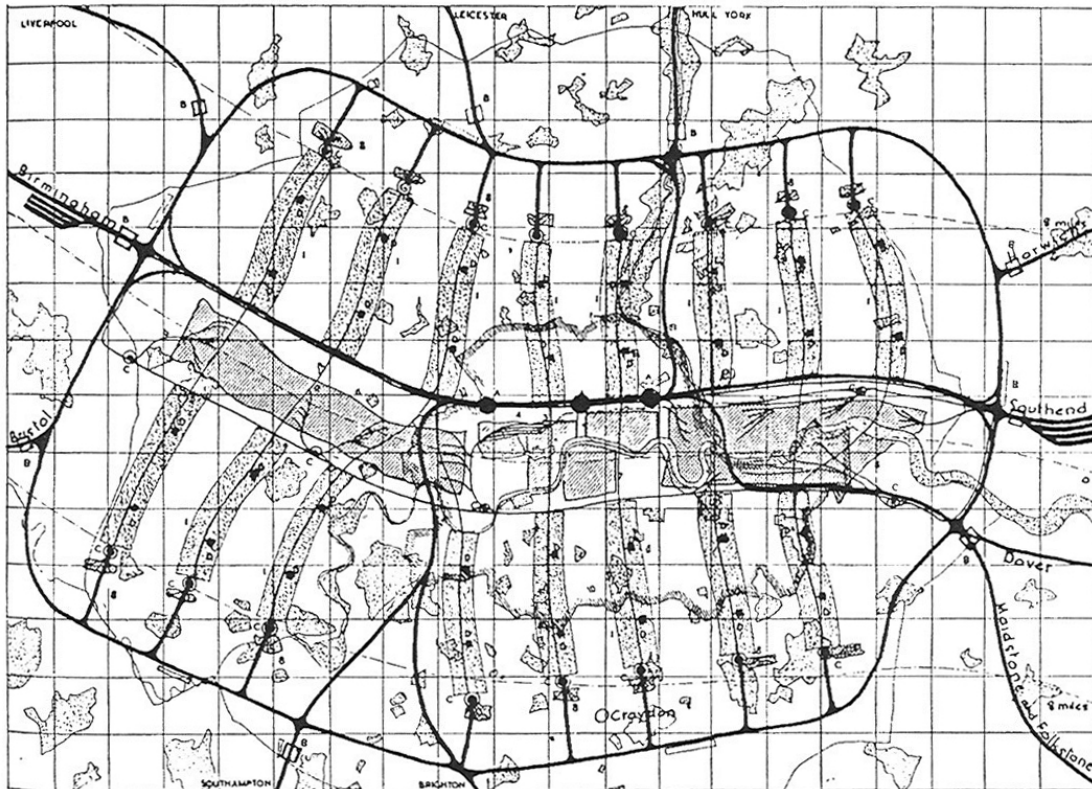


Figure 2: The MARS plan (Korn and Samuely, 1942).

complexities of urban form, structure and design (Marmaras and Sutcliffe, 1994, p. 434). Despite this exercise in spatial abstraction, the plan's two principal authors, Korn and Felix Samuely, seem to have believed in its practicality as a solution for reconstruction (Gold, 1995, p. 263),<sup>12</sup> but few others did – including many MARS members. One, Lionel Brett (later Lord Esher) argued instead for “a much more sensitive use of what exists” (Brett, 1942), but he was really arguing for a different approach to the aesthetics of character. The *Architect's Journal* (1942a) suggested that the proposed transportation infrastructure was inefficient and insufficient: although it could facilitate greater speed, it would face problems with peak period congestion. Samuely produced a robust defence of the plan, although he weakened his technical approach by stating his “belief that the people of London preferred to live in a town planned as a working one and not ‘to suit the idiosyncrasies of two or three hundred who love one place or another so much’ ” (Samuely, 1943, p. 55). Clearly this was written before the rise of the conservation movement.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the plan's importance lies in its culmination of the promotion of a new form of residential layout: the “neighbourhood unit”. This can be seen influencing the housing and social concerns of many other plans even at the strategic/regional level. Even so, and even for residential districts, its land-use planning has been described as “perfunctory” (by Marmaras and Sutcliffe, 1994, p. 435). It has nevertheless been suggested that this plan “summed up, as no other plan did anywhere in the world at

<sup>12</sup> Interviewed by Gold, Percy Johnson-Marshall said that Korn believed “that it was a real solution to London's problems. That was entirely an illusion, but I could never shake Arthur from his convictions” (transcript T7/12, Gold, 1995, p. 263).

<sup>13</sup> See Esher (1981) for the slow growth of reaction to the post-war reconstruction developments; the place of conservation in reconstruction planning and thinking is explored by Larkham (2003, 2010) and Pendlebury (2003).

that time, the whole nature of the CIAM approach to the hierarchical structure for a city” (Sharp, 1972, p. 155).

### *RIBA London Regional Reconstruction Committee plan*

This was a further unofficial large-scale plan. In 1941 RIBA constituted a London Regional Reconstruction Committee to advise on region-wide reconstruction planning. It first sought views from RIBA branches and members, although with little result. The task then fell to the committee itself, which was large and also represented the interests of the Architectural Association.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, Abercrombie was also evidently involved: he “became an increasingly important source of information. At the same time, he appears to have influenced the committee’s proposals, though without dominating or directing them” (Marmaras and Sutcliffe, 1994, p. 444). The proposals, described as interim, were published in a small booklet and promoted via an exhibit in a regional planning exhibition at the National Gallery in 1943.

The LRRC plan explicitly identified seven factors necessary before replanning could be implemented. These formed a significant conceptual contribution and distinguish this from most other plans for the metropolis. Perhaps of most significance was the call for the constitution of essential machinery for a national plan,<sup>15</sup> and, unlike the abstract conceptualisations of the MARS plan, there was a call for the satisfaction of human needs as a foundation for reconstruction.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, the plan covered four main elements: communications, the reconstitution of urban areas, industrial location, and the preservation of historical features and natural character. Trunk roads, railways and green open space would separate urban areas, which would be self-contained,

“each with its own local sense and civic pride, each provided with its own amenities in the form of schools, clinics, hospitals, recreational, shopping and administrative centres, and each having planned provision for local light and domestic industries and for district distribution” (LRRC, 1943, p. 30).

A new ‘inner airport’ was planned for a large area north of the Isle of Dogs, well connected by rail and road. Industry would be segregated from residential and urban areas, and linked to the transportation system. The preservation of natural and historical features was seen as an integral part of planning, and some improvements, including slum clearance was heavily emphasised. Yet, despite this strategic

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<sup>14</sup> The Committee included Arthur W. Kenyon (Chair), Henry Ashley, Robert Atkinson, Henry Braddock (replacing Brian O’Rorke in March 1942), J. Murray Eason, W. Curtis Green, Stanley Hamp, Frederick Hiorns, Charles Holden (who later worked with Holford on the City of London Plan), H.V. Lanchester (a prolific reviewer of reconstruction plans), S. Rowland Pierce (another reconstruction plan author) and Verner Rees (LRRC, 1943).

<sup>15</sup> The rhetoric of a ‘national plan’ was pervasive at the time, and some formal steps were taken; much better known are the informal approaches (eg *Picture Post*, 1941).

<sup>16</sup> There were other elements to the plan including: a decision on the outline of the national plan, the simplification of the existing legislative system of Acts, Bye-laws, etc., by the introduction of a national code to cover the whole country; the reorganisation of the building industry and modernisation of building technique; a financial system for reconstruction; the solution of the general items concerning control of land; changes in the location of industry; building new satellite towns; the creation of a local improvement fund; and the provision of housing related to war damage and the increasing number of families.

perspective, consideration was given to the micro-scale design of trunk road interchanges (LRRC, 1943, p. 20).

However, it was clear by 1943 that the LRRC lacked the detailed data and analysis necessary for turning a realistic set of ideas into an implementable plan. The LRRC plan was therefore produced in a seemingly *ad hoc* manner, small in format and short, with crudely-drawn maps and diagrams. As published it focused on communications, but many of the planning details were, perhaps understandably, vague and underdeveloped. Recognising its limitations, the published report noted that

“The LRRC realise that the interim work here presented (and shown at the Exhibition at the National Gallery) is merely a draft for a master-plan. To implement the proposals, to carry forward the idea of co-ordinated and co-operative planning into the future requires further and continuous effort. This will not be concerned wholly with an extension of the work shown, it must be related to the influence a physical plan may have upon legislation, upon controls of various kinds and, above all, with the attitude of mind of all those who may be affected by the replanning of the Region. It must be an understanding attitude of mind, bringing with it a will to accomplish the bases for better living, however long may be the term set upon the future for accomplishment” (LRRC, 1943, p. 49).

Even this statement does not explicitly acknowledge the faster-developing work being done elsewhere; although it shows awareness of the links with ‘attitude of mind’, legislation etc, it was vague and shapeless. In fact, a fundamental criticism of the plan as displayed was that its terms of reference were too narrow, particularly in terms of the areal extent of coverage (*Architect and Building News*, 1943, p. 117).

#### “A plan for ‘Greater London’”

A final, and again wholly unofficial, plan for “Greater London” was produced apparently by the architect A. Trystan Edwards,<sup>17</sup> and featured in *The Builder* in 1943 (Edwards, 1943). It was a self-proclaimed ‘master plan’ and made no attempt to plan any part of the city or region in any detail. It was explicitly aligned to the ‘national plan’ debate; but not specifically to and recently-promoted national plans, rather to a loose framework produced by the Hundred New Towns Association and its “technique of mass migration” hoping to reduce the Greater London population by two million, dispersed to 40 new towns. It referred to the Royal Academy plan (the only one then published) only in the sense that it, or another plan for the central area, “might be incorporated in it”.

In terms of contributing to the London planning debate perhaps this plan’s unique contribution is its explicit division of London into two regions; the ‘conservative’ and the ‘radical’. Historic London formed the ‘conservative’ element: “much of which should be treated with reverence, and as far as possible preserved”. This was identified as an 8 x 5.5 mile rectangle. Everything else would allow ‘radical’ replanning; “we need not scruple here to undertake a very large programme of

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<sup>17</sup> However the wording of *The Builder*’s feature is ambiguous; Edwards does not claim credit personally but neither does he explicitly ascribe it to the Association. An editorial footnote records “We understand that the Hundred New Towns Association ... is submitting the scheme to the LCC and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, and is in co-operation with the Industrial Christian Fellowship”.

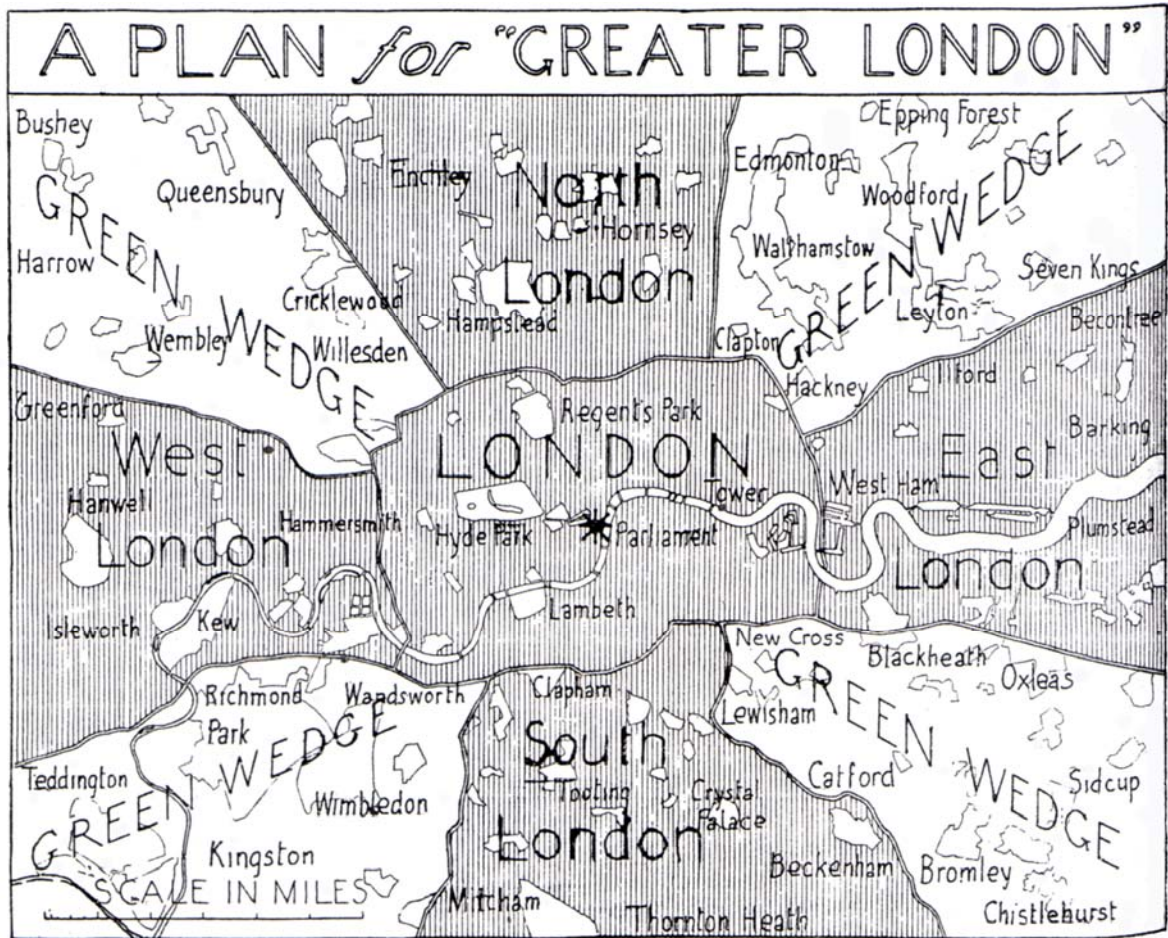


Figure 3: The Trystan Edwards / Hundred New Towns Association plan (Edwards, 1943, p. 128).

demolition and replacement". This would focus development into four wedges, separated by four green wedges, as an alternative to a green belt, in order to give rapid and direct access to countryside (Figure 3). Despite the feature in a major professional journal, the plan vanished without trace, as was so often the fate of these unofficial, unsolicited proposals.

#### *County of London Plan*

Nestling within the spatial structure and theoretical construct of the *Greater London Plan*, and by the same main author but originating slightly earlier, was the *County of London Plan*. For this Abercrombie was appointed by the London County Council to work with J.H. Forshaw, who was the LCC Architect and Planning Officer from July 1941; although Abercrombie made it plain from the beginning that he would need to consider an area wider than the County itself. By February 1942 Abercrombie felt that he "had really done his part" although much discussion "would have to be endured" before the LCC would approve the plan (memo to Vincent on meeting of 4/2/1942, HLG 71/116).

There were comparisons between the two plans, yet the *County of London Plan* appears to be clearly dominant not just for its statistical base and its more

sophisticated and better-articulated theoretical underpinnings. In particular, the problems identified and addressed by the Plan included:

- traffic congestion, causing waste of time and loss of life
- 'depressed housing', a generalised view of poor conditions in the bulk of inner London's housing
- Inadequacy of open space provision
- Environmental problems caused by mixing of housing and industry, and
- destruction of countryside caused by continuing urban sprawl.

The latter problem was too large for this plan to address comprehensively, and its handling of this through decentralisation was also criticised (*Estates Gazette* 1943b). Lesser problems discussed in the Introduction included the co-ordination of railway development, and the lack of 'coherent architectural development' such as, presumably, the uniformity of the Georgian period.

The plan was dominated by concepts of London as a community, a metropolis and a machine (Stamp, 1945, p. 666). One of the key novelties here was the concept and diagrammatic representation of 'social and functional areas' – this is the community aspect (Figure 4). Known irreverently to civil servants as the 'egg diagram' the key graphic representation of this concept came rather late in the proceedings, disrupting publication and exhibition (memo, Harry Stewart to Sir Stephen Tallents, 8 February 1945, HLG 104/3). Some of these between-spaces could be conceptualised as linear green spaces, having – on a much smaller scale – similar features as the regional green belt; such linear spaces were indeed suggested in the *Greater London Plan*. London as metropolis recognised the national and international functions of the city, including the business/finance centre of the City and the manufacturing, trading and cultural significance. Yet some were localised functions, including Westminster, the law courts and the university: the plan suggested that these functional zones should be treated as separate 'precincts'. London as machine focused on transport, especially the proposed three ring roads.

Another key component was the reduction of London's population and the calculation of optimum population densities in three tiers. These calculations were largely driven by the standard of public open space provision (four acres per thousand people). However, it has been suggested that such use of facts and standards "was highly selective to the point of absurdity" (Higgott, 2007, p. 80).

The Plan was published and rapidly reprinted in 1943 and 1944,<sup>18</sup> and a 'popular' version was written by Carter and Goldfinger (1945).<sup>19</sup> An exhibition was held at County Hall in July-August 1943, where it was visited by 54,732 (*The Builder*, 1943, p. 206) including the King and Queen, then moved to the Royal Academy in Piccadilly. Educational packs were made up by the LCC for schools and the armed forces (London Metropolitan Archives, CL/TP/1/44). Once published this plan was widely reviewed; although one review noted its advantageous use of "a mass of statistical and research data available from official sources ...this fact is important to bear in mind when inevitable comparisons are made with previously-produced plans" (specifically this reviewer mentions those of the LRRC and Royal Academy) (*Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 1943, p. 195).

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<sup>18</sup> The first printing was of 10,000 copies, costing £4,680 and consuming 10.5 tons of paper (King to Salmon, 24/11/1943, HLG 104/3).

<sup>19</sup> Edward Carter was RIBA Librarian and Ernő Goldfinger was the well-known Modernist architect, largely unemployed during the war, who became a prolific writer.

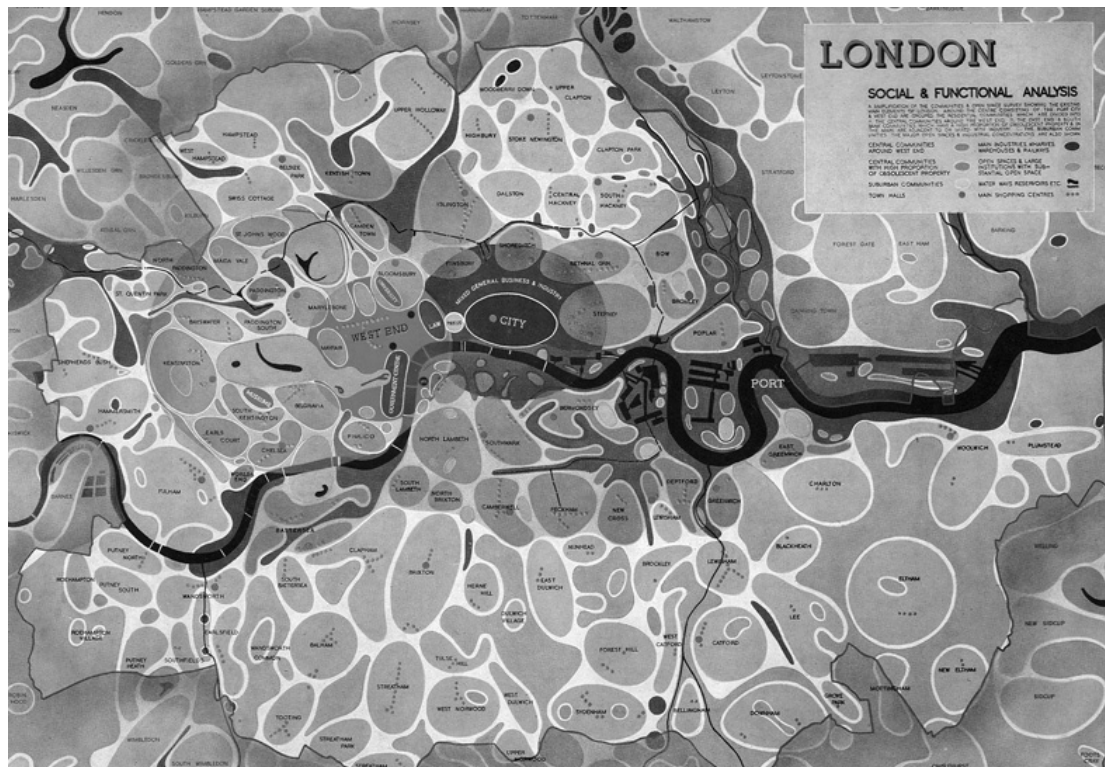


Figure 4: Map of social and functional areas (the “egg diagram”, *County of London Plan*, 1944).

Again there was wide communication with the constituent London Boroughs, and most agreed with most of the provisions; though there was some disagreement and “criticism” (a common term in the contemporary discourse of wider public engagement in planning!). Most boroughs, though, suggested numerous amendments; however these were usually detailed comments on the location of specific facilities and requests for “much more specific information” (Purdom, 1945, Appendix G). Probably the most negative overall comment from one of the boroughs was that “final planning for the County of London is not possible until a national planning scheme and a Greater London planning scheme have been drafted” (London Borough of Woolwich, quoted in Purdom, 1945, p. 264).

It could therefore be argued that the *County of London Plan* was widely perceived less as a strategic overview than as a series of detailed micro-scale proposals that happened to be presented at county scale. This can be seen by the Plan’s depiction of, for example, major road junction designs and even designs for individual urban quarters or, to use the then-common term, ‘precincts’ and through traffic was excluded from the precincts, leaving them “inward looking and separate from the city outside” (Higgott, 2007, p. 72).

The relationship between MARS and other emerging plans is interesting: a MARS Group meeting in 1944, discussing the County of London Plan, welcomed the latter as “the first adequate and comprehensive plan for the County”: there was no stout defence of the MARS plan against Abercrombie’s very different proposals for physical structure! (*MARS 1944*, p. 1). The County plan nevertheless descended to lower levels for specific proposals, and it is here that some have been most critical. The vision of control and orderliness is itself criticised explicitly and implicitly; Mort (2004, p. 142), for example, suggests that



“the heart of the city’s central area posed an obvious affront to Forshaw and Abercrombie’s metropolitan fantasy of ordered progress, in ways that reveal much about the urban value system of these planning intellectuals. Unpacking the collision between the planners’ worldview and competing uses and interpretations of the East End advanced by different groups of social actors provides significant insights into the contested nature of their vision for the central city”.

### *City of London plans (1) Improvements and Town Planning Committee*

The lowest level in the plan hierarchy spatially, and in terms of strategic thinking, was of individual boroughs and, particularly, the City of London itself. The City was the focus of greatest concentrated damage. Attempts had been made to suggest an external consultant (Hasegawa, 1999, note 41; several were later identified by Beaufoy: memo, 12/1/1944, HLG 79/973), but the City Corporation instead first produced a report principally by F.J. Forty, the City Engineer, on behalf of the Improvements and Town Planning Committee. There was Ministry concern that the City had not discussed matters with Abercrombie,<sup>20</sup> and had ceased communication with Sir Giles Scott, then working on a plan for St Paul’s for the Royal Academy: “this is another indication that the City wishes to be left to mind its own business” (memo to Vincent, 26/9/1941, HLG 71/116).<sup>21</sup>

On 9 December Ministry staff visited Forty to see the draft plan, and highlighted their concerns to Pepler in characteristically forthright terms. “We are not only disappointed, we are frankly alarmed. Never since 1666 has there been such an opportunity to replan parts of the City, and, if the plans we saw are adopted, this opportunity will once again be missed. Indeed, it will be more than missed, it will be deliberately passed by.” (memo to Pepler, 12/1942, HLG 769/973). Both now and subsequently, such memos make reference to the fact that Forty was not a planner but an engineer; an interesting point in the professional battle over where the responsibility for such planning should lie.<sup>22</sup>

The Corporation insisted to the Minister that it was too late to appoint a consultant, and their plan was to be published in response to public pressure (related in HLG 79/316, Beaufoy to Whiskard, 30/8/1945). However publication was repeatedly deferred “in the best interests of the Corporation and of the City in its future”, causing

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<sup>20</sup> This was in September 1941, at an extremely early stage in Abercrombie’s London work.

<sup>21</sup> However there are some indications that the City Corporation was not wholly averse to using a consultant, and preferred Scott; although in a discussion with Syrett (of the City Corporation) the Ministry view was that “we did not think Scott did planning on the same scale as Abercrombie, so that, if they were not opposed to a consultant, they might consider inviting Abercrombie and associating Scott with him, particularly for architectural purposes such as he is now working on for the City. Mr Syrett thought this a good idea! (*aide memoire* for Whiskard and Vincent, HLG 71/116).

<sup>22</sup> “It is not a criticism of Mr Forty to say that the plan is nothing but an engineer’s plan, for Mr Forty is an engineer” (memo to Pepler, 12/1942, HLG 79/973); “The plan is under the guidance of the City Engineer, who has not and can hardly be expected to have the proper qualifications needed for a job of this kind. He has a planning officer, Mr Lovett, who has done some extensive survey work, but there are indications, nothing more, that he is being kept in the background” (Beaufoy to Pepler, 18/2/1943, HLG 71/117); “Obviously Forty is not the right man for the job – he was not (and would not have been) chosen for it – he only did it because he happened to be on the spot” (K.S. Dodds to Pepler, 20/9/1943, HLG 79/973).

adverse comment (*Estates Gazette*, 1943c). Described as 'visually lavish' (Mort, 2004, p. 130) the published plan (Improvements and Town Planning Committee, 1944) was illustrated by the best architectural illustrators of the period, including J.D.H. Harvey (Figure 5). It was also accompanied by an exhibition (Corporation of London, 1944). A report of this scale can justifiably deal with detail, and this did so to some extent. It used perspective drawings by the best architectural artists to 'sell' its proposals; but the quality of these drawings was not always high, and this attempt failed. Yet one can see a very traditional design approach.

This plan was very heavily criticised by virtually all reviewers, as being overly cautious, traditional and short-sighted. "There is no such nonsense in it as vision, or adventure. The attitude obviously was how business can be brought back into the nearest equivalent of its old quarters without loss of ground rent to anybody" (*Architectural Review*, 1944, p. li). In more measured tones, this was "a plan of orderly redevelopment, which shows a marked tendency to rebuild along the old lines" (Stamp, 1945, p. 665). The Ministry staff were particularly scathing and, as usual, passed up no opportunity to extol the virtues of their favourite planner (Box 1).

"Never since 1666 has there been such an opportunity to replan parts of the city, and, if the plans we saw are adopted, this opportunity will once again be missed. Indeed, it will be more than missed, it will be deliberately passed by" (Beaufoy to Pepler, 11/1/1943).

"I told Mr Forty that if the City published their latest plan it would look very small beer beside the LCC plan. He agreed but said that all the help the Corporation had given him was to reduce his staff by three" (Pepler to Neal, on meeting with Forty, 13/5/1943)

"A very sorry prospect for the replanning of the City. The fundamental lack in the City's plans appears to be that no site-panner [original emphasis] has been allowed to get to work. An Abercrombie is required" (Neal to [Permanent] Secretary, 13/5/1943).

"The plan in its present form is humdrum and even parochial in its outlook" ([Permanent] Secretary to Minister, 9/6/1943).

"[the] city replanning proposals would almost certainly give rise to violent criticism, particularly on the ground that they lack imaginative boldness" (Pepler to [Permanent] Secretary, 17/6/1943).

"This is an amateur effort of the most dangerous kind and no time should be lost in insisting that a planner is employed – preferably it should be planned by Professor Abercrombie" (Beaufoy to Pepler, 16/9/1943).

"This plan is so badly presented that it is difficult to judge it in its present form ... The plan is fundamentally a street improvement scheme of the sort which might have been produced by any pre-war road engineer in an attempt to adapt an undamaged town to modern traffic requirements. It is a thing without a soul" (Dodd [Chief Regional Planning Officer] to Pepler, 20/9/1943).

Box 1: Ministry comments on the City of London Plan (comments extracted from National Archives HLG 79/973)



Figure 5: North part of ring road looking south, J.D.M. Harvey's perspective for the City of London Improvements and Town Planning Committee (1944).

Three critical reports were prepared by the Ministry by October 1944 (Hasegawa, 1999, p. 129). The Royal Fine Art Commission criticised the way in which the proposed street improvements would “make architecturally successful redevelopment difficult” and, more fundamentally, that the plan focused almost exclusively on the interests of the City businesses and failed to engage with wider interests, including the *Greater London Plan* and *County of London Plan* (RFAC, 1945). Interestingly, in light of subsequent events, Holford, then both a senior Ministry civil servant and a member of the RFAC, helped to draft this critical letter (Cherry and Penney, 1986, p. 136).<sup>23</sup> The Royal Academy likewise produced “drastic criticisms” of both detailed points and substantive principles, including the lost opportunities for comprehensive replanning of seeming to rely on the wishes of property owners and giving insufficient consideration to infrastructure, especially of railways (H.V.L., 1945, p. 449).

A key concern was that the plan proposed rebuilding, as far as possible, along pre-war lines. The control of the bulk of new buildings would be via limiting the proportion of the site to be built upon, and the height. To obtain the maximum bulk, it was feared that buildings would all be as large and tall as possible, responding to the Corporation's desire for a 50 per cent increase in floor area, and resulting in dull and uniform frontage development and little scope for comprehensive redevelopment of backland areas. Neither would it facilitate resolving other issues including traffic circulation. In terms of promoting the redevelopment, the Corporation was disinclined to pursue the new powers available under the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act,

<sup>23</sup> Oddly, the Ministry view of the RFAC response was that it “deals with a number of planning points that are scarcely within their field, but they are all good points” (Pepler to Neal, 29/10/1943, HLG 79/973).

of large-scale site assembly through compulsory purchase. The Ministry felt that this was “waiting for developers to shape the City instead of planning for them” (HLG 79/316, J.F. Figgis, 12/4/1945).<sup>24</sup>

After some time – about a year – the Minister refused to approve the plan and again strongly recommended appointment of a consultant, rather than the City Engineer (letter of July 25 from Whiskard to the Town Clerk, HLG 79/316). The City authorities unsurprisingly took offence at this. They were reluctant to appoint any consultant, let alone to commission an entirely new plan; and, the Ministry felt, the City was reluctant, if not refusing, to make use of the expanded planning powers of the 1944 Act (HLG 79/316, Neal to Whiskard, 30/4/1945). There were delays within the Ministry in responding to this problem:

“I find to my disquiet that two years have now elapsed since we first became aware of this wrong outlook. We have never yet succeeded in getting to grips with the problem, and I am more than ever convinced that we have got to take it by the throat. Our credit is at stake as well as the City’s credit” (HLG 79/316, Neal to Whiskard, 30/4/1945).<sup>25</sup>

Ministerial-level action was suggested. The then Minister, Silkin, stood firm in emphasising the need for some response, and the Ministry’s preferred consultants, the architect Charles Holden and the Ministry planner William Holford, were appointed (Hasegawa, 1999, pp.131-132).

#### *City of London plans (2): Holden and Holford*

Both Holden and Holford were Commissioners of the RFAC and were clearly aware of the perceived shortcomings of the City Engineer’s plan. Cherry and Penny (1988, p. 136) suggest that Holden, a senior and respected architect,<sup>26</sup> had the reputation to placate the City, but little planning experience although he was a member of the TPI. He was “perceived as neither a traditionalist, like the RA group, nor a die-hard modernist, like the MARS group” (Karol, 2007, p. 446). He played a relatively small role in the London plan, focusing particularly on the architectural setting of St Paul’s.<sup>27</sup> The wider planning expertise was supplied by Holford and a small team.<sup>28</sup>

An Interim Report was produced in 1946 (Holden and Holford, 1946), although this itself met some criticism. It “warns us not to expect too revolutionary a change in the more detailed proposals to follow” and also “affords some insight into the close oversight which has obviously been exercised on the Consultants” by the City’s officers and politicians (Stephen, 1946, p. 237).

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<sup>24</sup> There are some similarities here with the approach taken by Birmingham under its engineer and surveyor Herbert Manzoni, who disliked the rigidity of large-scale plans (Larkham, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> Again there are similarities with considerable delays in Ministry responses for other places and plans, notably Coventry.

<sup>26</sup> He was 70 in 1945 and had already been considering partial retirement in 1931 (Karol, 2007, p. 446).

<sup>27</sup> Holden had already acted as consultant for the Dean and Chapter of St Paul’s on reconstruction issues: copies of his suggestions were sent to the Ministry of Town & Country Planning and RFAC (Holden, 1945) although these were not to be made public.

<sup>28</sup> The team included Christopher Bon, Leslie Creed, Edward Duley and H. Myles Wright (later Professor at Liverpool), with part-time assistance from members of the Ministry (Cherry and Penny, 1986, p. 278 n. 4).

Their Interim Report (Holden and Holford, 1946) focused on issues of broad principle. In part it disagreed with Abercrombie's decentralisation proposals or, at best, did not suggest that the City contribute to them: office floorspace would instead remain at more or less its pre-war level. In fact demand for central office accommodation might actually increase given the national and international pre-eminence of the City. The traffic proposals were not radical either, although one new north-south route was aligned west of the Guildhall, utilising an area of very severe damage. It was thought inevitable that some building area would be lost to traffic schemes to relieve congestion. The principle of reconstruction "should not be one of general expansion, but of balance between the increase due to greater efficiency of building, and the reductions necessary to secure efficiency of lay-out and circulation" (Holden and Holford, 1946, paras 10-11).

They suggested a ratio of floor-space area to site area as the appropriate means of control, similar to (hardly surprisingly) the Ministry's technical evaluation of the City Engineer's proposals. Rather than a uniform maximum height built around courtyards, some buildings would be built higher, using set-back façades: this was seen as a more appropriate, effective and flexible mechanism of achieving this balance (Holden and Holford, 1946, paras 42, 46). The Interim Report also noted that the impact of these proposals on neighbouring Boroughs and on the County of London as a whole had been considered, but that a number of technical problems could only be satisfactorily resolved "on the basis of joint surveys and joint planning" (these points noted approvingly by Pepler, 1947, p. 217).

There were critical comments of the Interim Report and, as always, major revisions were undertaken. The roads were held not to be able to cope with suggested volumes of traffic, and retention of the central markets necessitated unduly expensive highway engineering (*Roads and Road Construction*, 1946, p. 284; *Manchester Guardian*, 1946), and the City's Improvements and Town Planning Committee felt unable to approve some road proposals (P.C.L., 1946, p. 198). But there was strong professional support from Professor Sir Charles Reilly (1946) and *The Times* (1946). The latter noted that the consultants "displayed more imagination than the authors of the original plan, but they ... also revealed a more realistic understanding of the needs and problems of the City as an imperial commercial centre than was apparent in some of the criticisms [of the City engineer's plan]". The principles of the report survived, but the expensive viaduct over Charterhouse Street, a two-level roadway along the line of Upper Thames Street, and a high-level riverside walkway were lost.

The final report was presented in 1947 and, although clearly a development of the interim report, was a refinement with detailed proposals rather than a further rewrite (Figure 6). It has been described as "not a radical or visionary plan, and did not attract much criticism or attention" (Karol, 2007, p. 460). One reviewer (Lanchester, 1947, p. 520) noted the immensely detailed surveys carried out, probably uniquely in this country at least, although some data were still missing: this relates to other comments about the survey-driven approach of other plans and the apparent lack of such a basis for yet others. Once again, the critical response was largely positive. That the Lord Mayor said that the "City of London Plan sent him to sleep" says more about the Mayor than the plan, to his detriment (*Evening Standard*, 19 September 1946). The plan gave owners and developers some certainty; its timing, just after the Town and Country Planning Bill, brought yet more certainty.<sup>29</sup> The plan clearly stated

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<sup>29</sup> Although the new planning system meant that the plan had to be approved by the LCC and incorporated into its Development Plan; this obviously angered City interests and may have deflected attention from the Holden/Holford plan at the time, although there was concerted opposition from some individual property owners at the



Figure 6: Ten-year plan for new roads, from Holden and Holford (1951).

rebuilding targets after 10 and 30 years. Density control was significant, a 'standard plot ratio' of 5:1 being established.

The report was accepted by the Corporation, with Silkin himself writing that "the plan would prove a reliable framework" for the future (quoted in *The Times*, 24/9/1947). An application for a Declaratory Order was made, largely successfully (230 of the requested 272 acres were approved), largely due to Holford's defence in cross-examination at the public inquiry (Cherry and Penny, 1986). Interestingly a review of this publication, by a London historian, suggested that it was too inward-looking, and would benefit from setting the City's proposals in the context of the county and of Greater London (Reddaway, 1952, p. 88).

Following the 1947 Act the planning system had changed, and the Holden/Holford plan could not be seen as independent of wider London planning. Although modified still further, recognisable elements of the plan were incorporated into the London County Development Plan (LCC, 1951), and it was only then that the 1947 report, greatly extended with material on the nature and extent of the destruction, was published for public consumption (Holden and Holford, 1951).

### *City of London plans (3) Royal Academy*

At a much less formal level, but still largely at the City scale, the same formal, traditional *beaux-arts* approach is seen in the plans from the Royal Academy. These

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1948 public inquiry into the necessary compulsory purchase order (Cherry and Penny, 1986, pp. 139-140).

dealt principally with traffic: the plan is much less ambitious than its wide-ranging title suggests. The RA team was led by that premier architect Sir Edwin Lutyens; Abercrombie was a member.<sup>30</sup> Its remit was “to consider and plan a scheme for the architectural development of London”, preserving its essential character (RA Planning Committee, 1942). The engineer Sir Charles Bressey was also a member, and clearly the proposals developed from the report were produced by Bressey (with some input from Lutyens) several years earlier (Bressey and Lutyens, 1937). The proposals, described as an Interim Report, were exhibited at the Royal Academy from 15 October 1942, and a version of the report was published by Country Life Ltd. In this published version Lutyens clearly stated that

“the Committee has not attempted a town-planning scheme in the technical sense. I should like to emphasise this point, which is fully explained in the report. The plan is put forward ... as an ideal possibility – a practical way of dealing, from the architectural stand-point, with some of the many problems that arise in considering any systematic reconstruction in London after the war” (Royal Academy, 1942, Foreword).

The proposals focused on roads and junctions; the road layout was *beaux-arts* and the architectural treatments were traditional and classical – albeit illustrated with arcaded frontages over pavements, and set-back upper storeys (Figure 7). Particular consideration was to be given, before detailed design and implementation, to building lines, junction design, scale and skyline. Open space was mentioned, and provision should ensure that all London residents and users should be within ten minutes’ walk of such facilities. Car parking provision was discussed, and there were suggestions for pedestrianising streets (RA Planning Committee, 1942, pp. 264, 266). These were drawn together by a dominant ring road around the central area, a clear descendant of the original Bressey/Lutyens plan. The published plan itself highlighted several “points of major interest” (Royal Academy, 1942, p. 5) including:

- a ring road connecting all main line terminal stations, some of which are moved to new positions
- a new circular electric railway underground, connecting all terminal stations
- within the circle of the ring road all railway lines electrified and underground
- the canals treated as amenities as well as means of transport
- parks and open spaces provided for the east and south sides of London on the same scale as for the West End
- the river frontages developed with embankments and gardens from Putney to Tower Bridge
- the markets moved from the central positions they now occupy to positions on the ring road, as may be found convenient
- pedestrians given opportunities of gathering in relative safety and quiet in squares closed to wheeled traffic
- some small streets paved over as shopping centres for pedestrians, free from road traffic
- access to public buildings planned to give the maximum dignity and convenience in the means of approach

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<sup>30</sup> The total membership was P. Abercrombie, R. Adams, J. Adburgham, W. Godfrey Allen, W.H. Ansell (PRIBA), H. Bradshaw, A. Davis, L. de Soissons, Viscount Esher, W. Curtis Green, A. Hall, V. Harris, P.D. Hepworth, F. Hiorns, C. James, Lord Keynes, W. Lamb, E. Maufe, A. Richardson, A. Scott, G.G. Scott, A. Tripp, F. Yerbury. Listed as ‘collaborators’ were S. Adshead, M. Buckmaster, C. Farey, J. Grey, J. Harvey, W. Holden, O. Milne, R. Pierce and A. Webb. Tripp’s membership confirmed the focus on highways and traffic.

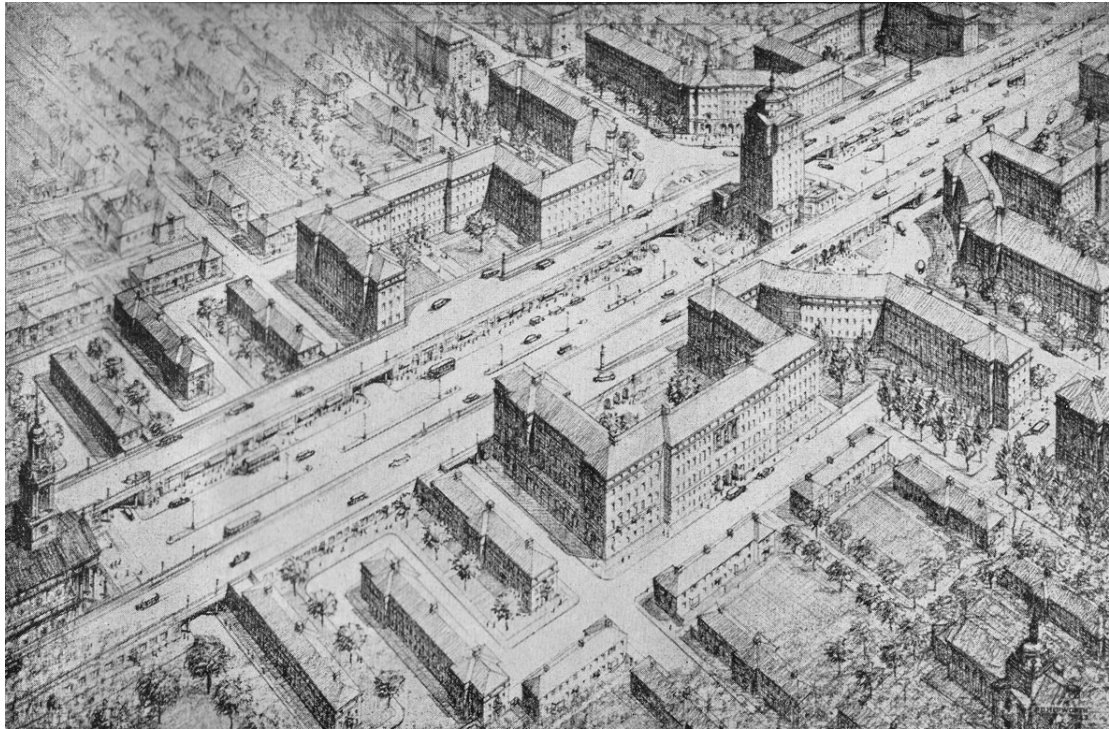


Figure 7: Main traffic road through suburban area, drawn by P.D. Hepworth for Royal Academy (1942)

- relief roads provided to supplement the main traffic routes
- better building sites on important road frontages, and the opening of street vistas.

Despite Lutyens's emphasis on these "points of major interest", the plan received overwhelming criticism in the professional press – although some support in the popular press. One of main criticisms centred on how the plan had been designed in disconnected pieces; for example, the terminus rail stations were to be moved to meet the new ring road (Aslan, 1942, p. 267<sup>31</sup>). While the term '*beaux-arts*' was accurately used to describe the plan, it was used pejoratively; and it was officially suggested that, notwithstanding the original remit, the proposals did not take account of the City's character (Beaufoy to Pepler, 18/2/1943, HLG 71/117). An otherwise measured critic wrote that this "introduces a symmetry of layout, as well as design of buildings, which is very foreign to Britain<sup>32</sup> and has resulted in the coining of a word by its opponents – 'vistamongering' " (Stamp, 1945, p. 665). The critical reception focused on style more than substance; for example the formal layout around St Paul's and the new processional way from Victoria Station to Buckingham Palace. The architectural historian John Summerson noted that the plans were "bold, exciting, well worth seeing"; yet he felt that the *beaux-arts* symmetries were over-done:

"Hyde Park Corner with *two* Apsley Houses and *two* colonnades, flanking a new opening to Park Lane; St Paul's Cathedral with *two* chapter-houses and

<sup>31</sup> Naim Aslan had written a dissertation on London's roads, himself produced an unofficial 'plan', and later worked with Professor Sir Charles Reilly on a reconstruction plan for Birkenhead.

<sup>32</sup> Yet this is plainly inaccurate, as is shown by the set-pieces of Georgian planning, the streets, squares and crescents of London, Bath and Edinburgh New Town.



two Deaneries. The last case, at least, is so impishly artificial that I suspect a leg-pull” (Summerson, 1942, p. 532).

Hussey, for the informed lay readership of *Country Life*, was positive towards the level of ambition demonstrated in the plan: “the more closely the plan is studied, the more reasonable and the less impossible appear these visions of the New London” (Hussey, 1942, p. 696). The then Lord Esher, as a member of the RA Planning Committee, also sought to defend the plan, arguing that it *had* preserved both character and personality (Esher, 1942).

Despite Abercrombie’s membership, and we do not know how much he contributed, the plan seems to have ignored planning and planners: an anonymous comment being that planning was not “only an affair of Avenues, Places, Axes and Boulevards” (quoted in Marmaras and Sutcliffe, 1994, p. 442). Although movement was indeed covered, wider social issues were not. The plan was later described by Lionel Brett (then Lord Esher; who himself had a small hand in post-war replanning) as “a period piece of academic nostalgia incorporating every cliché in the beaux-arts repertoire” (Esher, 1981, p. 95). Overall, it could be argued that this plan was limited in scope, traditional in focus, lacking in evidence of any foundation in survey or data, and unconvincing to contemporary professionals. This is highlighted by the Ministry view that

“Much of the impracticability of the Academy plan was probably due to the fact that its Authors had no practical restraint or goal imposed on them and had no reason to turn their minds to attainable as distinct from Utopian (in their view presumably) solutions” (Beaufoy to Pepler, 18/2/1943, HLG 71/117).

Revised plans and models were exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 1943. A further revised version was exhibited and published in 1944. Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, as Chair of the Planning Committee, noted in his Foreword that attention since the 1942 report has moved from “a general aesthetic approach” to “the practical details of one of the most important features of any town plan – communications”. Tripp was again a committee member and his influence is evident; but Scott also referred to other emerging plans:

“Some of the proposals here put forward are revolutionary; but they are nevertheless, in most cases, only new methods of attaining the objects recommended in the LCC County of London Plan” (Royal Academy, 1944, p. 3).

Ring roads and major ‘sub-arterial’ roads were proposed, usually with large-scale geometric roundabout junctions. Some of the latter were so large that shopping centres were planned within them, where “refreshments can be taken and gossip exchanged in pleasant surroundings and the shade of trees” (Royal Academy, 1944, p. 12). In some cases the roundabout was to be raised above ground level. Although inevitably the views of these proposals showed buildings, they were far less architecturally developed than in the 1942 publication – indeed some were simply rendered as boxes (cf Royal Academy, 1944, p. 25) – thus averting some of the specific criticism levelled at the earlier publication. Nevertheless the *beaux-arts* flavour remained with, for example, St Paul’s Cathedral being closely hemmed in by 3-storey Classically-detailed blocks (Figure 8).

Although this document was more favourably reviewed than its predecessor, there were far fewer reviews. Perhaps the time had passed; more likely the bulk of attention had been diverted by other plans for London, presenting a more holistic

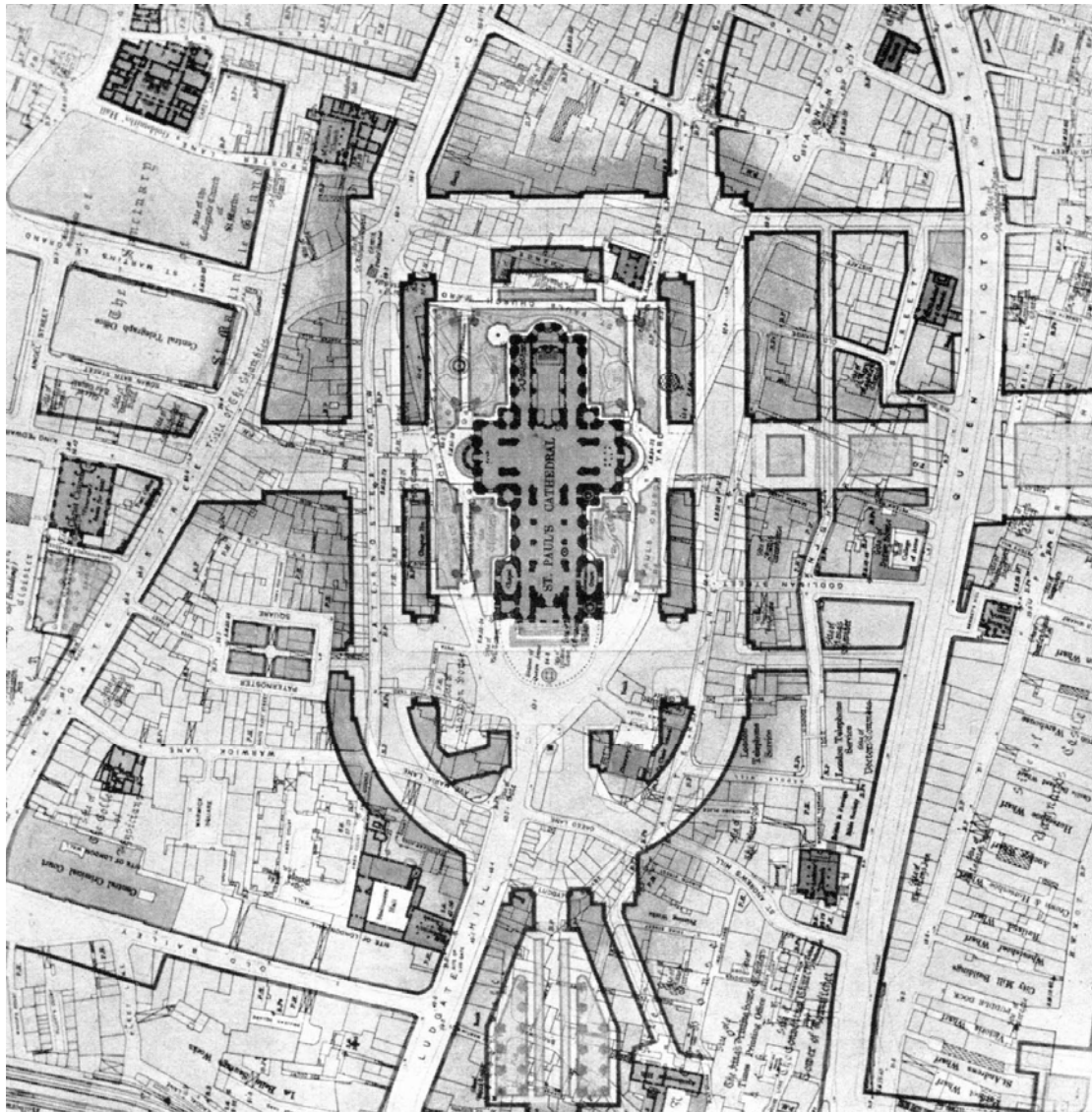


Figure 8: *Beaux-arts* layout for St Paul's precinct, from Royal Academy (1944).

vision than the micro-scale roundabouts that this 1944 plan appeared to focus upon. Even the final words of this publication seemed to convey what could only be described as a lack of drive on the part of the Royal Academy Planning Committee, or an awareness that they had been thoroughly by-passed:

“This proposal is put forward with the idea of suggesting a line of thought for the consideration of a specially appointed investigating body, as recommended in the Report of the County of London Plan; it is not intended to be taken as a cut-and-dried plan. The Committee are well aware that they lack sufficient knowledge of the technical details to be able to put forward more than a general line of thought which the experts may be able to develop into a satisfactory working plan” (Royal Academy, 1944, p. 30).

#### *City of London plans (4) Less formal*

More informal still is the raft of plans by individuals, local groups and so on, most usually for very localised areas within The City. These were of very variable quality, though where illustrations survive it is clear that they, too, were dominated by formal *beaux-arts* treatments. The exhibition by the architects Lindy and Lewis is an example. Their plan was publicly exhibited in early 1944 at the Incorporated Association of Architects and Surveyors. It showed no hard evidence of detailed factual survey or technical research, and hence was vague of issues such as building height even where building masses were depicted adjacent to retained existing structures. The proposals illustrated fall principally into the *beaux-arts* formulae of avenues and axes, with St Paul's surrounded by a colonnaded ellipse, an axis to the Bank crossing where there is a fan-shaped layout, and so on (Figure 9). It was quite widely reviewed, but critically (Box 2). The author's treatment of implementation appears to have focused on the compulsory purchase of all land "by a company under City charter and its operation as a universal ground landlord in complete co-operation with the town planning authorities would vastly simplify the ultimate redevelopment" – hardly likely to pass the entrenched vested interests of City landowners! (*The Builder*, 1944a, p.197). The authors responded to the *Architect's Journal* review by criticising the journal for not reproducing the full plan and report: "by concentrating upon the purely pictorial aspects it would seem that you yourselves have fallen into the very pit in which you profess to see us" (Lindy and Lewis, 1944).

"this [plan] illustrates an almost exclusive interest in the visual aspects of civic layout".

"... provides a spectacular setting for the great occasion, but leaves unsatisfied the demands of everyday life".

"It is essentially a piece of civic design; for its authors are not seriously concerned with planning matters, and think it their main job 'to achieve the civic dignity due to the capital of a great empire'".

"Here is a planning doodle presented in an elaborate form, exhibited as though it were a serious and finished proposal and publicised widely in the daily press. Its authors cannot therefore shelter behind the protest, as they have attempted to do, that it is merely an amateur spare time effort: they must expect to be judged by the severe standards that the magnitude of the problem of replanning the venerable City of London imposes on professional full-time planners".

Box 2: Criticisms of the Lindy and Lewis plan (*Architect's Journal*, 1944a, 1944b).

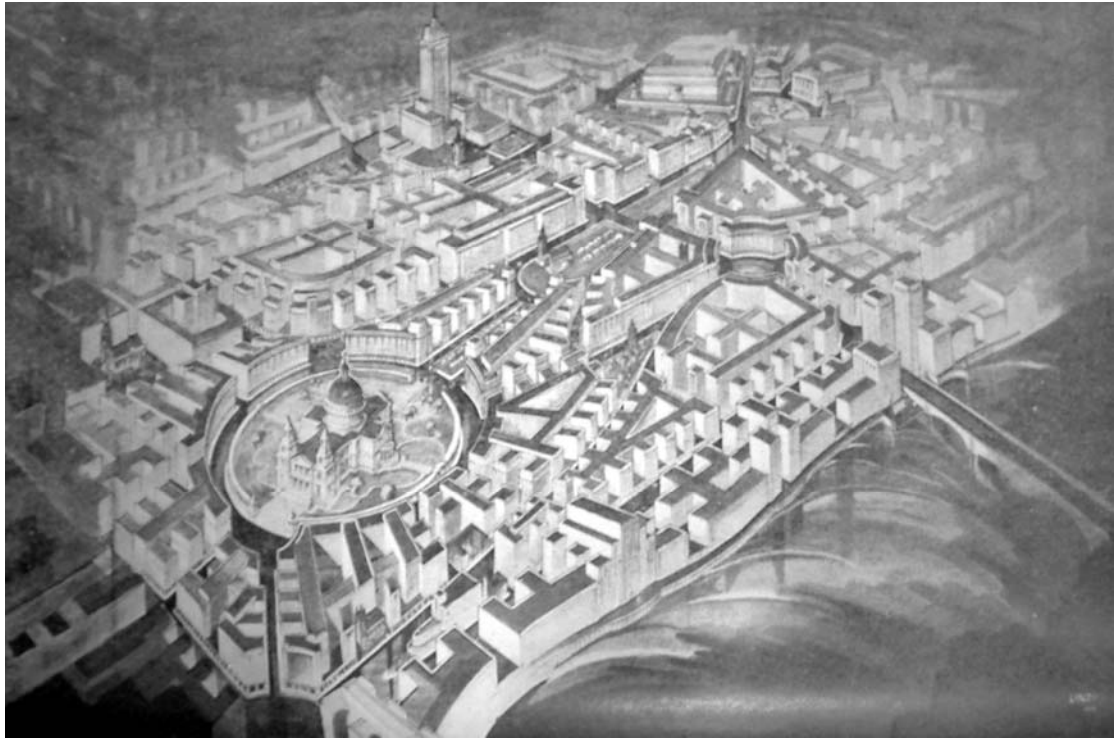


Figure 9: Perspective of proposals by Lindy and Lewis, reprinted in *Architect's Journal* (March 1944).

The architect and structural engineer Harold Baily also produced proposals in 1944. Also using *beaux-arts* principles, he placed St Paul's in formal gardens surrounded by a uniform arc of office blocks to the height of the cathedral's cornice; there were more axial roads and vistas, and a ring road surrounding the central area (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Harold Baily's plan, 1944 (*The Builder*, 1944b, p. 256).

“Properly planned junctions connect main streets, so as to abolish traffic lights and eliminate traffic jams”. The plans were presented without comment in *The Builder* (1944b) and vanished without trace. However, if this is the “Mr Bailey” of the London Regional Offices of the Ministry of Home Security, the plans were seen in early 1943 by Beaufoy, who reported that “though in parts [they] are rather amateurish and mistaken the proposals had yet more vision than those of the City Engineer” (Beaufoy to Pepler, 18/2/1943, HLG 71/117).

On a much smaller scale, the Tower Hill Improvement Trust produced proposals in 1945 for the area immediately north of the Tower of London, re-aligning the main road, and giving a 7-acre public space as a better setting for the Tower and other monuments including the Roman city wall. This was a serious proposal prepared by professionals,<sup>33</sup> and although it broadly conformed to the then-current proposals (of the Improvements and Town Planning Committee) (*Architects' Journal* 31/5/45 pp. 405-406; *The Builder* 27/4/45, p. 329), it was eventually overcome by the large-scale highway engineering of Tower Hill and Tower Gateway.

One has to wonder how serious some of these informal proposals were: for Lindy and Lewis, for example, gaining considerable professional and mass media coverage with an exhibition may have been more for reasons of self-publicity and career promotion than with any serious hope of influencing planning. Their exhibition of proposals received wide professional coverage, but again most of it critical. It provided spectacular settings but nevertheless “entirely fails to realize the city’s essential characteristics”. The *Architect’s Journal* editorial (1944a, p. 220) suggested that those who wished to devote their spare time, enthusiasm and talents to replanning “should not be helping with the necessary groundwork of surveys by joining collective planning groups whose work is based on essential and thorough research”.<sup>34</sup> It seems to be the case that the lure of replanning London was irresistible for some individuals, who perhaps felt that this was an easy way to promote their own careers at a crucial period. But the negative reception of such proposals meant that such initiative backfired.

### *Borough-level plans*

The lowest level of the hierarchy are those plans, formal and informal, for individual London boroughs and sub-areas (Table 3; Figure 11): they may rank lower than those for the City of London owing to the particular national and international status of the latter. Most of these were official, compiled by the professional staff of the borough or by the LCC. Kensington, however, engaged Thomas Sharp<sup>35</sup> in 1946 to act as planning consultant and to prepare two small-scale plans.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> J.H. Markham FRIBA, B.W. Stuttle FRIBA, MInstM&CE, Borough Engineer of Stepney; W.P. Shepherd-Barron MInstCE, PLA Chief Engineer; and B.H. Harbour, LPTB Commercial Manager (*Architects' Journal*, 1945).

<sup>34</sup> This could have referred to the LRRC group in London; but voluntary and informal groups were active elsewhere, for example the Chelmsford Area Planning Group; Tunbridge Wells Civic Association; and Sudbury and District Planning Association, all of which published plans (Minoprio, 1945; Spalding, 1945; Jeremiah, 1949).

<sup>35</sup> Sharp was at this time President of the Town Planning Institute. He had published the well-received plan for Durham and was either just about to, or had very recently, published a similarly popular plan for Exeter. One of the Kensington plans, known as the “Norland neighbourhood” and extending to 160 acres, was replanned by Sharp and the Borough Surveyor, H. Burleigh, by 1949 (*The Builder* 20/5/49, p. 613).

<sup>36</sup> Sharp was employed for an annual fee of £1,000 (Sharp’s contract correspondence file, Newcastle University Library, special collections GB186 THS).

**Table 3: plans for London boroughs**

Bermondsey (1942) U	Stepney & Poplar (1941-8) O
Brentford (1943) O	Tottenham (1944) O
Croydon (1943) O	Tower Hill (1945) U
Hornsey (1945) O	Twickenham (1946) O
Kensington (1944-9) O	West Ham (1949) O
Lambeth (1943-5) O	Westminster (1946) O
Pimlico (1944-6) O	Westminster (1947) U
Rickmansworth (1944) O	Willesden (1949) O
St Pancras (1945-7) O; U	
St Paul's district (1945-6) U	O = official plan, report, exhibition etc
Shoreditch (1945) U	U = unofficial
South Bank (1944) U <sup>37</sup>	

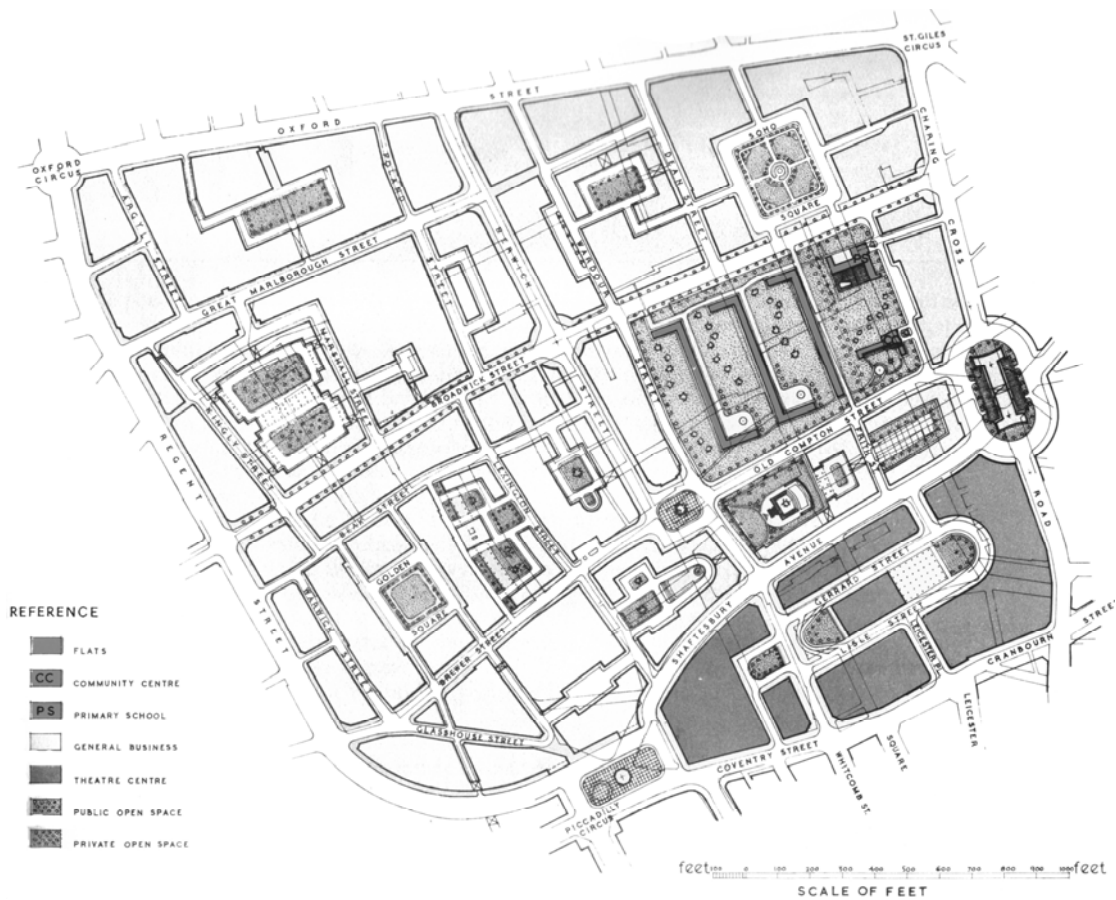


Figure 11: Example of borough plan: Proposals for rebuilding Soho, from the Westminster plan (1946).

The LCC plan for Stepney and Poplar is a useful and well-known exemplar (LCC, 1946; see Garside, 1997). The proposals covered 1,960 acres, suggested wholesale demolition and redevelopment at a likely cost of £45 million, over a span of 30 years. The plan was approved by the LCC on 5 February 1946. Housing was to be rationalised in point and slab blocks, with some areas of new terraces, all set in green

<sup>37</sup> However, this was a reprint of 1938 proposals by *The Star* newspaper.

parkland; the pre-war population would be reduced by 58% to an average density of 136 persons per acre. Industry was important, focusing on the nearby docks and providing factories, including 'flatted factories'. New roads would be an integral part of the plan, although the actual road layout had not by 1946 been approved by the Ministry of War Transport. Professional responses were generally positive; although, at such an early date in the replanning and reconstruction processes, it was strongly suggested that the plan was too slow:

“... the period of this development is too lengthy. To await completion for 30 years will surely be to nullify to a considerable extent the research value of this project. If Stepney and Poplar are to be effective laboratories for the exposition of the most enlightened thinking and the most modern and imaginative technique, the process of execution must not be too long delayed. Should it be so, the value of the experiment will be largely lost ... Over such a period as thirty years there will be many changes in thought, and more still in technique, and the mechanisation which surrounds us. The technique of planning must, to be effective, adopt the tempo of this rapidly evolving world” (*Architect and Building News*, 1946, pp. 93, 95).

The plan for Willesden illustrates another approach. This Borough was extensively bomb-damaged, with over half of its houses being damaged; but there was little intensive damage (Morris, 1950, p. 12). The plan itself, produced under the name of the Borough Engineer and Surveyor, was not published until 1950 (Morris, 1950) and even then was more a survey of the existing borough than a redevelopment plan. Some of the proposals were explicitly compared to the recommendations of the *Greater London Plan* (for example identifying and remedying the deficiency in open space provision (Table 44, p. 83); and the proposed migration from areas of poor-quality housing out to Hemel Hempstead New Town (Chapter 12). The specific chapter on redevelopment does identify 'areas ripe for redevelopment', most of which exceed the *Greater London Plan* density targets; one area, South Kilburn, is replanned as an example. High-density Victorian terraced housing is replaced with 3/4-storey linear blocks of flats, with some houses, community facilities, and copious amounts of open space. Although a very late example of a reconstruction plan, and explicitly seeking to accommodate the proposals of the *Greater London Plan*, this is a broad-brush survey more than a detailed reconstruction plan.

### **Overview: planners and planning**

“The London plans enunciate in simple and dramatic forms the most generally accepted lines of solution for the problems of the amorphous metropolitan area of the twentieth century ... [They] represent a crystallization of planning theory. They bring together, in authoritative form, all the symbols that have become stereotyped cliches and figure in every planning scheme in almost every country, whether the plan is to remodel a huge metropolitan area or to build a new village’ (Tyrwhitt, 1948, p. 592)

In exploring the range of reconstruction planning for London it is difficult not, though invidious, to focus on one individual. Patrick Abercrombie, knighted in 1947 for his contributions to planning amongst which the Greater London and County of London Plans are prominent, is a major figure. There is no definitive biography, although something is known of the development of his ideas and approaches (Dehaene, 2004, 2005) and there is a short overview of his career (Dix, 1981). Yet, in the absence of a detailed and definitive biographical study, we have to question the nature and extent of his personal input to these plans. It should also be remembered

that at this time he was busy but ageing; he only ran a very small office, and had to coordinate new seconded and temporary staff for these large commissions. Yet there seems to be a great facility for strategic overview, common in his other large-scale regional plans commissioned by the Ministry.<sup>38</sup> The approach influenced other regional plans – yet was this in part a shared professional milieu; or the influence of the (still largely unresearched) Planning Technique section of the Ministry? There is little trace of his workings in archives; National Archive files on the *Greater London Plan* are procedural and relatively uninformative (HLG 79/228; 79/287).

The prominence of Abercrombie, and other key consultants, at the time and since, as tended to devalue the direct contribution of co-authors such as J.H. Forshaw, co-author of the *County of London Plan*. Nevertheless Forshaw was a significant contributor, and professionally influential: being then the LCC Architect, and between 1846 and 1959 Chief Architect to the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Housing and Local Government. That he was a Liverpool graduate and thus a former pupil of Abercrombie's provides another interesting perspective on the working arrangements between the two men (Sharples *et al.*, 1996, p. 170). In a similar vein, much more is known of Holford (Cherry and Penny, 1986) than his co-author of the City of London plan, C.H. Holden; although the recent authoritative biography does go some way to redress this imbalance for those interested (Karol, 2007). Nevertheless, Holford's influence within the wartime Ministry, and his later elevation (knighted in 1953 and raised to a life peerage in 1965), ensured his pre-eminence.

Notwithstanding the high-profile figures such as Abercrombie and Holford, and the many others who produced both formal and informal plans for London, it is easy to see why Myerscough-Walker (1943, p. 195) was suspicious of the whole enterprise and of what he saw as "a new class who see Town Planning and Reconstruction as a profitable future".

All of the London plans were put together in an astonishingly short space of time (the only noticeable delay being promotional, between the first draft of the Holden and Holford plan for the City (1946) and its wider publication (1951)). The formal plans drew heavily on a wide range of data, much of which is tabulated and mapped within the plan documents. This was a very heavy workload. And yet the explicit link between data and specific plan recommendation is sometimes obscure.

What was also an issue – for some – is the way in which Abercrombie dominated London's replanning. Clearly he was being heavily pushed by the Ministry – or some within it at least. To be recommended for all three layers in the hierarchy of scale, and actually commissioned for two of them, is surprising. He was also involved in the Royal Academy plan preparation committee. Yet Abercrombie's approaches and plans for London and elsewhere were not uncriticised within the Ministry, usually (we presume) without his knowledge. And his plans are still cited, and arguably misunderstood, even today (see Keith, 2008, p. 56). Abercrombie's personal views of the process of planning are clearly significant in the complex context of London. He met each of the local authorities which requested a discussion of his emerging plans, but later said "I had to avoid showing them anything"; and felt that his plan had

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<sup>38</sup> Abercrombie co-wrote regional plans for the West Midlands (Abercrombie and Jackson, 1948), North Staffordshire (Abercrombie and Jackson, 1949), and the Clyde Valley (Abercrombie and Matthew, 1946). It was suggested that of his town plans "one has the feeling that they were less than wholly his: they lacked something of his characteristically sensitive handling ... The regional plans were a different matter. There he was both pioneer and master" (Sharp, 1957, p. 75).



come through the process of engagement with 130 local authorities “pretty well” (Abercrombie, 1948, pp. 14-15).

However, the resources expended on replanning were subject to critical review, particularly by the Ministry. Its lack of control was regretted. The preparation of plans, and particularly the unofficial ones,

“represents a large expenditure of time and money, largely misdirected. There is nothing to stop anyone preparing plans and presenting them in any way open to them but surely talent of this order ought to be directed *by us* to something more than the stimulation of public interest ... I suggest we should consider extending the scope of our activities to rope in more of the available talent, some of which is being devoted to the preparation of costly unofficial plans” (Beaufoy to Pepler, 18/2/1943, HLG 71/117, our emphasis).

Although this reads oddly to the modern reader, it should be remembered that this was wartime, when many activities were directed by the State in the national interest and with relatively little protest. Beaufoy suggested drawing together senior professional staff in a “pyramid organisation”, with “the present consultant” – ie Abercrombie – at its head, forming a small “high command” below which would be “any desired number of groups studying or developing and particular area or branch of the subject” – these to be “mainly voluntary”. In due course he recommended that London’s planning be managed by “a permanent technical planning body supported mainly if not entirely by contributions from all the authorities concerned” and then, in a manuscript addition to his typescript, “alternatively the Gov’t might retain full control through a commission” (Beaufoy to Pepler, 18/2/1943, HLG 71/117).

## Conclusions

“I think one may say that the whole object of planning is the preservation and improvement of existing amenities and the creation of new ones” (Heap, 1944, p. 105)

“The main aim of town planning is to secure the health and welfare of the people in their homes, at work, and in their leisure” (Forshaw, 1943, p. 14)

Planning philosophy and technique were transformed during the Second World War, resulting in the emergence of what has been termed a ‘grand synthesis’, a “comprehensive, normative model of urban form” (Cherry and Penny, 1986, p. 128). A new Ministry was formed, a ‘Planning Technique’ section set up to develop techniques and to critique plans; this centralised approach directly and indirectly affected both concepts of planning and the production of plans. Clearly, though, this synthesis was about far more than just urban form. It covered the whole range of “town and country planning” or “urban and regional planning” as the field became known in the post-war period. Cherry and Penny note that “the classic statements of this grand synthesis are generally and rightly held to be the London advisory plans prepared by Patrick Abercrombie” (1986, p. 128). Further, “If the hole at the centre of Abercrombie’s London plans is filled, as was intended, with the complementary prescriptions of the *Central Areas Handbook* (Ministry of Town and Country Planning, 1947), a remarkable product emerges: the total visualisation of urban form at a regional scale ...” (Cherry and Penny, 1986, p. 129).

London was indeed a valuable proving-ground for concepts of planning, and the communication of planning ideas, at this time. Its scale and variety allowed, indeed

made necessary, the testing of planning concepts and practice from the smallest-scale local to the widest regional context. Yet Hobhouse has argued that the problems of London do not vary much from generation to generation, and that the unique circumstances of this particular period were the opportunity for reconstruction occasioned by the bomb damage and later facilitated by new legislation; the existence of the London County Council and its skilled staff; and the cooperation of the relevant Government agencies (Hobhouse, 1989, p. 21).

### *Status of competing plans*

Clearly the hierarchy of plans discussed here were not of equal status, nor produced with the same resources, and in many ways we are comparing the incomparable. Yet they all seek, explicitly or implicitly, to address the planning problems of the capital city – whether its business centre, or the widest region in which the city sat. Discussing them as a group does present new insights into the process of planning *per se*, and the process of planning a city, however large.

It could be reasonably argued that, taken together, Abercrombie's *County of London Plan* and the *Greater London Plan*, along with the Holden/Holford plan for the City itself, and their associated public representations, carried a very substantial amount of 'material' weight (being official commissions involving the Ministry of Town and Country Planning) entering and colliding with the creation of 'real' everyday 'lived' spaces. Moreover, they can be viewed as being a product of a highly specific, even narrow perspective, yet simultaneously comprehensive in their consideration of social context and in their development of the framework for town planning tradition in Britain. Furthermore, they were widely disseminated to the public through booklets, education packs, press coverage and exhibitions; and they used a range of visual representations to re-work older imaginings of the city. Against the disorder of the congested, overcrowded and unsanitary sprawling city, a new urban structure and fabric was imagined (Mort, 2004; Hornsey, 2008).

The less authoritative, but professionally-led, LRRC plan was promising but overtaken by events, not being completed and publicised to its full potential: the principal event in question being publication of Abercrombie's own plans. There were comments about the interesting degree of agreement on principles between some of the plans, particularly the LRRC and *County of London Plan* (*Architect and Building News*, 1943). Many of the other plans were less authoritative, less influential, of much less lasting significance, and were either unrealistic in terms of implementation (the MARS plan) or too narrowly focusing on minutiae of road layout and architectural style. The response of one reader to the *Architect's Journal* review of the Lindy and Lewis plan is illuminating in this context:

"This scheme for the replanning of the City should be a warning to all architects who imagine that *ipso facto* they are town planners. The scheme suggested is not town planning in even the widest interpretation of that term, nor is it even a study in civic design, the architecture of the buildings being of the palatial insurance building type, in fact the architecture of a decadent capitalism. ... If architects wish to fly into the realms of fantasy they are at liberty to do so, but they should not put the results forward as serious efforts in town planning, to the detriment of future planning schemes" (Atherton, 1944, p. 258)

(though note the plan authors' response to the journal: Lindy and Lewis, 1944). In this respect, many 'unofficial' proposals do not fulfil the majority of the six key criteria

identified by Felix and Samuely in 1944: we should really avoid calling them “plans”! They certainly played a part in the national debate on reconstruction / replanning in the early-mid 1940s, but they were never fully developed and surely never seriously intended to be implemented. Some were, surely, exercises in self-promotion. All failed to be taken seriously.

### *Material and non-material considerations*

It could also be argued that the city of London and the wider region were transformed through material practices which were, in many cases, beyond representation. Indeed, less explored has been the plans’ attention to the *social* fabric and the underlying belief to reconfigure the city into a system of sustainable neighbourhood communities (re-using ideas of Clarence Perry). Some plans, of course, ignored this completely. As noted, there was some communication with the constituent London Boroughs as to how these ideas were to be implemented and ‘imposed’ over the existing social structures and indeed there were pockets of dissension and “criticism” with some boroughs suggesting alterations to these plans. A case could be made, therefore, for more concentration to be directed at unpicking some of these criticisms – in other words how the different levels of the plans would work – and moreover, there is a need for a more profound exploration of the manner in which individuals engaged with elements of the replanning for London.

That re-planning of London inevitably involved an enmeshing of material networks and a multiplicity of actors involved with the process of reconstructing the city. Named (and famous) plan authors were not *sole* authors. The authors of the County of London Plan, for instance – Forshaw and Abercrombie – worked in conjunction with over forty of the staff of the L.C.C. Architect’s Department and, indeed, there is evidence to suggest that there was some diversity of views and approaches involved with the publication. Furthermore, the preparation of these plans was a major consideration of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning – Holford, for example, was personally involved with the monitoring of the work on the Greater London Plan, which was prepared within Ministry buildings with the assistance of members within the Planning Technique Section (such as Stephenson, Coote and Sheppard). But despite Cullingworth’s official history and subsequent work, the Ministry, and Planning Technique, still seem to have moved in mysterious ways (in fact the “hostility” ran in both directions!). The other so-called plans add to this complexity, and potential confusion, in the range and number of individuals and organizations promoting their views. The hierarchy of plans, especially the ways in which potentially competing plans did not engage with each other, and the variety of motives ascribed to their various ‘authors’ clearly demonstrate the problematic structure of planning and planners of the time, including networks of education, influence and contact. This further develops Hewitt’s (2011) arguments about the socialisation of planning in and for London, and the links (or lack of them) between weak ties of association (Granovetter, 1973) and the ‘star producers’ (Moody, 2004). Subsequent histories have tended to emphasise the star producers at the expense of others, and perhaps to the detriment of exploring the range of ideas developed for the city and region.

A key issue arising from the more comprehensive plans was the focus on society and community. Abercrombie’s ‘social communities’ had something in common with the residential areas planned by the LRRC, although the former were more carefully thought through as a concept and delineated in spatial terms. The MARS linear city comb structure was even more vague. Neighbourhood units were a popular solution (in London and elsewhere) and were usually unproblematic because their ideal size

and general shape was rarely in dispute (Marmaras and Sutcliffe, 1994, p. 448). But in large number, at a metropolitan scale, there was no precedent. Garden city ideas tended to fail under the weight of the high densities needed in the metropolis (and Osborn's plea for London to be restructured on garden city lines was surely not serious: Young and Garside, 1982, p. 232), although these ideas clearly informed the decentralised New Towns to be developed outside the London Green Belt in Abercrombie's vision. But all of these were pre-war concepts.

Therefore, even from this short analysis, it is argued that further academic attention needs to be given to the human imbrications associated with the re-planning process, and, moreover, detailed consideration should be given to the interplay, dialogue, relationships that existed between the Ministry, the plan authors, City officials, inhabitants and so forth, involved in shaping London's post-war future. Perhaps even more bluntly, more effort should be placed on establishing who influenced whom within these complex relationships. The processes of plan-making, plan promotion and plan consumption are still not clear. Where oral history studies are not practicable at this distance in time, other methodological approaches should be explored: contemporary diaries, histories and biographies, for instance, could provide some obvious lines of investigation in this regard.

#### *Scale of activity*

Clearly a major legacy is the regional perspective on population, employment and transportation: including new towns, green belt and major road initiatives. What is much less clear is the way in which this vision was disaggregated at the more local scale where, as we have shown, micro-detailed plans for such things as road junctions seemed to take priority – even being delineated in the *Greater London Plan*. And this was often accepted uncritically. Yet there still seems to be a layer missing. Even close reading of the plans does not reveal how they would actually work together. And the logical structure is suspect, with the *Greater London Plan* being commissioned and published after much of the smaller-scale replanning activity; and the need to respect existing authority structures led the *County of London Plan* to exclude the area of the City of London at its heart. This failing was recognised at the time: “a rational approach to the planning process has ... been violated by the division of the metropolis for planning purposes into three parts, like ancient Gaul” (Robson, 1945, p. 107).

Furthermore, it could be argued that the multiplicity and layering of plans for London problematises ideas surrounding the appropriate geographical scale at which planning should take place. Again, Abercrombie's plans provide perhaps the best example of this argument. Indeed, these plans taken together with the concomitant prescriptions of the *Central Areas Handbook* (Ministry of Town and Country Planning, 1947), produce a significant visualisation of urban form at a regional scale with a strategic perspective being afforded to issues surrounding population, employment and transportation. Importantly, perhaps, this visualisation is distinct from the other London plans, particularly in its comprehensiveness, its commitment to a broad strategy, the analytical techniques applied in the inception of Abercrombie's plans, and the synthesis involved for their formation - all of which paved the way for planning at a metropolitan scale. Notwithstanding this important regional perspective, much small-scale replanning activity had already taken place! It is argued, therefore, that more attention should be focused on developing a deeper analysis of how the hierarchy of plans were supposed to cohere and function, and, perhaps more tantalisingly, consideration could be given to exploring notions of pliability and fluidity within and between these scales.

### *Implementation: the future*

Surely planning should be explicitly about the future, and plans should consider implementation. Yet very few of the detailed proposals were ever implemented as envisaged in these plans. Mort (2004), writing principally of the *County of London Plan* and that of the Improvements and Town Planning Committee for the City, suggests that

“social historians<sup>39</sup> have counseled against too literal a reading of this vision. They have stressed how the plans for postwar London were always necessarily pragmatic and patchwork, both in their original intellectual conception and in their implementation, constrained by the material fabric of the existing built environment and by social and financial realities.”

Plans may have been pragmatic, but (the official ones at least) represented substantial investment of time, money and resources. Why, therefore, should we – and the contemporary professionals and wider public who knew of the plans’ proposals through widespread publicity – not literally interpret the vision presented? Yet “the processes of the [County of London] Plan were undertaken at a diagrammatic level with little account taken of site or programme, or the distinction between intention and construction” (Higgott, 2007, p. 79). This suggests a major problem with interpreting practicability: indeed in revisiting the very purpose of some of these plans given the circumstances of the time.

Kent and Samuely (1944, p. 101) identified the need for any plan worthy of the title to “be practicable”. Although their comparison covered only four of the plans discussed here, none were satisfactory in this respect. Only the MARS plan had, and only “very approximately”, estimated actual building costs. Only MARS mentioned the increase in site values, and then no figure was mentioned. No plan estimated “increase in productivity for the community” or attempted “to assess the rise in standards of living, the increase in leisure, in terms of an economic value for the whole community” (Kent and Samuely, 1944, p. 114). Yet were these issues that the plan authors set out to address in the first place?

Much of the published research on this short period of intense planning activity focuses not on the delivery (or otherwise) of these plans, but on specific sectors and the harsh realities moving actual delivery often far from the ideal of the plans (eg Bullock, 1994, on LCC housing, and Garside, 1997, on East End industry). Yet this is a common fate of this period, caused in part by the radical restructuring of planning responsibilities by the 1947 Act and by the harsh financial position of the period. Political and economic realities meant that almost no reconstruction-era plan was implemented as envisaged (Flinn, 2011): even Abercrombie’s plan for Plymouth changed significantly between inception and completion (Chalkley, 1983, Figure 2). However this does not imply that all this expensive effort was wasted. In all, the cascade of plans for London in this short period provides not only a good snapshot of the development of professional practice, but real evidence of realistic (and some less realistic) approaches to complex problem-solving at a range of spatial scales. It shaped much contemporary planning and thinking about planning.

“The County and Greater London plans may well form the watershed between the unplanned world of yesterday and the planned Britain of to-morrow” (Robson, 1945, p. 107).

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<sup>39</sup>

Mort does not identify these historians.

However, the sad final word belongs to a point made about the LRRC plan, but which could equally refer to the fate of most plans of this period:

“The future work of the LRRC depends on many factors, among which not the least is concerned with the material resources necessary for continuance of the work; money, labour, sympathetic interest are all required for the extension of the study and research and *to ensure that what has so far been done shall not be consigned to dusty pigeon-holes*” (LRRC, 1943, p. 49, our emphasis).

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### General

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Clunn, Harold P. (1947) *London marches on: a record of the changes which have taken place in the metropolis of the British empire between the two world wars and much that is scheduled for reconstruction*, Caen, London.

Foley, D.L. (1963) *Controlling London's growth: planning the Great Wen 1940-60*, University of California Press, Berkeley. Detailed study of the wartime and post-war plans for London.

Garside, Patricia L. (1979) *Town planning in London 1930-1960: a study of pressures, interests and influences affecting the formation of policy* unpublished PhD thesis, London School of Economics

Marmaras, E. (1992) *Central London under reconstruction policy and planning, 1940-1959*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester.

Hebbert, M. (1998) *London: more by fortune than design* Wiley, Chichester. pp. 62-72 on reconstruction.

Hasegawa, J. (1999) 'Governments, consultants and expert bodies in the physical reconstruction of the City of London in the 1940s', *Planning Perspectives* vol. 14 pp. 121-144.

### **Thematic**

Bullock, N. (1994) 'Ideals, priorities and harsh realities: reconstruction and the LCC, 1945-51', *Planning Perspectives* vol. 9 pp. 87-101. *Focuses on housing issues.*

Garside, Patricia L. (1997) 'The significance of post-war London reconstruction plans for East End industry', *Planning Perspectives* vol. 12 no. 1 pp. 19-36.

Hasegawa, J. (1999) 'Governments, consultants and expert bodies in the physical reconstruction of the City of London in the 1940s', *Planning Perspectives* vol. 14 pp. 121-144.

### **Greater London**

Edwards, A. Trystan (1943) 'A plan for "Greater London"', apparently speculative private venture, reviewed in *The Builder* 5/2/43 pp. 128-129; *Building* 3/43 pp. 67-69.

### **MARS**

Korn, A. and Samuely, F. (1942) 'A master plan for London', *Architectural Review* vol. 91 pp. 143-151. The only contemporary publication of the MARS 1942 exhibition.

Brett, L. (1942) 'Doubts on the MARS Plan for London', *Architects' Journal* 96, 9 July, pp. 23-25

Gold, J. (1995) 'The MARS plans for London, 1933-1942', *Town Planning Review* vol. 66 no. 3 pp. 243-267. *Deals in part with the second MARS linear city plan of 1942: a significant Modernist vision rather than a reconstruction plan per se.*

Gold, J. (2000) 'Towards the functional city? MARS, CIAM and the London plans 1933-42', in Dekker, T. (ed.) *The Modern city revisited* Spon, London.

## LRRC Plan

Royal Institute of British Architects, Reconstruction Committee (1942) 'First general statement of conclusions', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* vol. 49 no. 10.

Royal Institute of British Architects (1943) *Greater London: towards a master plan: the second interim report of the London Regional Reconstruction Committee of the RIBA*, London, 52pp.

(1943) London Regional Reconstruction Committee proposals: "Greater London: towards a master plan", exhibition at the National Gallery.

London Regional Reconstruction Committee (1943) "Greater London: towards a master plan", exhibition at the National Gallery.

Committee included Hiorns, Holden, Lanchester, Pierce and Verner Rees.

Reviewed/described in

*Journal of the RIBA* 6/43 pp. 171-176;

*Architect and Building News* 4/6/43 pp. 142-150 by G. Gibbons;

*Architects' Journal* 10/6/43 pp. 379-384;

*Architecture Illustrated* 5/43;

*The Builder* CLXIV no. 5235, 4/6/43, pp. 491-496 where described as the 'second interim report of the Committee';

*Country Life* 11/6/43;

*National Builder* 6/43 pp. 170-173.

(1943) "Greater London exhibition", RIBA with the Architectural Association London Regional Reconstruction Committee, 31/5/43 – 28/8/43 (having been extended on at least three occasions)

## Greater London Plan

Abercrombie, Patrick (1945) *Greater London Plan 1944*, HMSO, London, 25/-. An advance limited edition – not available to the public - was also published by HMSO in 1944 (218pp) "to allow work to start". Consultant.

Reviewed in

*The Builder* CLXVII no. 5315, 15/12/44, pp. 465-469, 27/7/45 vol. 169 p. 63;

17/8/55 CLXIX no. 5350 pp. 122-125, by H.V. Lanchester;

*Architectural Design and Construction* 1/45 pp. 16-17;

*Architect and Building News* 15/12/44 vol. 180 pp. 159-163 and 28/9/45 vol.

183 pp. 191-193, by Goodhart-Rendel; and 1/6/45 pp. 127-129 by Sir Gwilym Gibbon;

*Architect's Journal* 28/9/44 pp. 229-234 and 19/10/44 p. 297, analysis of comments from London boroughs; 15/3/45 vol. 101 pp. 205-212 and 1/11/45 vol. 102 pp. 313-327;

*Journal of the Chartered Surveyors' Institution* 1/45 pp. 278-286;

*Journal of the Town Planning Institute* 1-2/45 pp. 64-68;

*Official Architect* 1/45 pp. 182-193;

*Town & Country Planning* 1945 vol. 13 no. 51 pp. 126-131, by F.J. Osborn;

*Estates Gazette* 16/12/44, pp. 550-551.



*Architectural Review*, 9/44, pp. 77-82, critical commentary by 5 authors including C Stein.

Robson, W.A. (1945) 'The Greater London plan', *Political Quarterly* vol. 16 no. 2 pp. 106-116

Exhibition at the Institute of Civil Engineers, 14/8/45 - 15/9/45.

Ministry of Town and Country Planning (1947) *Greater London plan: memorandum by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning on the report of the Advisory Committee for London Regional Planning* HMSO, London.

## County of London Plan

Forshaw, John H. and Abercrombie, Patrick (1943) *County of London Plan prepared for the LCC*, Macmillan, London, 188pp, 12/-. *Printed twice 1943; reprinted 1944.*

Reviewed/discussed in

*Architect's Journal* 15/7/43, vol. 98 pp. 35-36 and 39-44, 31/10/43, 4/11/43;

*Architect and Building News* 16/7/43 pp. 29-32; 23/7/43, pp. 54-61, 30/7/43, pp. 68-71 and 6/8/43, pp. 86-87;

*The Builder* 16/7/43, vol. 164 pp. 43-50, by H.V. Lanchester, 29/10/43, p. 347, 20/10/44 p. 307, by F.H. Mansford;

*Building* 8/43 pp. 195-208;

*Country Life* 16/7/43 pp. 106-108;

*Estates Gazette* 17/7/43, description. 58; Editorial, p. 61; "a surveyor's views", 23/10/43, p. 393; commentary, 14/7/45, p. 33.

*Town & Country Planning* 1943, vol. 11 no. 43 pp. 113-117, by F.J. Osborn and pp. 118-121,

*RIBA Journal* 7/43 pp. 195-201, largely descriptive, and 8/43 pp. 227-234 by W.R. Davidge, a 'critical review';

*National Builder*, 8/43 pp. 3, 6-11 by R. Coppock, LCC Chairman;

*Official Architect*, 9/43;

*Journal of the Chartered Surveyors' Institution*, 9/43 pp. 127-130 by F. Longstreth Thompson;

*Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 9-10/43 pp. 234-239;

Statement by T&CPA Executive; *Town Planning Review* 1943, vol. 19 no. 1 pp. 38-41 and *Architect and Building News* 24/9/43, pp. 191-192;

Extract of the Report of the Town Planning Committee to Council, *Architect and Building News* 20/7/45 pp. 46-47.

A commentary by W.R. Davidge in Osborn, F.J. (ed.) (1944-5) *Planning and reconstruction* Todd, London, pp. 68-75. Critical comments by Osborn reported in *Estates Gazette* 11/9/43, p. 249; Critical comments in *Journal of the Chartered Surveyors' Institute* (3/44); criticisms of 28 London Boroughs summarised in *Architects' Journal* 28/9/44 pp. 229-234.

*Official Architecture and Planning* 1970, vol. 33 pp. 1075-1078, a retrospective by J. Craig; See also *Architectural Review* 1952 vol. 3 pp. 257-260, by J.M. Richards. There was a Progress Report by A. Tatton-Brown in *Architectural Review* 1949 (May) pp. 223-230.

London County Council (1944) *Replanning the County of London: a brief account of the County of London Plan by J.H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie*, LCC, London, 24pp. Publicity item prepared for schools.

(July 1943) Exhibition of County of London Plan, County Hall. Moved to the Royal Academy, re-opened 3/11/43 by Sir Giles Scott. See London Metropolitan Archives file CL/TP/144.

(1944) A "light touring exhibition" of the County of London Plan prepared by Ernö Goldfinger and Ursula Blackwell, at the Housing Centre, Suffolk Street, London, 27/1 – 12/2/44

Carter, E.J. and Goldfinger, Ernö (1945) *The County of London Plan*, Penguin, West Drayton. Explanation of the Plan for the general public.

Mumford, L. (1945) *The plan of London county* Rebuilding Britain series, no. 12, Faber, London, 40pp.

Craig, J. (1970) 'The 1943 London Plan: a perspective', *Official Architecture and Planning* vol. 33 pp. 1075-1078.

Higgott, A. (1991-2) 'A modest proposal: Abercrombie's County of London Plan 1943', *Issues in Architecture and Design* vol. 2 no. 1 pp. 38-57.

Young, K. and Garside, P.L. (1982) *Metropolitan London: politics and urban change 1837-1981* Arnold, London. Chapter 8 discusses the preparation, contents and reception of the Forshaw and Aercrombie plan for the County of London.

## City of London

### Improvements and Town Planning Committee, City of London

Improvements and Town Planning Committee, City of London (1944) *Report on the preliminary proposals for post-war reconstruction in the City of London*, Batsford, London, 32+xxxiv p. There seems to have been a version published "for very limited circulation" in mid-1944. The Batsford edition was "of 10,000 copies" (*Architect and Building News* 4/8/44, p. 66).

A 34-member 'expert' Committee, including the architectural historian Banister Fletcher. Cherry (1974, p. 126) calls it "an unambitious affair, and in due time was rejected by the Minister".

Reviewed/described in

*Architect and Building News* 4/8/44 pp. 67-68 and reviewed by Goodhart-Rendel, 11/8/44, pp. 81-86

*The Builder* CLXVII no. 5295, 28/7/44, pp. 61 (Editorial), 63-68; comments of the Council of Property Owners in the City excerpted, CLXVIII no 5320, 19/1/45, p. 45; of the Chartered Surveyors' Institution in *The Builder* CLXVIII no, 5333, 20/4/45, pp. 316-318;

*Proceedings of the Institute of Municipal and County Engineers* LXXI, 10/44, pp. 96-97, by "W.R.D." [Davidge?]

*Estates Gazette*, 15/4/44, p. 368, comments on an early draft, mentioning a delay in printing "owing to the shortage of craftsmen skilled in colour processes involved in reproducing plans and drawings"; 29/7/44, p. 105-106, 109, a further summary; 12/8/44, p. 154; comments of the Auctioneers' and Estate Agents' Institute, 14/4/45, p. 302; criticism by E. Howard; 28/4/45, p. 342, comments of the Chartered Surveyors' Institution.

Criticised by the Royal Academy Planning Committee, in a 12pp pamphlet of 1944; see also *Estates Gazette*, 5/5/45, p. 352; *The Builder* 8/6/45, p. 449.

Royal Fine Art Commission (1945) *Observations on the City of London's Report on post-war reconstruction* HMSO, London, 11pp, 2d. Extracts in *Architects' Journal* 13/9/45 pp. 198, 200; noted in *Estates Gazette*, 8/9/45, p. 206.

Notes on the Minister's rejection of the plan in *Estates Gazette*, 28/7/45, p. 73 and text of his letter in *Estates Gazette*, 4/8/45, pp. 102-103; *The Builder* CLXIX no. 5348, 3/8/45, pp. 81-86. *Architects' Journal* 31/5/45 p. 405 notes that "there was a promise that an edition for sale to the public would be available last January. It has not yet appeared." This issue also gives a review of a counter-proposal from the Tower Hill Improvement Trust.

An exhibition of plans and drawings prepared by the City Engineer, F.J. Forty, was at the Royal Exchange: *Estates Gazette* 4/11/44, p. 417.

### **Holden and Holford**

Holden, Charles H. and Holford, William G. (1946) *Reconstruction in the City of London: Interim Report to the Improvements and Town Planning Committee by the Joint Consultants*. Circulated in March 1946.

Comments on this by the Auctioneers' and Estate Agents' Institute are in *Estates Gazette* 16/11/46 pp. 477-479;

Part reprinted in *Architect and Building News* 12/7/46, pp. 20-26

Reviewed in  
*Journal of the Town Planning Institute* 7-8/46, pp. 198-991, by PCL;  
*Architects' Journal* 11/7/46, p. 20, brief comment; editorial comment 18/7/46, pp. 39-40 and description, pp. 43-54;  
*The Builder*, CLXXI no. 5397, 12/7/46, pp. 27, 30-32, editorial and review.

Holden, Charles H. and Holford, William G. (c. 1946) *The new plan for the City of London: a summary and explanation of the interim proposals for reconstruction*, Architectural Press, London, 12pp.

Reviewed in *Journal of the RIBA*, 12/46 p. 103.

Holden, Charles H. and Holford, William G. (1947) *Reconstruction in the City of London: Final Report to the Improvements and Town Planning Committee*, The consultants, London, 64pp.

The consultants' Interim Report had been circulated in March 1946. "Edition with additional material is expected to be published by the Architectural Press in February 1949 price 25/-" (actually 1951).

Report unanimously approved by the Court of Common Council, 14/7/47 (*Estates Gazette* 19/7/47). Discussion of its reception by the Improvements and Town Planning Committee in *Estates Gazette* 31/5/47, p. 384.

Comments on by the Auctioneers' and Estate Agents' Institute are in *Estates Gazette* 16/8/47, p. 120.

Reviewed in

*Architect and Building News* 6/6/47, pp. 189-197;

*Architects' Journal* 22/5/47, pp. 425-443;

*The Builder* CLXXII no. 5441, 30/5/47, pp. 520-528, by H.V. Lanchester;

*RIBA Journal* 6/47, pp. 425-428 (described ie excerpted).

(1947) Exhibition of drawings and maps from Holden & Holford's Final Report, at the Guildhall Art Gallery.

Holden, C.H. and Holford, W.G. (1951) *The City of London: a record of destruction and survival*, Architectural Press, London. *Reviewed in* *Town Planning Review* vol. XXIII, 1952, pp. 86-88, by T.F. Reddaway.

London (Corporation of) (1951) *Rebuilding the City of London: an exhibition of photographs, plans and drawings of bomb damage and reconstruction projects ...* Corporation of London, London, 20pp. Foreword by H. Anthony Mealand, City Planning Officer. Pamphlet issued for the Exhibition held at the Royal Exchange, July-August 1951.

(1951) "Rebuilding the City of London" exhibition at the Royal Exchange of damage, proposals and progress, May.

Cherry, G.E. and Penny, L. (1986) *Holford: a study in architecture, planning and civic design*, Mansell, London.

### **Royal Academy 1942**

Royal Academy (1942) *London replanned: the Royal Academy Planning Committee's interim report*, Country Life, London, 32pp.

An 'expert committee': Foreword by Lutyens (initiated by him as RA President), introduction by Sir Charles Bressey.

Commented upon/reviewed/described in

*Architects' Journal* 22/10/42, vol. 96, by Astragal; commentary by Aslan, pp. 258-271; 7/1/43 pp. 7-8;

*Country Life* 9/10/42 pp. 692-696 by Hussey, 6/11 alternative plans by Holden;

*Architect and Building News* 16/10/42 pp. 39-45, 23/10, 30/10 by Summerson, reprinted from *The Listener* 22/10/42; 13/11/42 pp. 102-103, City Engineer's report, 27/11/42 pp. 12-13 comparison of RA and Aslan proposals;

*Architectural Design and Construction* 11/42;

*Architect and Building News* Architectural Review 1/43 pp. 23-26 by Lionel Brett;

*The Builder* 16/10/42 pp. 326-326, 23/10, 13/11 p. 412, 27/11, 4/12;

*Building* 11/42 pp. 241-234;

*The Listener* 22/10/42, pp. 532-633;

*Journal of the RIBA* 10/42 pp. 216-218;

*National Builder* 11/42;

*Official Architect* 11/42;

*Studio* 2/43 pp. 42-47, by Reilly.

(1942) Royal Academy "Plan for London" exhibition, also called "London replanned", 14/10/42 - (?)

## Royal Academy revisions

(1943) RA revised proposals exhibition, summer 1943 organised by LCC at County Hall; Revised plans and models exhibited at the RA Summer Exhibition 1943: *Architect and Building News* 7/5/43 pp. 83 -; *Architects' Journal* 13/5/43 pp. 316-317; *Builder* 7/5/43 pp. 407 -; *Country Life* 14/5/43 pp. 878-879. (Is this 2 events?)

## Royal Academy (1944)

Royal Academy Planning Committee (1944) *Road, rail and river in London* *Country Life*, London, 30pp, 2/6.

Reviewed in

*Architect and Building News*, 5/5/44, pp. 70-73;

*Architects' Journal*, 18/5/44, pp. 367-370;

*Architectural Design and Construction*, 5/44, p. 109;

*The Builder*, 12/5/44, pp. 376-377;

*Building*, 5/44, pp. 116-117;

*Country Life*, 5/5/44, pp. 770-771.

(1944) RA Summer exhibition: feature of "Road, rail and river in London"

## Independent

Aslan, N.J. (1943) 'City of London: planning proposals by N.J. Aslan', reviewed in *Architects' Journal* 9/12/43, pp. 421-422, 429-432.

Baily, H. (1944) Redevelopment scheme for the City of London, described in *The Builder* 31/3/44, p. 256.

Lindy, K. and Winton Lewis, B.A.P. (1944) Exhibition of "drawings illustrating a suggestion for the replanning of the City of London", held at the Incorporated Association of Architects and Surveyors, London.

Discussed in

*Estates Gazette* 18/3/44, p. 272.

*Architect and Building News* 17/3/44 pp. 190-191;

*Architects' Journal* 23/3/44, Editorial pp. 219-220 and description, pp. 227-229; their response to criticism, 6/4/44 p. 257;

*Building* 10/4/44, pp. 196-197;

*The Builder* 10/3/44 p. 197.

Watson, J.A.F. (1944-45) 'Canonbury, London: proposed redevelopment of the Canonbury estate of the Marquis of Northampton', *Town and Country Planning* Winter 1944-45 pp. 166-168.

Tower Hill Improvement Trust (London) (1945) report by a Technical Sub-committee giving alternative proposals for the area to those contained in the Report of the Improvements and Town Planning Committee. Reviewed in *Architects' Journal* 31/5/45 pp. 405-406; *The Builder* 27/4/45, p. 329.

## Various

- (c. 1942) *Replanning the city*, The City Press, London, 19pp. Pamphlet collection of reconstruction articles from *The City Press*.
- (1943) *Your London has a plan* Association of Building Technicians, London, 27pp.
- (1943) "Your London has a plan", exhibition by J.B. White, M. Best, R. Coppack, D.E. Gibson, W.H. Thompson, E. Darby; at Association of Building Technicians, thereafter toured.
- (1944) "Reconstruction in the City of London" exhibition at the Royal Exchange, 31/10/44 - 30/11/44, weekdays 11.00-16.00, organised by G.H. Grimaldi in cooperation with J. Emberton. Opened by W.S. Morrison.
- Advisory Committee for London Regional Planning (1946) *Report to the Minister of Town and Country Planning and Report of the Technical Sub-Committee* HMSO, London
- Hobhouse, H. (1989) 'The first real move to a planning of London', *Urban Design Quarterly* no. 31 pp. 17-21.
- Hall, P. (1994) *Abercrombie's Plan for London: 50 years on* Vision for London, London

## LONDON BOROUGHES & DISTRICTS

### Bermondsey

Croad, A. and Bennett, F. (1942) 'Bermondsey's riverside: proposals for reconstruction', commentaries on proposals, perspectives and model exhibited at Cement and Concrete Association, 52 Grosvenor Gardens, reviewed in *Architect and Building News* 18/9/42 pp. 172-173; *Architectural Design and Construction* 10/42; *The Builder* 18/9/42 p. 243; *Parthenon* 10/42. Croad described as "engineer" and Bennett ARIBA. These must be the "certain technical officers of the Ministry of Home Security" described in the *Architect & Building News* review.

(1949) LCC applied for Declaratory Order (ie for compulsory purchase) under 1944 Act for 169 acres of Bermondsey, for a reconstruction scheme. *Estates Gazette* 19/3/49, p. 236. But see also *Estates Gazette* 2/8/47 regarding an application for an area of about 180 acres.

### Brentford

Lobb, H.V. (1943) *Brentford redevelopment scheme*,

Approved by Brentford and Chiswick Council 28/9/43. Lobb was FRIBA, resigned as manager to Messrs Guy Morgan & Partners F&ARIBA to go into private practice, based in Brentford (*The Builder* CLXI no. 5148, 3/10/41 p. 300), based in Cowes c. 1946.

Discussion by Anthony Chitty in a Souvenir Programme for Brentford and Chiswick Housing Week, Brentford and Chiswick Corporation, London, 1945, 12pp. Illustrations of the scheme exhibited at the Royal Academy, 5/44.

Reviewed in

*Architect and Building News*, 26/5/44, pp. 120-122;  
*Architectural Design and Construction*, 1/44, by Chitty;  
*The Builder* CLXIX no. 5347, 27/7/45, pp. 64-66.

(1945) Exhibition of plans by H.V. Lobb (*The Builder* CLXIX no. 5347, 27/7/45, pp. 64-66)

### **Canonbury**

Watson, J.A.F. (1944-45) 'Canonbury, London: proposed redevelopment of the Canonbury estate of the Marquis of Northampton', *Town and Country Planning* Winter 1944-45 pp. 166-168.

### **Croydon**

Davidge, William R. (1943) Appointed by Croydon Reconstruction Committee "to act jointly with the Borough Engineer in preparing a comprehensive scheme of replanning", *Architect and Building News* 3/12/43, p. 142. Was it his plan that was approved by Croydon Council "last week": *Architect and Building News* 1/8/47, p. 88?

### **Hackney**

(1945) Planning exhibition at Hackney Town Hall (*Architect and Building News* vol. 183 pp. 60-61)

(c. 1947) *Hackney and the County of London Plan*, Borough Council of Hackney, London, 16pp.

Sponsored by the Borough's Reconstruction Committee.

### **Heston and Isleworth**

(1945) *Borough Surveyor's report on the Greater London Plan* Heston and Isleworth Borough Council, 12pp.

### **Holborn**

Chitty, Anthony M. (1946) Appointed planning consultant to the London Borough of Holborn: *Builder* CLXX no. 5378, 1/3/46, p. 206.

### **Hornsey**

1945 "A plan for Hornsey" exhibition at the showrooms of the Hornsey Gas Co.

(1945) *A plan for Hornsey. Exhibition at the Showrooms of the Hornsey Gas Co, June 1945*, Borough of Hornsey, London, 27pp.

### **Kensington**

(1944) "Kensington Today and Tomorrow" exhibition, Housing Centre, London, October. Opened by Lord Balfour of Burleigh

Sharp, Thomas (c. 1946) Commissioned at an annual fee of £1,000 to act as planning consultant and prepare two town planning schemes for Kensington. *From Sharp's contract files.*

(1949) First Kensington scheme completed, known as the "Norland neighbourhood" and extending to 160 acres, replanned by Sharp and the Borough Engineer & Surveyor, H. Burleigh, by 1949: *The Builder* 20/5/49, p. 613

### **Lambeth**

(1943) *Report of Special Committee on the County of London Plan 1943*, Metropolitan Borough of Lambeth, London, 30pp.

Chambers, Holroyd F. and Soissons, Louis de (1945) *North Lambeth and Southwark redevelopment area: a study prepared for His Majesty's Council of the Duchy of Cornwall*, Duchy of Cornwall, London, 73pp in 2 vols, 21/- Consultants.

Reviewed by

*The Builder*, CLXX no. 5372, 18/1/46, pp. 65-66, by H.V. Lanchester; discussed by Gibbon, G. (1946) 'The application of planning', *Architect and Building News* 8/2/46, pp. 82-83.

(1948) "Our Lambeth" exhibition at Lambeth Town Hall, 18/9/48 - 26/9/48 (*Architect and Building News* vol. 194 p. 286)

### **Pimlico** (part of Westminster, see below)

Rawlinson, J. and Davidge, William R. (1944) *Report on the replanning of Pimlico*, City of Westminster Council, Westminster, 19pp.

J. Rawlinson MEng MInstCE was City Engineer and Surveyor. Davidge was appointed at a fee of 1,500 guineas: *The Builder* CLXV no. 5264, 24/12/43, p. 506.

Reviewed/described in

*Journal of the Town Planning Institute* 7-8/45, p. 186;  
*The Builder* CLXXIV no. 5478, 13/2/48, pp. 189-190, by H.V. Lanchester.

(1946) Exhibition of designs entered for competition for major Pimlico Housing Scheme, Caxton Hall SW, 20/5/46 – 25/5/46 (later extended). Opened by E.H. Keeling MP, Mayor of the City of Westminster.

(1946) *A new plan for Pimlico*, Town Planning and Improvements Committee, City of Westminster Council, 11pp.

Reviewed in *The Builder*, CLXX no. 5374, 1/2/46, pp. 118-119, by H.V. Lanchester.

### **Poplar** see Stepney and Poplar

### **Rickmansworth**

Thompson, F. Longstreth (1944) Rickmansworth UDC "approved on general lines a plan for post-war development, prepared by Mr F. Longstreth Thompson PPTPI"



in December 1944 (*Architects' Journal* 18/1/45, review of 1944); no publication known.

### **St Pancras**

(1945) "St Pancras of the future" exhibition at St Pancras Town Hall, 22/9/45 - 29/9/45

(1945) *Saint Pancras of the Future* Catalogue illustrating a town planning and housing exhibition. St Pancras Borough Council, London, 48pp.

(1946) *Regent's Park area re-development scheme, 1946*, Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee adopted by the Borough Council on 17 April 1946, St Pancras Borough Council, London, 10pp.

(1946) Plan for redevelopment proposed by the Borough Labour Party. Scheme accepted by the Borough Council, affecting 138 acres costing £8.75 million, *The Builder*, CLXX no. 5387, 3/5/46, p. 422.

Described by *The Builder* CLXXI no. 5398, 19/7/46, pp. 65-66.

Gibberd, Frederick (1947) Appointed Town Planning Consultant by St Pancras Borough Council "for the preparation of a Borough Plan", *The Builder* CLXXII no. 5426, 31/1/47, p. 128.

### **St. Paul's area**

Holden, Charles H. (1945): reconstruction plan for St Paul's environs prepared for the Dean & Chapter: copies sent to the Ministry of Town & Country Planning and RFAC. "Unfortunately it is not proposed to make this plan public at this stage", *Architectural Review* vol. 987 November 1945, p. liii

(1946) Proposals for this area given in a theme issue of *Architectural Review*, 11/46, pp. 125-150.

### **Shoreditch**

(1945) Plan for reconstruction explained by C.T. Fulcher MInstM&CyE at Shoreditch Rotary Club, 3/5/45: news item, *The Builder* CLXVIII no. 5336, 11/5/45, p. 368.

### **South Bank area**

(c. 1944) '*The Star*' scheme to rebuild the South Bank as part of the replanning of London, *The Star*, London, 8pp.

These proposals were originally published on 6/5/38 in *The Star* and reviewed in the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* 7/38, p. 329, by 'WRD'. Reprinted c. 1944.

### **Stepney and Poplar**

Stuttle, B.M. (1941) first discussion of the Borough's reconstruction plans, at Toynbee Hall: *Architect and Building News* 7/11/41, p. 83. Stuttle was Borough Engineer and Surveyor.

(1943) Reconstruction proposals by an amateur group exhibited at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, opened by Lewis Silkin MP: *The Builder* CLXV no. 5255, 22/10/43, p. 330

(1946) *Stepney-Poplar reconstruction area: recommendations of Town Planning Committee of LCC under Town and Country Planning Act, 1944.*

Report approved by LCC on 5/2/46 for reconstruction of 1,960 acres of the boroughs, land acquisition costing £45 million.

Described/reviewed in

The Builder, CLXX no. 5375, 8/2/46, pp. 143-144;  
Journal of the Town Planning Institute 3-4/46, p. 116;  
Architect and Building News, 15/2/46, pp. 93-95. Stepney's plans first discussed by; then by

Ling, Arthur (1946) discussion of the reconstruction plans at the London Society, 9/11/46: *Architect and Building News* 20/12/46, pp. 227-230.

Ling was then working for the LCC.

(1948) *Stepney and Poplar reconstruction area: report* London County Council, London, 70pp.

(1948) 'Poplar builds', exhibition at the Central Library designed by H.J. Gordon ARIBA (Senior Assistant, Architect's Section, Borough Engineer and Surveyor's Department). To 18/12/48, then moves to other Borough libraries. (*The Builder* CLXXV, 5521, 10/12/48, p. 692)

Moye, A. (1979) *The LCC's reconstruction of Stepney and Poplar 1945-65* Planning Studies no. 5, Planning Unit, School of Environment, Polytechnic of Central London

## **Tottenham**

(1944) "Tottenham town planning exhibition". Opened by Sir John West. (*Architect and Building News* vol. 178, 22/9/44, p. 175)

## **Tower Hill**

Tower Hill Improvement Trust (London) (1945) report by a Technical Sub-committee giving alternative proposals for the area to those contained in the Report of the Improvements and Town Planning Committee.

Reviewed in  
*Architects' Journal* 31/5/45 pp. 405-406;  
*The Builder* 27/4/45, p. 329.

## **Twickenham**

(1946) Housing and town planning exhibition (no details)

Brochure "Looking backward and looking forward to the future Twickenham: a review and prospect etc", 28pp

## **West Ham**

(1949) Plan for the area, "which suffered extensive bomb devastation", prepared by T.E. North FRIBA, Borough Architect and Town Planning Officer: *The Builder* 13/5/49, pp. 599-600.

## **Westminster, City of** (see also Pimlico, above)

Rawlinson, J. and Davidge, William R. (1946) *City of Westminster Plan*, City of Westminster Council, Westminster, 78pp.

J. Rawlinson MEng MInstCE was City Engineer and Surveyor. Davidge was PPTPI, a consultant.

Reviewed in

*Architect and Building News* 27/2/48, pp. 201-204, by S. Rowland Pierce;  
*The Builder* CLXVI no. 5282, 28/4/44, p. 333, editorial.

(1947) 'Westminster regained', *Architectural Review* editorial proposals for Westminster largely by Gordon Cullen, *Architectural Review* vol. CII no. 611 (November) pp. 159-170

## **Willesden**

Morris, J.C. (1950) *The Willesden survey, 1949* Corporation of Willesden (West London), 96pp + 33 maps etc.