

Florian Urban, "Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall and the Invention of the Post-modern City"
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Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall and the Invention of the Post-modern City

Abstract

The Royal Concert Hall, designed by Leslie Martin, occupies a pivotal space in central Glasgow. Its opening in 1990 concluded a thirty-year war over modern and postmodern urban form. At the time, Glasgow's city centre looked very different than three decades earlier, and the changes from a modern to a "postmodern" environment were paradigmatic for the shifts in many deindustrializing cities in Europe and North America. In this context the Royal Concert Hall is an example of how a single building catalysed a wide-ranging paradigm change.

This article retraces the design debates on the basis of newspaper articles, interviews, and documents in particular from the City Council and other public agencies. It will show that the struggle that eventually defined the shape and use of Glasgow's largest music venue as well as those of the entire city centre related to Glasgow's post-modern "reinvention." At the same time it shows that the new urban form was not a mandatory consequence of the economic shift but conditioned by several social and cultural specificities.

Keywords: Glasgow, Royal Concert Hall, Leslie Martin, Archibald Jury, Gordon Cullen, post-modern urban design, urban regeneration.

Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall and the Invention of the Post-modern City

The Navel of the City

Glasgow's *omphalos* is an elevated semi-circular square in the very centre of the city, at the intersection of Buchanan and Sauchiehall Streets. The analogy to Delphi's "navel of the earth" might at first glance seem exaggerated for a three-meter-wide platform, which for the passers-by at best affords an unexpected and impressive view over the Clyde Valley and at worst an acoustic nuisance for the many overamplified buskers. However, the square is not only the visual pivot of Glasgow's busiest shopping streets, but also the entry point to a little-known chapter of the city's history. Situated above the entrance to the Buchanan Galleries shopping centre, it also provides a monumental entry to the Royal Concert Hall designed by Leslie Martin, which shares a building complex with the arcade. Its opening in 1990 concluded a thirty-year war over modern and post-modern urban form, and at the same time shows how the new design was influenced by Glasgow's shift from heavy industry to service economy.



Fig. 1: The entrance to the Royal Concert Hall with the semi-circular square. The windowless stone-clad front and the large windows on the right belong to the shopping centre Buchanan Galleries (author's photograph).

This article will retrace the design debates on the basis of newspaper articles, interviews, and documents in particular from the City Council and other public agencies.¹ It will show that the struggle that eventually defined the shape and use of Glasgow's largest music venue as well as those of the entire city centre related to Glasgow's post-modern "re-invention." At the

¹ Glasgow's local authority was called "The Corporation of the City of Glasgow" from 1895 to 1975, "City of Glasgow District Council" from 1975 to 1995, and "Glasgow City Council" since 1995. Each name change involved organizational restructuring. For better understanding, this article refers to it at all times as "City Council."

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Glasgow looked very different in 1990 than three decades earlier, and the changes from a modern to a "post-modern" environment were paradigmatic for the shifts in many deindustrializing cities in Europe and North America.² As the modernist, car-oriented city gradually lost its lure, design principles moved from functional separation to mixed use, from motorways to boulevards, from comprehensive renewal to historical continuity, from New Town foundation to Old Town revitalization, and from modern inventions to historic quotations. And as along with de-industrialization welfare-state policies were slowly changed towards neoliberal entrepreneurialism, design policy moved from public to private, from large public administration to lean management, and from the promise of equal standards for everybody to the acceptance of social polarization. In this context the Royal Concert Hall is an example of how a single building catalysed a wide-ranging paradigm change.

The rebuilding of Glasgow's Concert Hall became necessary since the old St Andrew's Concert Hall, approximately half a mile west of the current location, burned down in October 1962.³ Lovers of the typically Glaswegian mix of high and low savoured the irony that an eminent classical music venue in a stately Victorian building went up in flames after a boxing match had taken place there.⁴ Despite the City Council's declared commitment to provide a replacement quickly, the rebuilding process took three decades and was only brought to an end with the opening of the Royal Concert Hall on 5 October 1990.

The thirty years of debate over the function and appearance of Glasgow's most significant music venue can be divided into three phases. They paralleled Glasgow's industrial decline and an economic change from manufacturing and shipbuilding towards services and the creative industries. In the early 1960s, the City Council proposed an "island of culture," where theatres and concert halls were to be housed in pavilions scattered on an elevated plaza and surrounded by ring roads and traffic arteries. These ideas combined *tabula rasa* urban renewal with the vision of a modernist, car-oriented city. From the late 1960s to the late 1970s a series of proposals centred around a pedestrian zone that was connected to the existing urban fabric and drew from its spatial principles. And from the 1980s onwards the design aimed at a visual expression of history and historical continuity. In line with the changing economic basis, the first two visions relied on public funding and municipal planning, while the third involved an increase in private investment and the coexistence of culture and commerce.

The Royal Concert Hall itself, now degraded to a wing of the shopping arcade and car park complex, bears witness to the competing ideas of the past. The designer Leslie Martin (1908-

² For shape and history of the post-modern city see for example Nan Ellin, *Postmodern Urbanism* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1996) Edward Soja, *Postmetropolis* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) or Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992). For the political economy that shaped this city see for example Margit Mayer, "Politics in the post-Fordist city" *Socialist Review* 21 (1991) 105-24, Allen Scott, *Metropolis - From the Division of Labour to Urban Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), or Tim Hall and Phil Hubbard, eds., *The Entrepreneurial City. Geographies of Politics, Regime, and Representation* (Chichester: John Wiley, 1998).

³ St Andrew's Halls was built 1873-77 (design: James Sellars) and purchased by the city council in 1890. The Grand Hall in the building provided space for 4500 people. The building boasted a giant order of Ionian columns on the second floor and numerous statues and caryatids. The façade is now all that remains, integrated into the western part of the Mitchell Library. See Charles McKean, David Walker, and Frank Walker, *Central Glasgow - an Illustrated Architectural Guide* (Edinburgh: Royal Incorporation of Scottish Architects, 1989), 170 and *The Glasgow Story*, online publication by the City Council, University of Glasgow, and others under the direction of Professor Arthur Allison, at <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image.php?inum=TGSD00269> (accessed January 2012).

⁴ Martin Spring, "Glasgow's Hall of Fame," *Building*, 19 October 1990, reprinted in Peter Carolin and Trevor Dannat, eds., *Architecture, Education and Research - The Work of Leslie Martin: Papers and Selected Articles* (London: Academy Editions, 1996).

2000) was one of the most significant architects of his time. The Concert Hall was his last work – when it finally opened he was 82 years old. Plan and façade reflect his characteristic vocabulary of austere orthogonal forms and clear rhythms. They stand, as it were, for what critics called "the tradition in modern architecture" – the variations of modernist design that reflected the innovative spirit of the 1920s and 1930s and similarly sought to incorporate principles of classical harmony.⁵ The building and its surroundings also reflect the many compromises Martin had to make.

Martin was an unlikely figure to herald the post-modern city. Born in Manchester in 1908, he belonged to the generation of architects educated in the spirit of functionalism. From an early stage of his career he had been in close contact with some of the Modern Movement's most influential figures. In his position as Head of the Department of Architecture at Cambridge University since 1956 and consultant to countless architecture and planning committees, he significantly influenced the course of British modernism and helped launch many careers.⁶ At the same time he built comparably little. Examples of his design work include university buildings such as Harvey Court for Cambridge University (1960) and the St Cross Faculty Libraries for Oxford University (1964). The former is an austere composition of classical geometries around a central courtyard, the latter an arrangement of cuboids with a protruding second floor and longitudinal windows. His most celebrated building is the Royal Festival Hall in London, an solitary icon of modernist architecture, which he co-designed with Robert Matthew for the Festival of Britain in 1951.⁷ Eventually it would be the classical tradition in his work that made his last buildings the Royal Concert Hall and the nearby Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (1983-88, now Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). become instrumental for a post-modern approach to urbanism:

In the years before Leslie Martin became involved in the reconstruction of the Concert Hall, Glasgow's position as a powerful industrial hub was still unchallenged. Nonetheless the urban structure was seen as unsatisfactory, and the city toyed with radical modernist renewal plans in the same way as many other municipalities in Europe and North America. Glasgow's local authority enthusiastically planned for decentralization and the functional separation of residential, commercial, industrial, and entertainment areas. The 1945 Bruce Plan by City Engineer Robert Bruce had proposed the demolition of large parts of the Victorian city centre and the dispersion of its population to the wider region.⁸ Following the British parliament's 1946 New Towns Act, five New Towns were built in Scotland, two of which lay in close proximity to Glasgow: East Kilbride (designated 1947) and Cumbernauld (designated 1955). Together with peripheral estates such as Castlemilk, Drumchapel, or Easterhouse (all begun in the 1950s) they were designed to house the overspill inhabitants of overcrowded tenements, providing them with light, air, and greenery. For the remaining population, tower blocks were to offer similar living conditions. Widened streets and motorways would enable speedy access

⁵ For the "modern tradition" in Martin's work see for example Richard MacCormac, "An Architects' Architect," in Peter Carolin and Trevor Dannat, eds., *Architecture, Education and Research – The Work of Leslie Martin: Papers and Selected Articles* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), 9.

⁶ For example Richard Rogers, after Martin's death, expressed his thankfulness for helping him in his early career. Richard Rogers, letter to the editor in response to Martin's obituary, *The Guardian*, 17 August 2000. See also Robert Proctor, "Social Structures: Gillespie, Kidd & Coia's Halls of Residence at the University of Hull," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67 n. 1 (March 2008), 106-129.

⁷ Diana Rowntree, "Sir Leslie Martin" [Obituary], *The Guardian* 2 August 2000. The contribution of the different architects to the Royal Festival Hall is somewhat contested. See Miles Glendinning, "Teamwork or Masterwork? The Design and Reception of the Royal Festival Hall," *Architectural History* 46 n. 1 (2003), 277-319.

⁸ Robert Bruce, *First Planning Report to the Highways and Planning Committee of the Corporation of the City of Glasgow* (Glasgow: Master of Works and City Engineer's Department, 1945). For the plans to disperse large parts of Glasgow's population see also Patrick Abercrombie and Robert Matthew, *Clyde Valley Regional Plan – a report prepared for the Clyde Valley Regional Planning Committee* (Edinburgh: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1949).

to the city centre, which was to be reserved for central functional buildings such as shopping centres, large theatres and concert halls. This model embodied the promises of modern life: material wealth, health and cultural inspiration for the entire population.

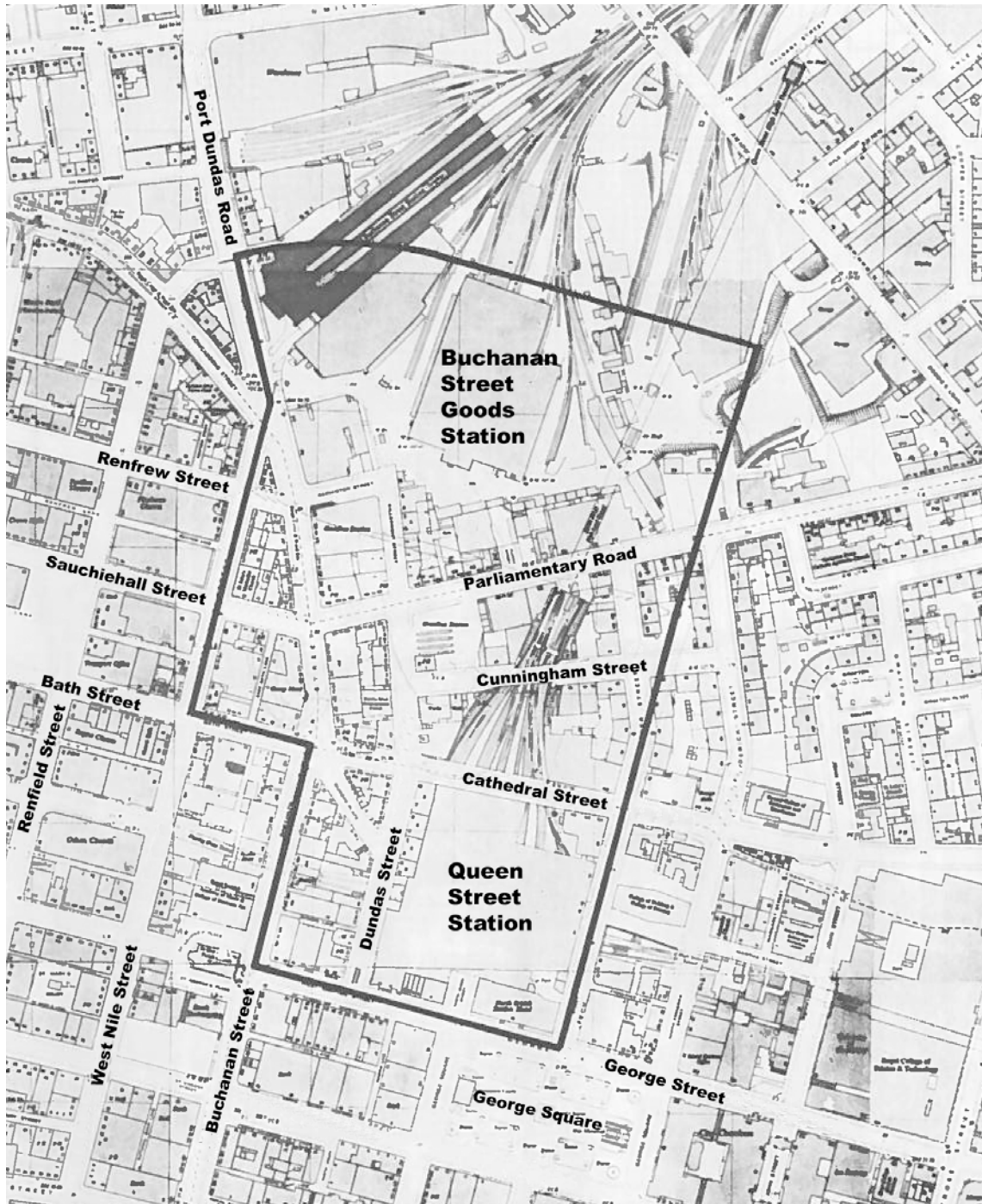


Fig. 2: Glasgow's city centre in the early 1960s. Over the following years, not only the marked area was demolished and redeveloped, but also the adjacent areas north and east. Today the entrance to the Royal Concert Hall is situated where Sauchiehall Street turns into Cunningham Street. The latter street does not exist any more (map by Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

To carry out these ambitious plans, Glasgow City Council in line with the national policy at the time allocated parts of the inner city to so-called Comprehensive Development Areas (CDA). In these areas much of the existing building stock – mostly sandstone tenements and industrial brick buildings from the late nineteenth century – was torn down and the street plan altered. The vision for the city centre was shown in the City Council's 1964 exhibition "Urban Renewal in Glasgow."⁹ Certain streets were to be closed to through traffic, creating a system of "superblocks." On these blocks, pedestrians were to move freely. Connections between the superblocks were to be given through pedestrian bridges. The renewal plans relied on compulsory purchase orders and reflected the self-confidence and ambition of a local authority that had not yet realized that the industrial base of its wealth had long started crumbling.¹⁰

An Island of Culture between Motorways: Archibald Jury's Scheme, 1964

The first proposal celebrated the modern, car-oriented city. On a superblock north of Renfrew Street the new Concert Hall was to be erected as part of a new Cultural Centre around a gigantic pedestrian plaza (see figures 3-6). The dimensions of 60 by 110 metres were just about the equivalent of George Square, the city's biggest nineteenth century square, but enlarged by the continuing open spaces on its edges. All structures on the square were solitary box-shaped buildings. The Concert Hall was to be built on the square's northern side, next to a civic theatre and an exhibition hall. On its western side, a repertory theatre was to face the square, and on the eastern side a hotel. Cars and buses could access the complex through large subterranean car parks that provided direct access to the buildings.¹¹ The wider area was earmarked for educational purposes and included buildings for today's Stow College and University of Strathclyde.¹²



Fig. 3: Model for a Cultural Centre, worked out in 1964 by the Corporation of Glasgow's Civic Design Section under Archibald Jury. The picture shows the south façade of the Concert Hall that faces the pedestrian square. The small building on the left is the Exhibition Gallery, and the building on the left edge of the photograph the Civic Theatre (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

⁹ Exhibition "Glasgow and its Housing Policy," Corporation of Glasgow, Architectural and Planning Department, photographs dated 8 February 1957, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "Photographs miscellaneous."

¹⁰ Glasgow's old industries of heavy engineering and shipbuilding had relied on trading privileges connected with the British Empire. The structural problems started to become apparent in the interwar period, but were then masked by the Second World War and its demand for industrial goods, and an initial rise in service economy in the early postwar years. Employment in manufacturing started to decline massively in the 1950s, from 424,000 employees in 1952 to 387,000 in 1961, to 257,000 in 1971 and 186,000 in 1981. John MacInnes, "The Deindustrialization of Glasgow," *Scottish Affairs* 11 (spring 1995), 4-7.

¹¹ "Site for New St Andrew's Hall," *Glasgow Herald* 11 April 1963, 16. "Design for Cultural Centre Defended – City Architect Opposed to Competitions," *Glasgow Herald* 26 November 1965, 1.

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Fig. 4: Model for a Cultural Centre by A. Jury, 1964, looking west across the square onto the Repertory Theatre. On the right side the Civic Theatre (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

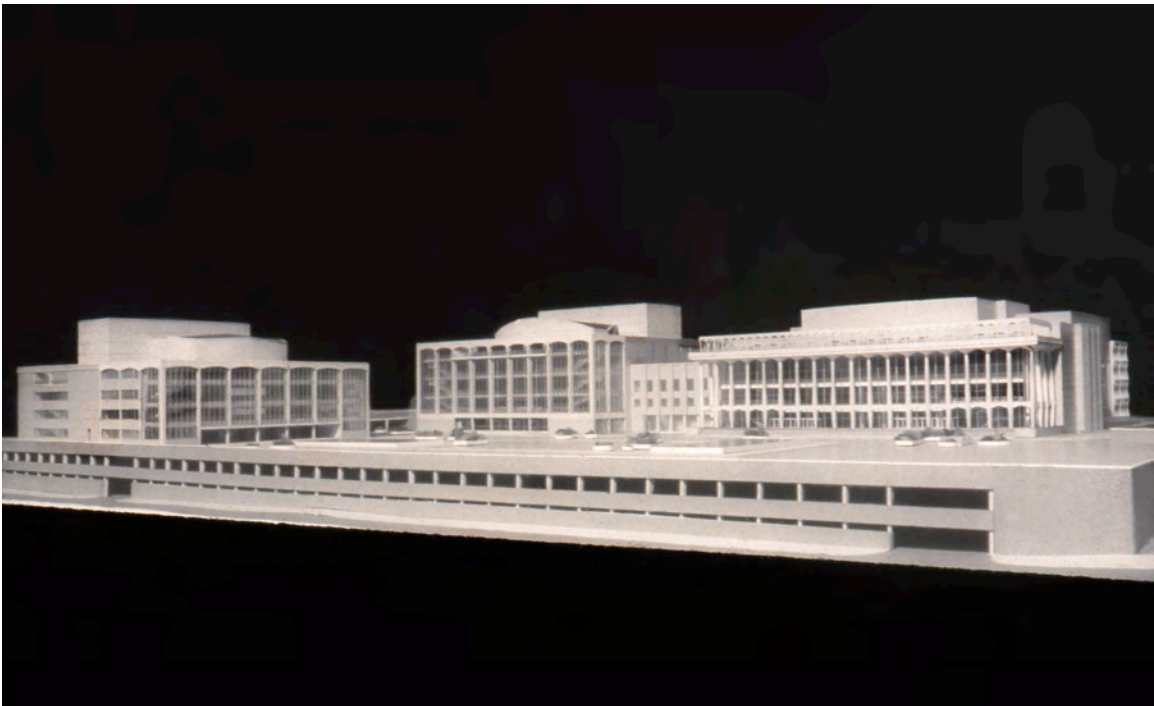


Fig. 5: Model for a Cultural Centre by A. Jury, 1964, looking north. The model shows the parking structure under the gigantic square. Buildings from left to right: Repertory Theatre, Civic Theatre, Exhibition Gallery, Concert Hall (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

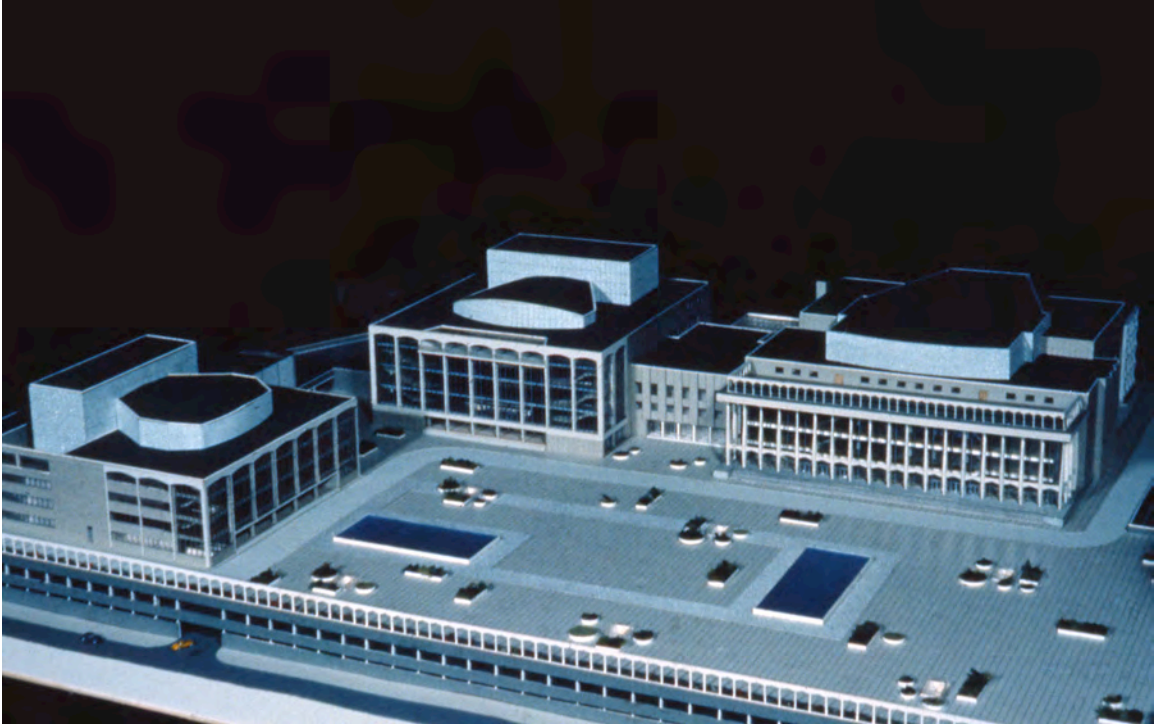


Fig. 6: Model for a Cultural Centre by A. Jury, 1964, looking north (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

The plans were prepared in 1964 and 1965 by City Architect Archibald George Jury (1907-2003) and his team of fifteen architects and engineers in the City Council's Civic Design Section.¹³ Born in Devon, Jury had been appointed to his post in 1951 and held it under changing titles until his retirement in 1972. Like the City Engineer Robert Bruce, Jury approached the city like a machine whose efficiency has to be improved. He was more bureaucrat than visionary, embodying both the hubris of the expert planner and an unflinching belief the municipal authorities' ability to promote the public good. He boldly rejected any necessity for public participation and countered calls for a more democratic design process with a snappy "There is no special magic about national or international competitions."¹⁴ No plan or section was made available to the local public. Only an indication of the building's exterior was exhibited in the City Chamber's vestibule in 1965.¹⁵ In any case Jury considered aesthetics secondary, asserting that in general "ninety percent of people do not notice what buildings look like."¹⁶

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

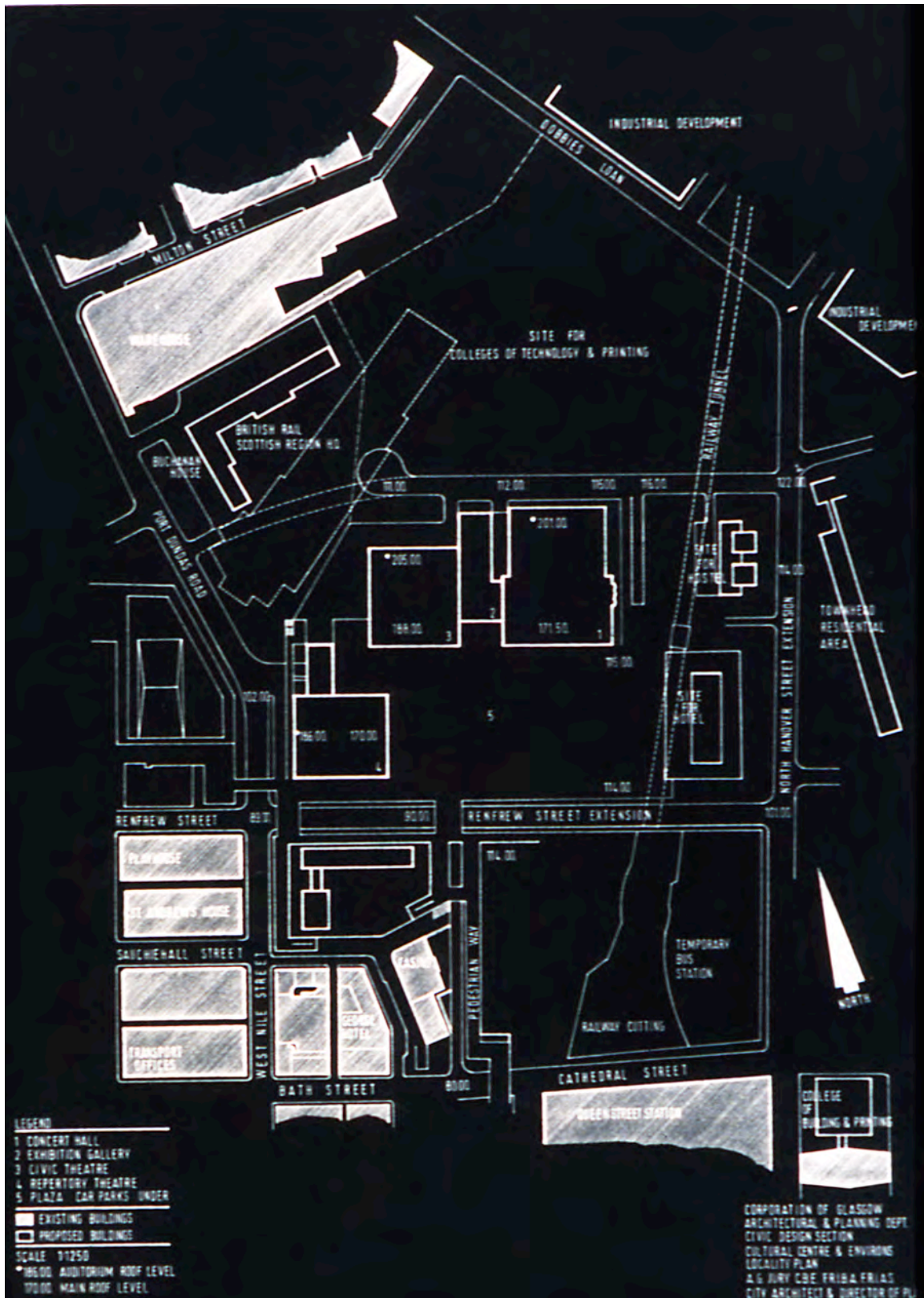


Fig. 7: Redesign plans for Glasgow's city centre, approximately 1964. The building outlines in the middle show Archibald Jury's planned Cultural Centre (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

Indeed, Jury's proposal appears first and foremost concerned with urban functions and traffic flows (see figures 3-6). Car parking literally formed the basis of the new cultural centre, and the location in the Cowcaddens Comprehensive Development Area was favoured among other reasons because of its proximity to the proposed inner ring road, the future M8 motorway.¹⁷ The scheme also provided, as Jury pointed out, "the first opportunity in Glasgow for the segregation of motorists and pedestrians."¹⁸ This can best be seen in a 1965 version of the plan (see figure 7).¹⁹ The pedestrian zone was a deck that stretched over several streets, straddling Renfrew Street on two pedestrian bridges and reaching out to the west across West Nile Street and to the south across Cathedral Street. Unlike Jury's first proposal (figures 2-6) the gigantic square was to be opened up to the south and west. The deck was also connected to the planned buildings for the college, and to the two levels of the new bus station. The visitor could arrive by car or bus on the subterranean level, and then walk two blocks to either side on the elevated deck, without being disturbed by car traffic. In addition to the deck, pedestrian ways stretched across many adjacent streets, forming both overpasses and underpasses.

The project was thus firmly rooted in Glasgow's plans for the accommodation of increasing motor traffic. This approach had already been outlined in the 1945 Bruce Plan. Major projects included tenement demolitions such as those in the Gorbals (early 1960s) and new road works such as the Clyde Tunnel (1964) and the four-lane Kingston Bridge (1970).²⁰ In the Cowcaddens Comprehensive Development Area itself many tenements and industrial sites were demolished. The largest was the former Buchanan Street Goods Station (see figure 2).²¹ The Cultural Centre thus demonstrated the technocratic ideal of an efficient city as well as an ostentatious break away from the Victorian industrial metropolis and its historic division between the splendour of the city centre and the misery of the industrial quarters. At the same time the ambitious renewal project was predicated on lasting wealth generated by industrial production – a hope that would soon be foiled by Glasgow's industrial decline.

Their techno-fetishist concern with traffic planning notwithstanding, Jury and his team aimed at a representative building that was at the height of its times. Their design was monumental, not only in terms of the plaza's scale but also with regard to the freestanding buildings. They showed a modernist glass and concrete design that nevertheless included classical elements. The main façades towards the plaza were characterized by a clear rhythm of vertical concrete pillars, which in the concert hall building formed big arches around the ground floor and smaller bays at the receding top floor. The decidedly modernist façade thus contained a hint of classicism with changing orders in every floor and a cornice under the roof. Jury himself deemed this design an "envelope" to clothe the city's cultural functions in "an elegant, simple and uncomplicated fashion."²²

¹⁷ Corporation of Glasgow, Architectural and Planning Department, Report to Special Sub-Committee on the Development Plan, dated 26 November 1962, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "Cowcaddens Cultural Centre."

¹⁸ Archibald Jury, quoted in "Design for Cultural Centre Defended – City Architect Opposed to Competitions," *Glasgow Herald* 26 November 1965, 1.

¹⁹ See the version produced by Jury's department in 1965, slide available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services.

²⁰ Corporation of Glasgow, Press Release for the Exhibition "Glasgow 1980", 1970, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "G R C H [Glasgow Royal Concert Hall] analysis."

²¹ Exhibition "Glasgow and its Housing Policy," Corporation of Glasgow, Architectural and Planning Department, photographs dated 8 February 1957, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, folder "Photographs miscellaneous", picture no 64-559-12.

²² Archibald Jury, quoted in, "Design for Cultural Centre Defended – City Architect Opposed to Competitions," *Glasgow Herald* 26 November 1965, 1.

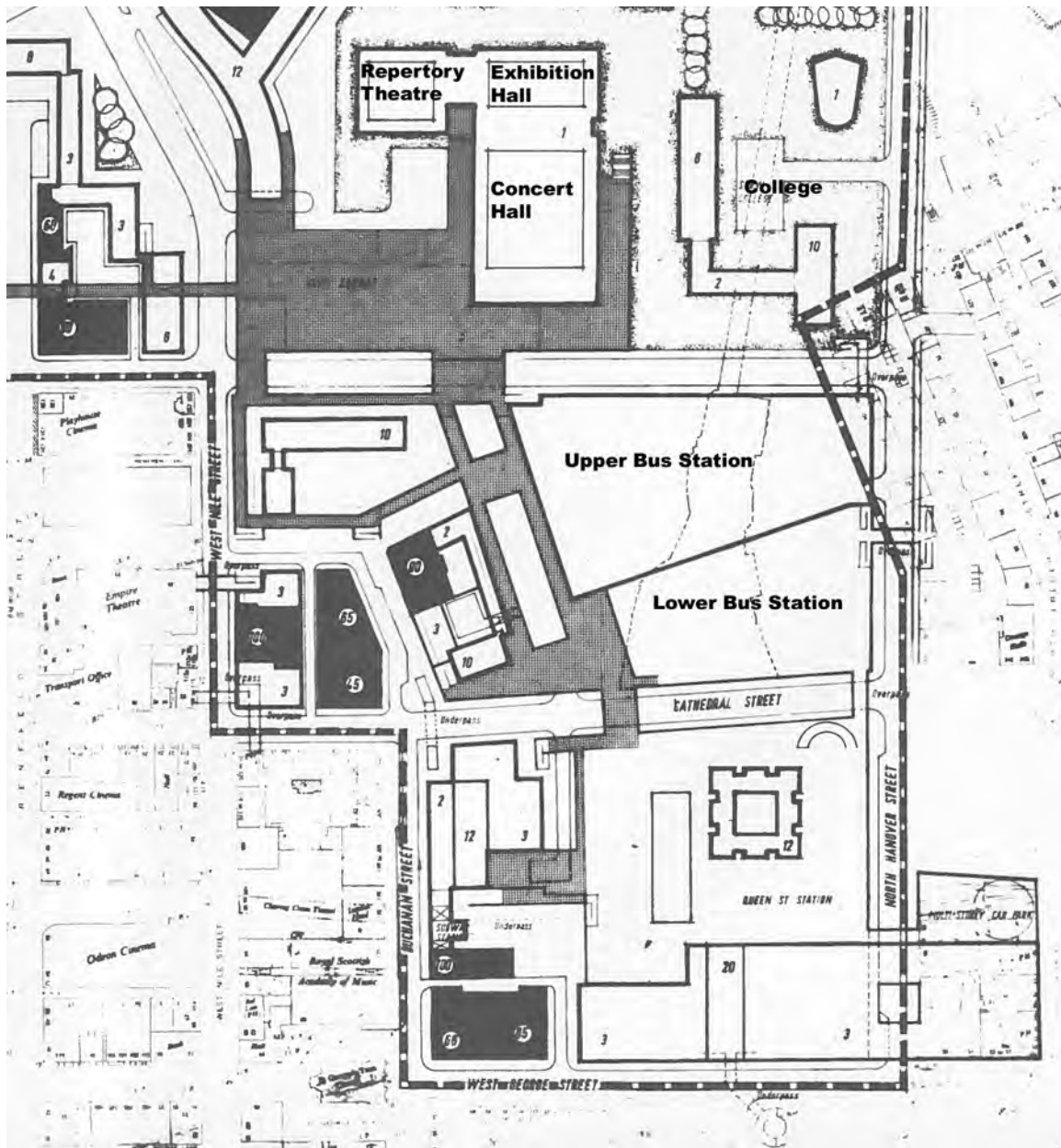


Fig. 8: Redesign plans for Glasgow's city centre, approximately 1964, revised version by Archibald Jury/ Civic Design Section of the Corporation of Glasgow. On this plan, the square is smaller. A pedestrian deck extends over the street. (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

The scheme resonated with similar plans in other European and North American cities during the mid-twentieth century. They were influenced by the most significant visions for a functionally separated urban agglomeration, including Ebenezer Howard's Garden City and Le Corbusier's city of towers in the park. Jury's plan was a watered-down version of these visions: a pronounced opposition between cultural functions in the city centre and tower blocks or garden suburbs on the periphery, and the connection of both through motorways and large thoroughfares. The new city model for Glasgow was illustrated in a diagram by Robert Mansley (figure 8). Mansley, who like many of his colleagues at the time was an administrator rather than a designer, directed the City Council's Planning Department, with which Jury's department collaborated. Instead of the "uncontrolled" Victorian city, he

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announced a "controlled" modern environment, which "reduces congestion... enables good daylighting... [and] encourages the development of larger sites."²³

Jury's proposal also reflected the debate about the "Heart of the City." The desirable shape of a "humanized" city centre was the theme of the 1951 CIAM meeting in Hoddesdon (England).²⁴ The debate was anchored in recent design. One of the most celebrated "hearts of the city" at the time, the Festival of Britain site on London's South Bank, was shown to conference participants as a part of the tour programme.²⁵ It included CIAM member Leslie Martin's Royal Festival Hall (completed 1951). Thirty years later, Martin's design for the Royal Concert Hall would cast the idea of an articulated urban centre in an entirely different form. At the time, however, large developments of solitary cultural buildings were the cutting edge. In New York City the most famous example is the Lincoln Center (begun in 1959) with the Philharmonic Hall (Max Abramovitz), the Metropolitan Opera House (Wallace Harrison), and the New York State Theatre (Philip Johnson). In West Berlin one finds the Kulturforum with the Philharmonic Concert Hall (Hans Scharoun, begun 1960) and the New National Gallery (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, begun 1965). And on London's South Bank, the Royal Festival Hall was complemented with the National Film Theatre and British Film Institute (Leslie Martin and others, 1957), the Queen Elizabeth Hall (Hubert Bennett and others 1967), and the National Theatre (Denys Lasdun, first plans submitted in 1951, opened in 1976).

Indeed, architect Jury and his team had visited not only the Lincoln Center but also other modernist icons, such as the Berlin Conference Hall (Hugh Stubbins, 1957), the Toronto City Halls (Viljo Revell, begun 1961), the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv (Dov Karmi and Zeev Rechter, 1957), and the Concert Hall and International Convention Centre in Jerusalem (Zeev Rechter, 1950-1963).²⁶ Within Britain they had toured Coventry, Liverpool, Manchester, and of course the already mentioned London South Bank.²⁷ Jury's proposal would soon be referred to as a "South Bank type arts complex."²⁸

The Cultural Centre was also a textbook example of "deck urbanism" or "urbanisme de dalle" which at the time were tested in different countries.²⁹ Famous examples include La Defense in Paris (begun 1958), the Bunker Hill Redevelopment in Los Angeles (begun 1955), or the elevated Domplatte square around Cologne Cathedral (begun 1968). All had been designed to protect the pedestrians from the dangers of increasing motor traffic. And all of them are now widely criticized for their lack of connection to the surrounding areas and the many graffiti-ridden, littered and smelly spaces they create around open-air stairwells and subterranean access paths.

Public Outcry

The "island of culture" proposal did not meet the critics' favour. Jury was attacked not only for the obvious shortcomings of the plan, but also for his opaque decision-making and authoritarian top-down approach. His conviction that the City Council knew best what the city

²³ Robert Mansley, "Report to the Special Sub-Committee on Development Plan on Plot Ratio Control in the City Centre," [1960s], available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services.

²⁴ See for example Konstanze Domhardt, *The Heart of the City – Die Stadt in den transatlantischen Debatten der CIAM 1933-1951* (Zurich: gta publishers, 2012) or Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism 1928-1960* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2000).

²⁵ Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism 1928-1960* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2000), 204.

²⁶ "Design for Cultural Centre Defended – City Architect Opposed to Competitions," *Glasgow Herald* 26 November 1965, 1.

²⁷ "Site for New St Andrew's Hall," *Glasgow Herald* 11 April 1963, 16.

²⁸ Martin Spring, "Glasgow's Hall of Fame," *Building*, 19 October 1990, reprinted in Peter Carolin and Trevor Dannat, eds., *Architecture, Education and Research – The Work of Leslie Martin: Papers and Selected Articles* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), 101.

²⁹ See for example Rosemary Wakeman, "Les Dalles: French Modernism and the Architecture of Public Space," in Vladimir Kulic and Timothy Parker, eds., *Sanctioning Modernism: Architecture and the Making of Postwar Identities* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

needed was not appreciated; neither was his refusal to discuss alternative proposals.³⁰ On a formal basis, the plaza was deemed too large and the centre too isolated from the rest of the city. As a matter of fact, the proposed forms and uses of the surrounding blocks were remarkably unspecific. The plans marked many spaces as "not allocated," and much suggests that the purpose of these spaces was not yet decided.³¹ In addition, critics pointed to the "climatic impossibility of this scheme," in which a huge plaza would be exposed to the fierce Scottish wind and rain and evoke "memories of the rainswept wastes surrounding London's Royal Festival Hall."³²

The most consequential criticism came from the architectural establishment. Summarizing some of the points that were already raised in the newspapers, Jack Coia, Ninian Johnston, Alan Reiach, and Walter Underwood disparaged the design and demanded the appointment of a new master planner to replace Jury.³³ The four were among Scotland's best-known architects.³⁴ They complained that the buildings were isolated and the scheme was not properly tied in with its surroundings. A particular problem for them was the large proposed new bus station to the south as well as the yet indeterminate commercial development next to it. In their opinion, the entry to the building from Renfrew Street "by means of the two deck garage [was] unsatisfactory."³⁵ The Royal Fine Arts commission joined in the protest, complaining that the proposed scheme was not "properly related and linked to the structures and spaces which would, in due course, provide its setting."³⁶

Coia, Johnston, Reiach, and Underwood were eventually invited to meet Jury to discuss possible alterations, and the Glasgow Institute of Architects was also consulted.³⁷ But by that time the public outcry had, it seems, rendered Jury's plan unfeasible beyond recovery. A year later the City Council gave in – not to the newspapers' calls for an open competition but rather to the four established architects' demands to employ a different designer. Jury, the state-employed bureaucrat, came to be replaced by a private-sector star architect. In 1968 the City

³⁰ "Design for Cultural Centre Defended – City Architect Opposed to Competitions," *Glasgow Herald* 26 November 1965, 1, Elizabeth Meldrum, "Mr Jury's Time of Trial," *Glasgow Herald* 20 April 1966, 10, "Envelopes," [editorial] *Glasgow Herald* 26 November 1965, 8.

³¹ Exhibition "Glasgow and its Housing Policy," Corporation of Glasgow, Architectural and Planning Department, photographs dated 8 February 1957, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, folder "Photographs miscellaneous", picture no 64-559-12.

³² "Design for Cultural Centre Defended – City Architect Opposed to Competitions," *Glasgow Herald* 26 November 1965, 1.

³³ Jack Coia, Alan Reiach, Walter Underwood, Ninian Johnston, Letter to Town Clerk James Falconer, dated 16 June 1966, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "G R C H [Glasgow Royal Concert Hall] analysis." Also other eminent voices joined in the criticism, such as Frank Fielden, professor of architecture at Strathclyde University Elizabeth Meldrum, "Mr Jury's Time of Trial," *Glasgow Herald* 20 April 1966, 10.

³⁴ Johnston (1912-1990), renowned for his various schools and housing estates in Glasgow, was the president of the Glasgow Institute of Architects. Coia (1889-1981) had held this post before, and was a principal of Gillespie, Kidd and Coia, one of the country's most eminent architectural firms, Underwood (1906-1988) had designed numerous residential and commercial buildings in Glasgow, and Reiach (1910-1992), who unlike the others was based in Edinburgh, was the vice president of the Edinburgh Architectural Association.

³⁵ Jack Coia, Alan Reiach, Walter Underwood, Ninian Johnston, Letter to Town Clerk James Falconer, dated 16 June 1966, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "G R C H [Glasgow Royal Concert Hall] analysis."

³⁶ Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland, *Report for 1964 to 1966*, presented to the parliament in 1967, p 18, available at the City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "Cowcaddens Cultural Centre."

³⁷ This is remembered by Jury's successor. James Kernohan, Letter to the editor titled "Let concert hall go ahead," *Glasgow Herald* 8 March 1986, 10.

Council approved the appointment of "the architect hinted in Coia et al.'s letter of 1966" as a "consultant": Leslie Martin.³⁸

A Pedestrian Square for the Historic Centre: Leslie Martin's First Proposal, 1968

The row over the cultural centre might not so much have reflected "the city's traditionally ambivalent attitude to the arts," as a journalist surmised in 1966, as a stirring ambivalence towards the modernist, car-oriented environment as well as the purposefulness of state bureaucracy.³⁹ At the time, such doubts were voiced in many European countries, and Martin's appointment has to be seen against this background. It must have been clear from the beginning that his "consultancy" would in fact mark the abandonment of the "island of culture" idea and an invitation to create a completely new design, one that was more closely connected to Glasgow's existing urban fabric.

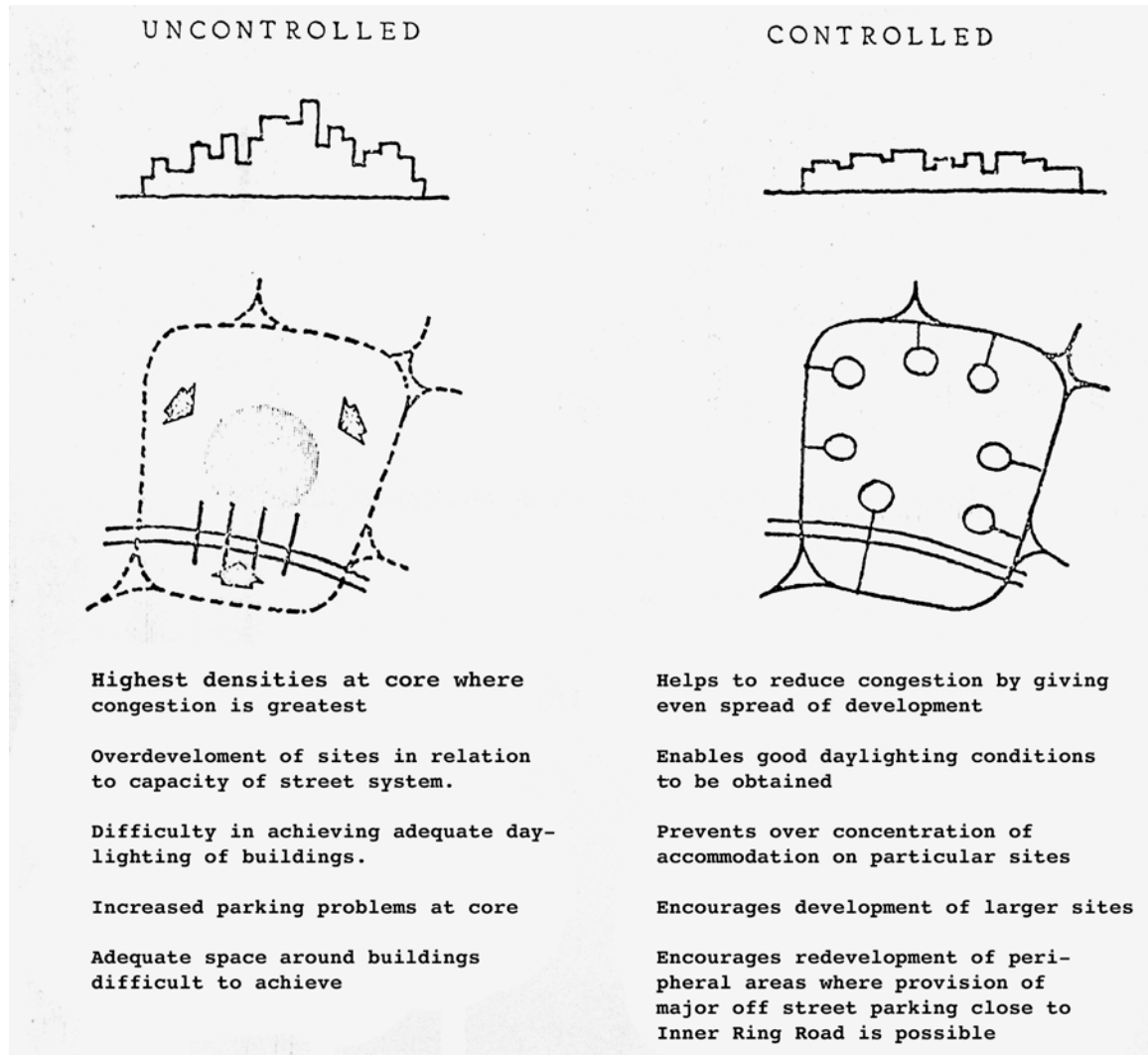


Fig. 9: Comparison of "controlled" and "uncontrolled" density worked out by the Director of Planning Robert Mansley in his "Report to the Special Sub-Committee on Development Plan on Plot Ratio Control in the City Centre," early 1960s (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

³⁸ Glasgow City Council, Department of Planning, Report on the history of the Concert Hall, draft version, typed draft version, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "G R C H [Glasgow Royal Concert Hall] analysis."

³⁹ Elizabeth Meldrum, "Mr Jury's Time of Trial," *Glasgow Herald* 20 April 1966, 10.

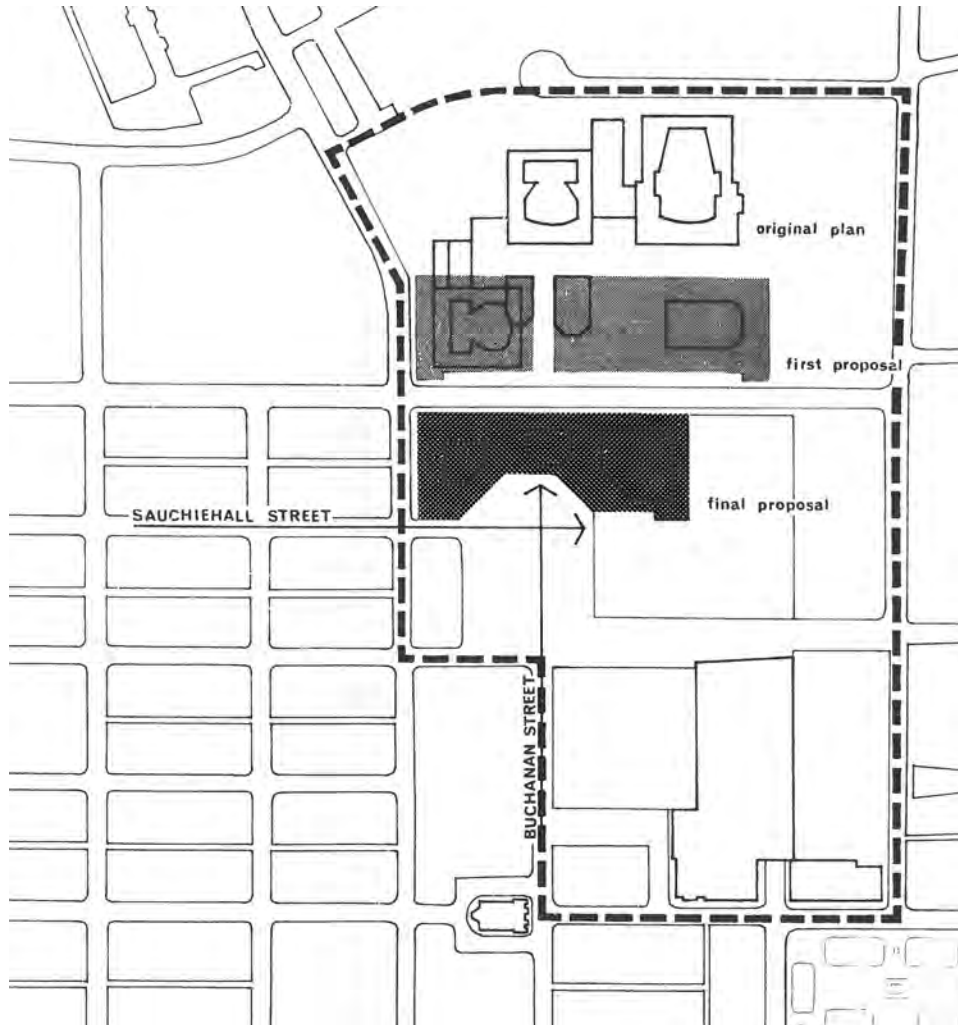


Fig. 10: Leslie Martin, *Old and New Scheme, A Report for the Corporation of Glasgow [on the new cultural centre]*, dated November 1968, p. 6b (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services)

The design Martin presented in 1968 was indeed a departure from Jury's scheme (figures 9-10). Proposing a protruding glass-covered façade, Martin used a modernist vocabulary quite unlike Jury's.⁴⁰ The drawings showed a three- to four-storey complex that developed around a hexagonal square at the intersection of Sauchiehall and Buchanan Streets, only one block south of Jury's site and yet in a completely different setting. The present location at the intersection of Glasgow's busiest shopping streets was thus determined, resonating with Martin's conviction that the cultural centre "could not be regarded in isolation."⁴¹ For Martin, "[a]rchitects must respond to the old forms and materials and perceive their true intent in their own age, and then, remembering everything, start again. This is the essential intention of tradition."⁴² This approach is already recognizable in Martin's cuboid university buildings from the 1960s, which express a functionalist aesthetic through historically informed

⁴⁰ Leslie Martin, *A Report for the Corporation of Glasgow [on the new cultural centre]*, dated November 1968, 9a [available at the Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services].

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴² Leslie Martin, quoted in Diana Rowntree, "Sir Leslie Martin" [Obituary], *The Guardian* 2 August 2000.

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geometries. It resonates Aldo Rossi's theory of urban typologies, which was developed at the same time would eventually herald a new conception of the city.

For the Cultural Centre, Martin's design offered a continuation of the existing city centre instead of dispersed pavilions on a *superquadra*. The square was determined by existing streets on two sides, and on the remaining sides by Martin's new building. It would form a complex of its own that would nevertheless not be entirely isolated. The visual axes were crucial for the integration, providing vistas along both Sauchiehall and Buchanan Streets. In future versions of the proposal, arbours stretching along the streets would enhance these vistas. Martin's hexagonal platform was thus a combination of the traditional Victorian square and a semi-private elevated plaza.

Martin's scheme was a megastructural complex that combined several functions in a single building (see figure 10). Next to the Concert Hall, three other venues were integrated: the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, which at the time was located in different buildings across the city; the Citizens' Theatre, whose directors were considering relocation; and a hotel. All were connected by internal corridors. External pedestrian walkways would lead to a new "Sports and Exhibition Centre" and to a redesigned bus station on the west. The ensemble would continue the block structure of the area and yet form a separate compound.

With regard to its urban qualities Martin's design had both advantages and disadvantages over Jury's. His glass-covered winter garden facing the octagonal square would provide a visual connection between inside and outside, and at the same time an impenetrable barrier that would have diminished the value of the public square. In addition, a pedestrian bustle on the square would be encouraged at the expense of neglecting the building's northern and eastern sides. This is precisely what eventually happened when a revised version of Martin's design was built twenty years later. The north and east of the Concert Hall is now reserved for parking and service entrances and constitutes an unwelcoming barrier that cuts off the adjacent neighbourhoods.

Nonetheless Martin's plan was widely praised. The Royal Fine Arts commission spoke of a "brilliantly rational piece of three-dimensional planning and civic design"⁴³ and planning director Mansley commended the "compact and potentially exciting design at one of the most important visual points of the city."⁴⁴

Martin's scheme owed a debt to similar contemporary designs. The most radical proposals for multifunctional complexes with interior streets and linked buildings were the utopian designs by the Japanese Metabolists (early 1960s).⁴⁵ A famous realized example was the exhibition and hotel complex Place Bonaventure in Montreal by Ray Affleck, which was begun in 1964 and famously analysed by Reyner Banham.⁴⁶ In these cases multi-use facilities were integrated into the urban fabric and nonetheless formed a world of their own, with ample interior spaces divided from the surroundings by futuristic glass walls and semi-private plazas.

Although Martin's proposal remained unbuilt, it heralded a new approach to the city that would eventually lead to a renaissance of the historic city centre. The ideal of the car-oriented city was not yet completely abandoned, but the Corbusian model of the tower in the park was slowly losing momentum. The significance of the historic centre was reinstated, as evidenced in the 1969 pedestrianization of Sauchiehall and Buchanan Streets.⁴⁷ The demolition plans for the surrounding buildings were more cautious, following an awakening awareness of their

⁴³ Royal Fine Arts commission, quoted in Claude Thomson, "Glasgow Cultural Centre Plan a 'Brilliant Design'," *Glasgow Herald* 3 June 1969, 1

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 and 22.

⁴⁵ For a history of the Metabolist movement and their megastructural proposals see Zhonjie Lin, *Kenzo Tange and the Metabolist Movement* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011)

⁴⁶ Reyner Banham, *Megastructures – Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976).

⁴⁷ Royal Fine Arts commission, quoted in Claude Thomson, "Glasgow Cultural Centre Plan a 'Brilliant Design'," *Glasgow Herald* 3 June 1969, 22.

value as well as a declining economy and dwindling tax income. There was a willingness to work with the existing urban fabric. Plans were developed around visual axes and took into account the wider surroundings. This echoed a user-centred and aesthetically informed approach to cityscape that was most famously expressed by Kevin Lynch and his followers, but similarly in the Townscape movement, whose protagonist Gordon Cullen would soon play a crucial role in the design of Glasgow's city centre.⁴⁸ The city, both old and new, was considered an aesthetic ensemble that was to be modernized and developed, but no longer reinvented from scratch.

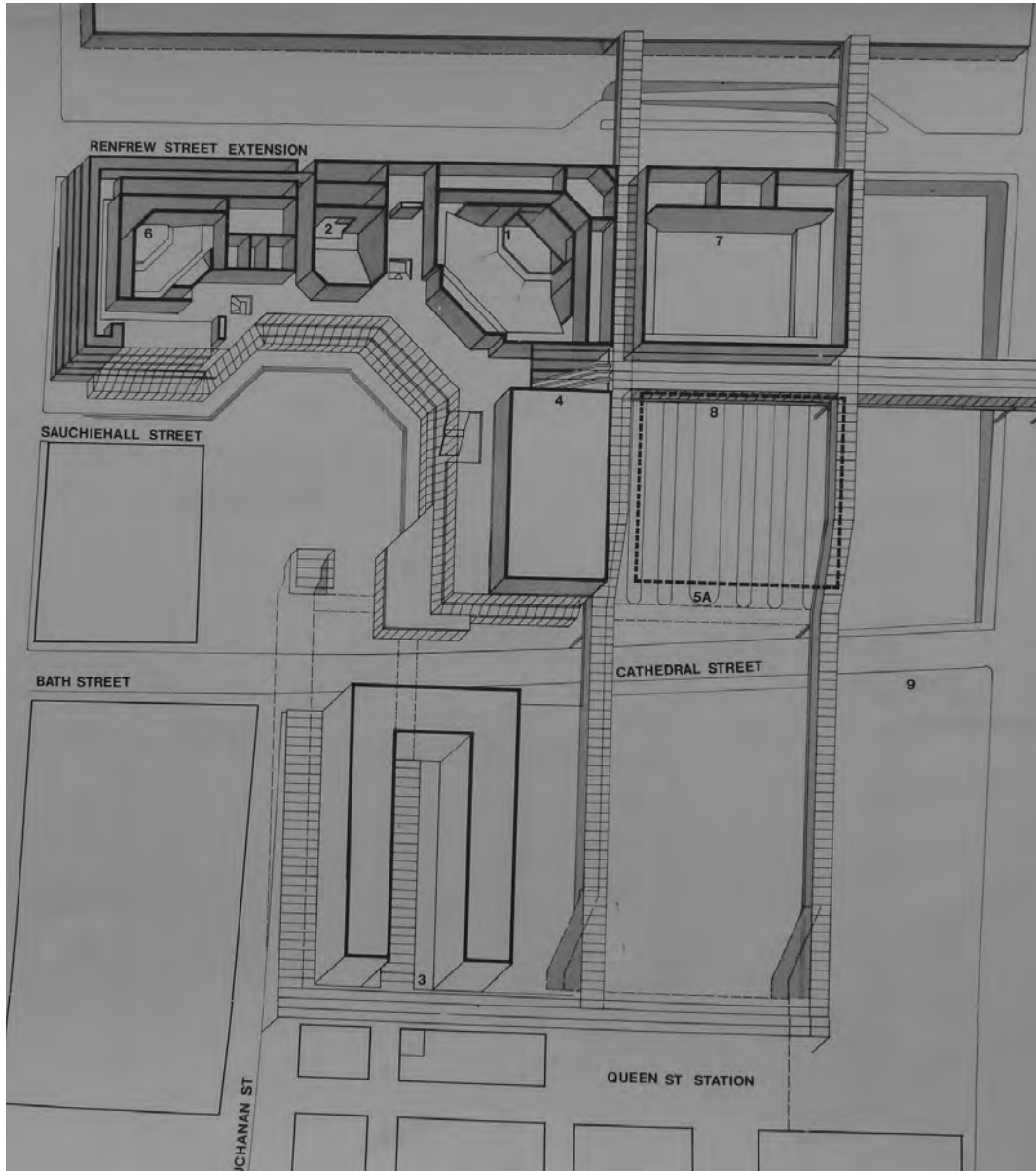


Fig. 11: Leslie Martin, *Old and New Scheme A Report for the Corporation of Glasgow [on the new cultural centre]*, dated November 1968, p. 9a. The complex includes several components: 1 Concert Hall, 2 Theatre, 6 Royal Academy of Music and Drama, 4 Hotel, 7 Exhibition and Sports Hall, 3 Commercial Development, 5 Temporary Bus Station, 8 Final Bus Station (Glasgow City Council, *Development and Regeneration Services*)

⁴⁸ The two founding texts in this context are Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960) and Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1961).

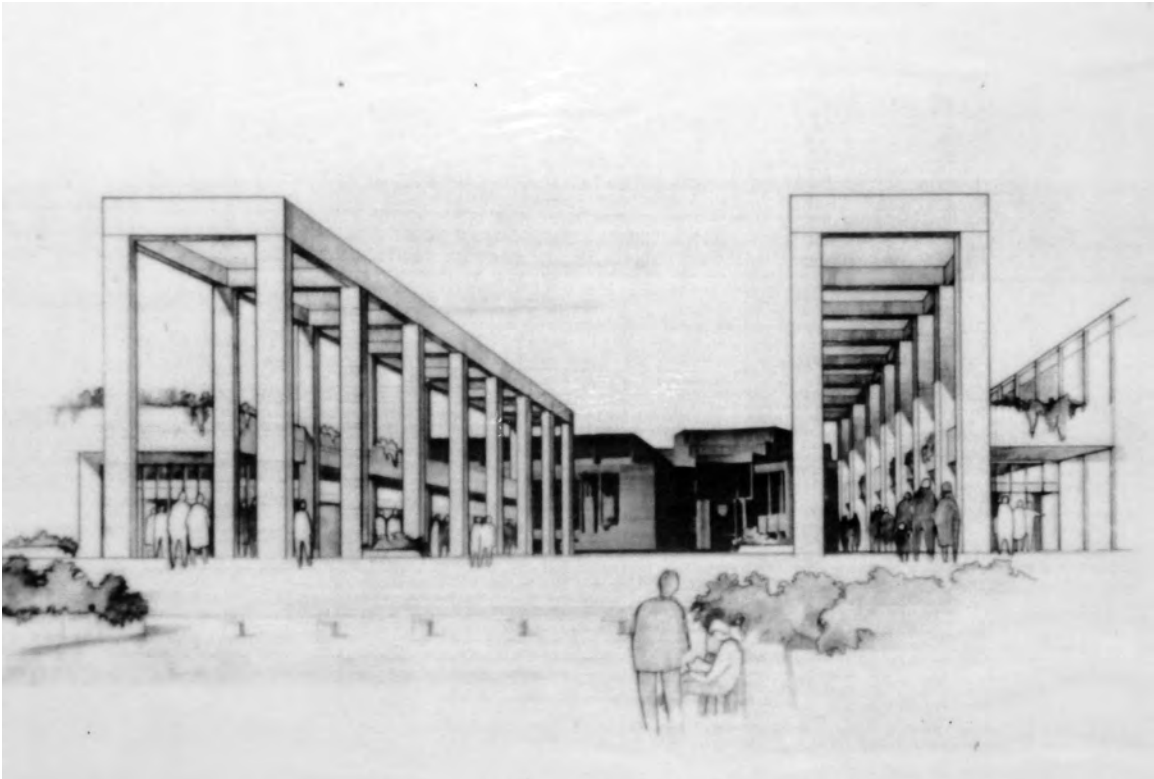


Fig. 12: Leslie Martin, Concert Hall proposal, undated photograph (1970s?). The drawing shows a view looking north along Buchanan Street (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

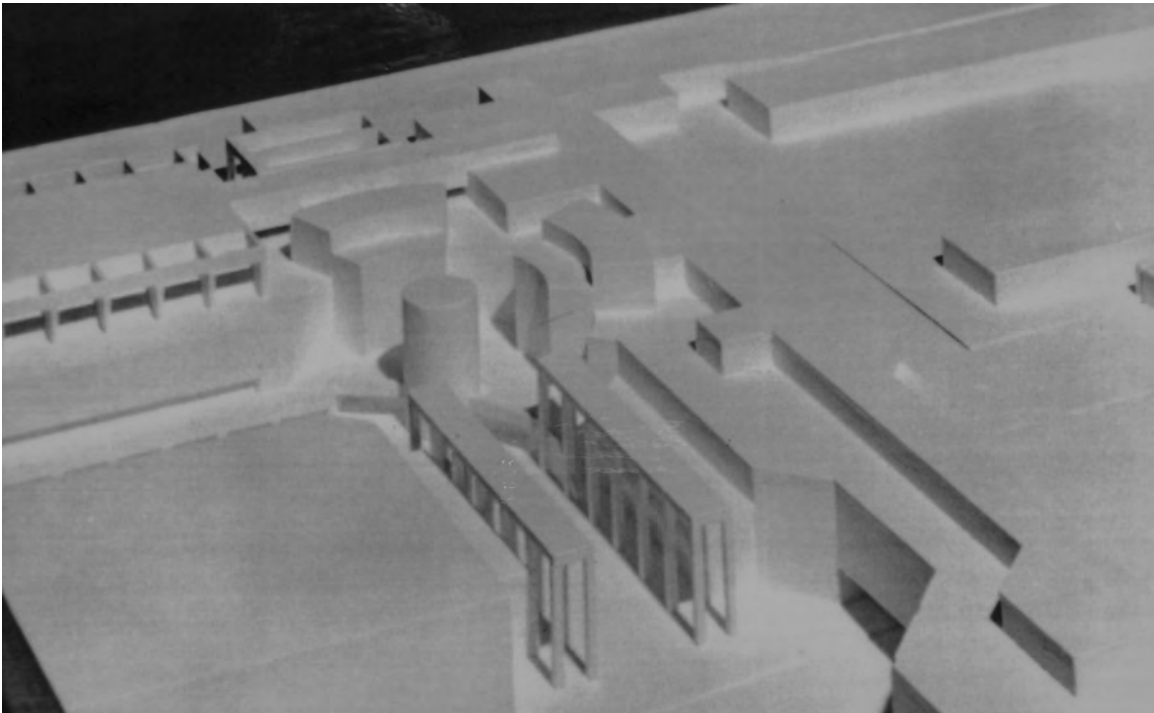


Fig. 13: Leslie Martin, Concert Hall proposal, undated photograph (1970s?), looking northeast. On later drawings the cylinder on the square is rendered as a covered spiral staircase (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

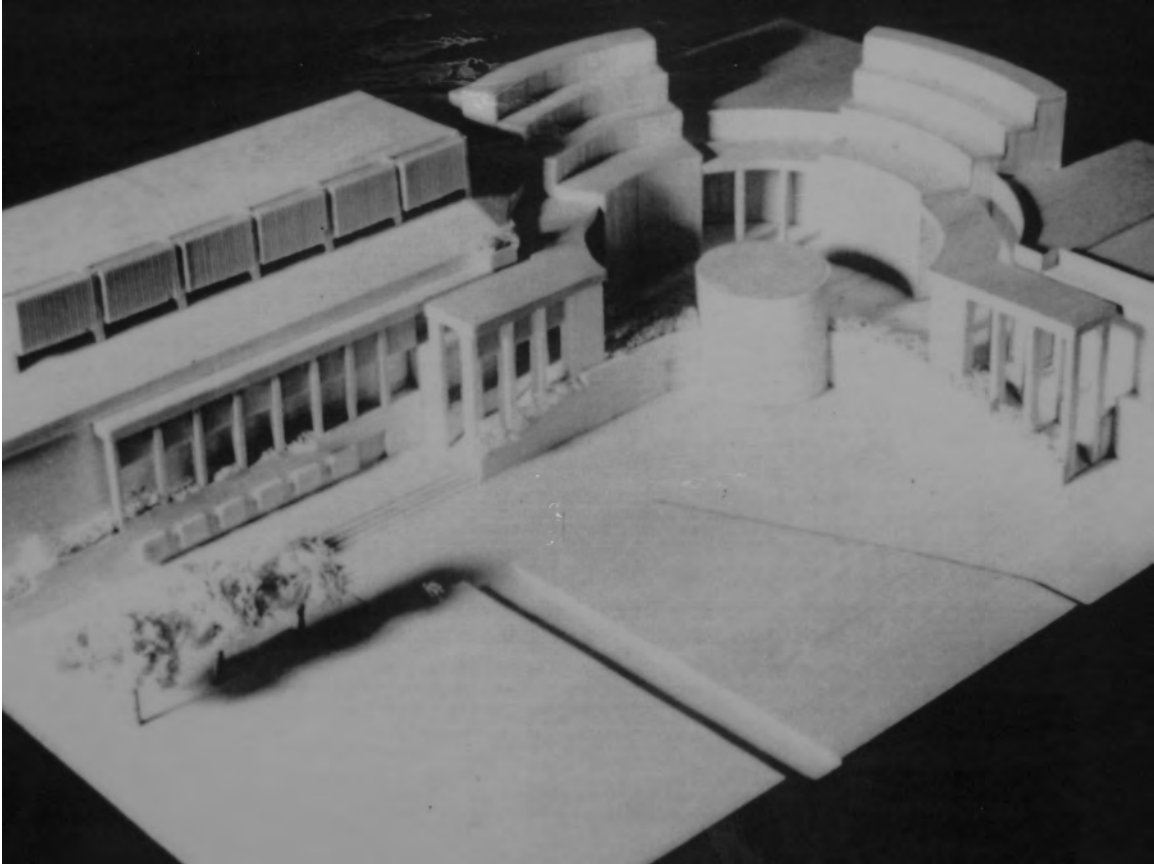


Fig. 14: Leslie Martin, Concert Hall proposal, undated photograph (1970s?), looking northeast. On this model the cylinder is slightly smaller. Instead of a double colonnade along Buchanan Street there are two colonnades along both Sauchiehall and Buchanan Streets (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

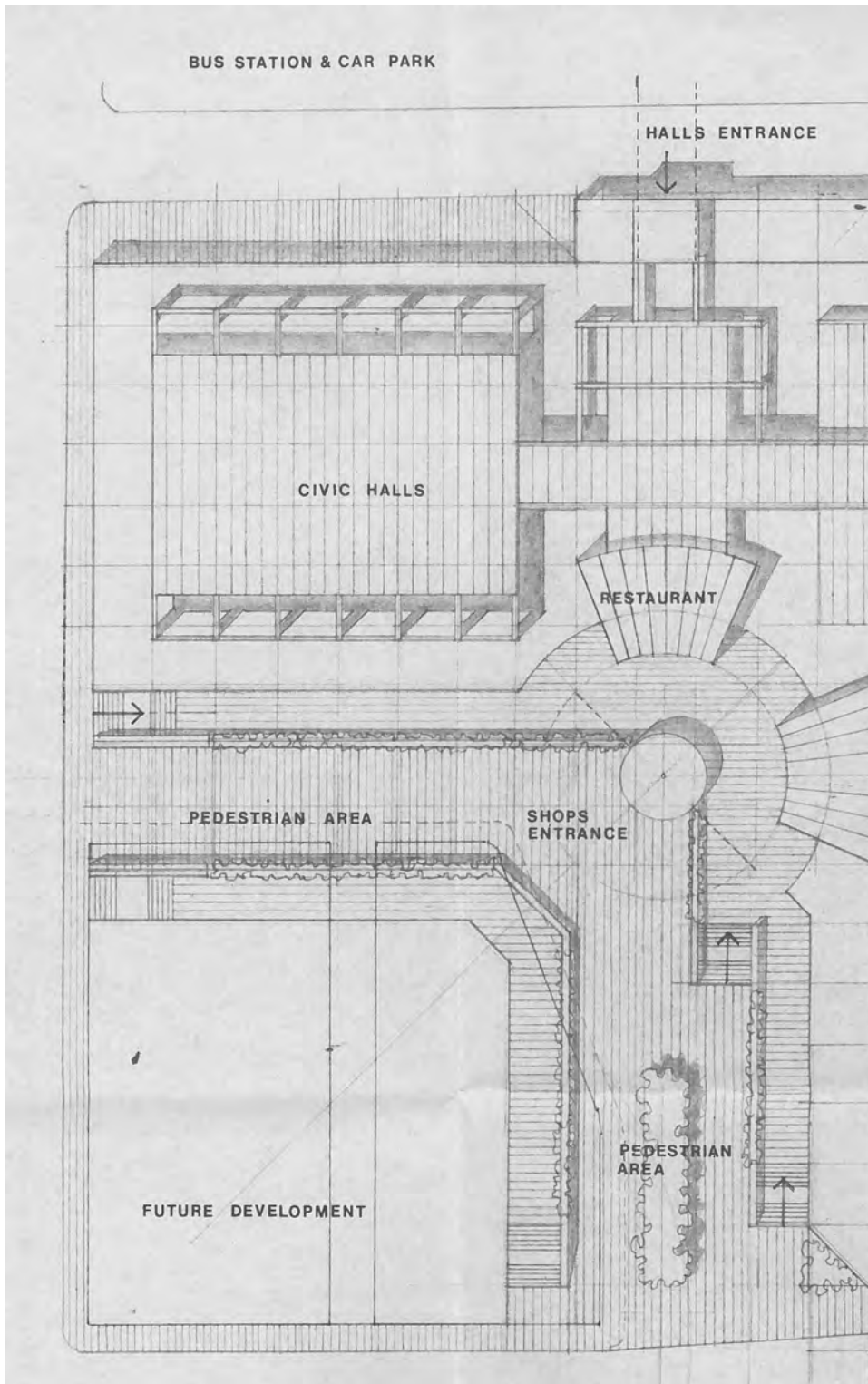


Fig. 15: Leslie Martin, Concert Hall proposal, undated photograph, 1970s or 80s, plan. On this proposal the cylinder provides an entrance to the shops (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

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Economic Decline and Quarrels over Leslie Martin's Design

Over the following years Glasgow's industry continued to decline.⁴⁹ At the same time Leslie Martin's proposal was repeatedly altered in its details. In one version (figures 11 and 12) Buchanan Street was turned into a monumental walkway flanked by symmetrical loggias on piers, creating a modern ensemble of classical harmony. In another version (figure 13) the walkway was opened up and the loggias were reduced to arbours over the shop front. In the versions shown on figure 12, 13, 14, and 15 a massive cylinder became the centre of the square, constituting a spiral staircase that would give entrance to the building's first floor. After many alterations, today's elevated square still echoes this circular "hinge of the two streets."

Given the widespread approval, why was Martin's first design not built? Part of the answer lies in the ongoing skirmish between the many different actors who time and again required adjustments to the extent that an overall consensus was never reached. But there is much to suggest that Martin's design ultimately fell victim to "the onrush of financial stringency."⁵⁰ Already at its first presentation in 1968 city officials were quoted as feeling "acute apprehension about the tremendous cost of proceeding with all of Sir Leslie's ideas."⁵¹ Over the following years of exacerbating industrial decline and a crumbling tax basis the city was simply not able to afford the investment.

What followed was denial and debates over details, prompting the *Glasgow Herald* to lament that if the Concert Hall was eventually built "the optimism of those interested in the cultural welfare of the city has known too many reversals and missed chances for anyone to do more than breathe a sigh of relief."⁵² But the sigh did not come. Meanwhile, the Citizens' Theatre - withdrew and decided to remain on its existing premises in the Gorbals. The Scottish National Orchestra continued to play in the tiny "City Hall" on Candleriggs, which critics called a hothouse with hard seats and stark décor.⁵³ A viable plan did not materialize, and the *Glasgow Herald* summarized the dilemma with a disillusioned "This year, next year, some time, never."⁵⁴

At the same time, welfare-state policies were gradually ended. With Jury's dismissal in the late 1960s, the City Council had already abandoned the model of city design by state-employed architects. Now, in the late 1970s, it also began to curtail its financial support. Pressed by waning tax income, the Council in 1979 started investigating the possibility of a commercial developer taking up Martin's design.⁵⁵ The city purchased the adjacent site to enable a combined cultural and commercial development.⁵⁶ Martin, according to a report to the Council, had given his blessing to this commercial element - basically a whole ground floor of shops over which the cultural venues were to be erected. The savings were tempting. With a commercial basis the project was calculated to cost a mere 12 million instead of 23 million

⁴⁹ The number of Glaswegians employed in manufacturing declined from 306,000 in 1971 to 188,000 in 1981 and 121,000 in 1991. A. McGregor and F. Mather, "Developments in Glasgow's labour market," in W. Leer and C. Moore, eds., *The City in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) and J. MacInnes, "The deindustrialization of Glasgow," *Scottish Affairs* 11 (Spring 1995), both quoted in María Gómez, "Reflective Images: The Case of Urban Regeneration in Glasgow and Bilbao," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22 n. 1 (1998), 108.

⁵⁰ John Fowler, "Still no prospect of a concert hall," *Glasgow Herald* 4 January 1983, 4. This is confirmed by Glasgow's former Director of Planning. James Rae, conversation with the author, Glasgow, 30 May 2012.

⁵¹ "Decision to build concert hall may be taken soon," *Glasgow Herald* 30 November 1978, 5.

⁵² "Centre for culture," *Glasgow Herald* 20 August 1970, 8.

⁵³ John Fowler, "Still no prospect of a concert hall," *Glasgow Herald* 4 January 1983, 4.

⁵⁴ Charles Gillies, "Hope Still Deferred for Glasgow Culture Centre" *Glasgow Herald* 21 February 1973, 11.

⁵⁵ James Kernohan, Letter to the editor titled "Let concert hall go ahead," *Glasgow Herald* 8 March 1986, 10.

⁵⁶ Claude Thomson, "Glasgow's last chance for a civic hall?" *Glasgow Herald* 22 September 1983, 9.

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pounds.⁵⁷ The course was now set for a strategy that was also tested in other parts of the deindustrializing world: the mobilization of private capital through a combination of culture and commerce.

This went along with a progressive move towards architectural post-modernism. Also Martin's design was not left untouched by this development. His classical elements such as his stylized columns and window rhythms were soon juxtaposed with the eclectic historicism of the adjacent shopping mall. Glasgow's central streets thus increasingly conveyed the impression of a historical urban fabric.

Neo-historical Façades to Promote Urban Regeneration: Gordon Cullen's Proposal, 1985

In the early 1980s, urban planning in Glasgow arrived at a new stage. At the time, the city felt the disastrous effects of industrial decline. Closed-down shipyards and soaring unemployment rates brought the city to the brink of bankruptcy, and the overambitious renewal plans, which even a flourishing economy would have been hard-pressed to finance, were scrapped one after the other. What remained were neighbourhoods ravaged by motorways and ruthless tenement demolition, and next to them increasingly dilapidated tower block estates whose maintenance became more and more difficult.

The way out of this predicament, as elsewhere in the deindustrializing world, was sought in a combination of privatization and image marketing. The visual language of this new policy was post-modern, showing at the same time an inclination for pre-modernist forms and a nostalgia for Glasgow's golden age in the late nineteenth century, when it was deemed the "Second City of the British Empire". The new approach was developed against the background of the conservative British government under Margaret Thatcher and its neoliberal policies. In the Glasgow context, however, neoliberalism was mediated on the one hand by the fervently socialist City Council and on the other hand by an institution that promoted market-oriented policies but had been set up under the Labour government in 1975: the Scottish Development Agency (SDA).⁵⁸ The SDA was a well-funded public authority. It was created to liaise with local authorities such as the Glasgow City Council as well as with private enterprise in order to mitigate the consequences of industrial decline, and in the long run to help create jobs.⁵⁹ Being a regional agency SDA stood above the City Council and thus had the authority to initiate or accelerate programmes that targeted Glasgow's physical aspect. This included basic tasks such as façade cleaning, painting, planting, and floodlighting as well as architectural projects.

Glasgow became a textbook example of the interdependence between economic circumstances such as de-industrialization and the emergence of post-modern design famously analysed by David Harvey.⁶⁰ However, unlike other places, in Glasgow the instrumentalization of architecture for urban entrepreneurialism was not pushed by influential business leaders but rather by nominally left-wing public institutions. Post-modern architecture and an increasing fragmentation between rich and poor neighbourhoods thus did not respond to the needs of existing businesses but were instead used to establish a post-industrial economy in a city that had lost its industrial base.

The plans for the Royal Concert Hall were included in these new strategies. The first ideas for a "civic element" to "complement" the Concert Hall – a shopping arcade with a glazed façade – were proposed in 1979.⁶¹ The building was now seen in conjunction with the surrounding shopping streets. Its design fed into the efforts to make Glasgow in general and the historic city centre in particular attractive for visitors and potential investors. The connection between

⁵⁷ "New concert hall plan would cut original price by half," *Glasgow Herald* 19 June 1979, 2.

⁵⁸ From 1981-87 George Mathewson was SDA's chief executive. Stuart Gulliver was Director of Development, one of six directors.

⁵⁹ Stuart Gulliver, former Director of Development for the Scottish Development Agency, conversation with the author, Glasgow, 14 November 2011.

⁶⁰ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), particularly 66-98.

⁶¹ "The Glasgow Concert Halls project," *Architecture Today* n. 8 (1990), 34-37 [article based on an interview with Leslie Martin].

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entertainment and shopping became more prominent against the background of an incipient "return to the inner city."

At the same time, the plans for a multifunctional cultural complex had long died. It seems that the different actors involved no longer accepted the City Council's lead role in their search for an appropriate new location. The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama had eventually found a new home two blocks north. From 1983-1988 it built its new headquarters on Renfrew Street after a design by Leslie Martin himself (figure 16). In contrast to Martin's designs from the 1960s, the Royal Academy contains several elements that relate to post-modern urbanism: the building follows the traditional block structure in both outline and height, and it opens towards the surrounding space. The cast-concrete overpass near its main entrance—a relic from the 1960s plans in which pedestrian decks were to connect buildings across the street—is cut off and ends in a clinker-clad stairwell leading down to the pavement. In his design Martin tested the themes that he would later use for the Royal Concert Hall: a monumental block perimeter façade, classically-derived elevations that nevertheless relate to Glasgow's nineteenth-century tradition, and a high-tech interior. The stripped columned façade was received ambiguously by critics. The design was commended as "a building with a special character, wrought with care and consistency and set within deeply rooted architectural traditions,"⁶² but also reviled for its "specious peristyle and its meaningless chamfered corner."⁶³ In any case the new building stood for a period in which culture began to be instrumentalised for an investor-driven urban regeneration.



Fig. 16: The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (1983-88, now renamed Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), designed by Leslie Martin. The surroundings betray some of the debates over urban form. The grey cast-concrete overpass leading to the shopping centre Savoy Centre (opened in 1973) is a relic of the 1960s plans of a layered city where streets are reserved for cars and pedestrians move on elevated decks. The cube on the overpass's right end contains the stairs leading down to the pavement. Only this part of the bridge was clad with the same clinker brick as the Royal Academy building, making the clash between the two urban concepts visually apparent. Together with the canopied bicycle stands (built in the 2000s) it represents the post-1960s model of the mixed-traffic city.

⁶² Roger Stonehouse, "Theme and Variation," *Architects' Journal* 11 May 1988, reprinted in Peter Carolin and Trevor Dannat, eds., *Architecture, Education and Research – The Work of Leslie Martin: Papers and Selected Articles* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), 93.

⁶³ Charles McKean, David Walker, Frank Walker, *Central Glasgow – an Illustrated Architectural Guide* (Glasgow: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, 1989), 149.

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A milestone of this new policy was Gordon Cullen's design proposal, which was developed in 1985 in combination with an analysis by the consulting firm McKinsey and Company.⁶⁴ Both resulted from an initiative of Glasgow Action, a consortium of politicians and business leaders set up by the Scottish Development Agency in 1985.⁶⁵ At the height of industrial decline many of Britain's business leaders considered Glasgow a lost case. At a time when the mere idea of a development strategy for Glasgow seemed absurd, David Macdonald, the chief executive of Glasgow Action, was able to convince McKinsey to carry out their analysis free of charge.⁶⁶ The company's charitable act, unsurprisingly, focused on the city's business environment and gave precise suggestions for a market-oriented economic restructuring.

According to the McKinsey report, "Glasgow's city centre is amorphous and lacks memorable features".⁶⁷ This had a detrimental effect on the external image and the city's attractiveness for tourists and investors. Next to suggested new features such as a "world-class aquarium," a "science exploratorium", a "folk/emigration museum", the report therefore suggested a focus on the city centre.

The physical aspect of this environment was worked out by Gordon Cullen. Cullen (1914-1994), who at the time of the report was already in his seventies and led a practice with David Price (1954-2009), belonged to the older generation of picturesque modernists. He was one of Britain's most eminent urban designers and protagonist of the 'Townscape' movement. His 1961 book *The Concise Townscape* was a bestseller among architects and urban planners.⁶⁸ Cullen's influence relied to a great extent on his visually appealing drawings as well as on his rhetorical skills. He proposed to counter the shortcomings of Athens-Charter-inspired city planning through aesthetic principles inspired by picturesque harmonies. His use of classical rhythms, motion-based sequences and a perspective centred on the inhabitant situated his approach halfway between the reformed modernism of the 1950s and the New Urbanists of the 1980s. At the same time, he construed his design as a particularly British response to the monotony and inhospitability of tower-in-the-park design.

⁶⁴ Both reports are widely quoted and often confused. None was produced by a publisher. The McKinsey report is a typed, spiral-bound document and the Cullen proposal a bound booklet printed in the architect's office. Excerpts from both were published by the Scottish Development Agency, ed. *The Potential of Glasgow City Centre* (Glasgow: Scottish Development Agency, 1985). Most likely the publication was put together by David Macdonald. Stuart Gulliver, conversation with the author, Glasgow, 28 May 2012. A review of the report by the City Council can be found at Glasgow City Council, Economic Development Bureau, Report by Town Clerk on "Glasgow Action: McKinsey Review", dated December 1989, available at the Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services. For a critique in retrospect see "Gordon Cullen, *The Potential of Glasgow City Centre*," *Urban Realm*, September 2008.

⁶⁵ Glasgow Action was designed to improve Glasgow's "entrepreneurial spirit." Its chairman Sir Norman Macfarlane was head of Clydesdale bank. Other members included bankers and industrialists as well as council leader Jean McFadden. Robin Boyle, "Partnership in practice: An assessment of public-private collaboration in urban regeneration – a case study of Glasgow Action," *Local Government Studies* 15 n. 2 (March/April 1989), 17-25.

⁶⁶ Stuart Gulliver, conversation with the author, Glasgow, 28 May 2012

⁶⁷ Scottish Development Agency, *The Potential of Glasgow City Centre* (Glasgow: Scottish Development Agency, 1985), 27.

⁶⁸ Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1961).

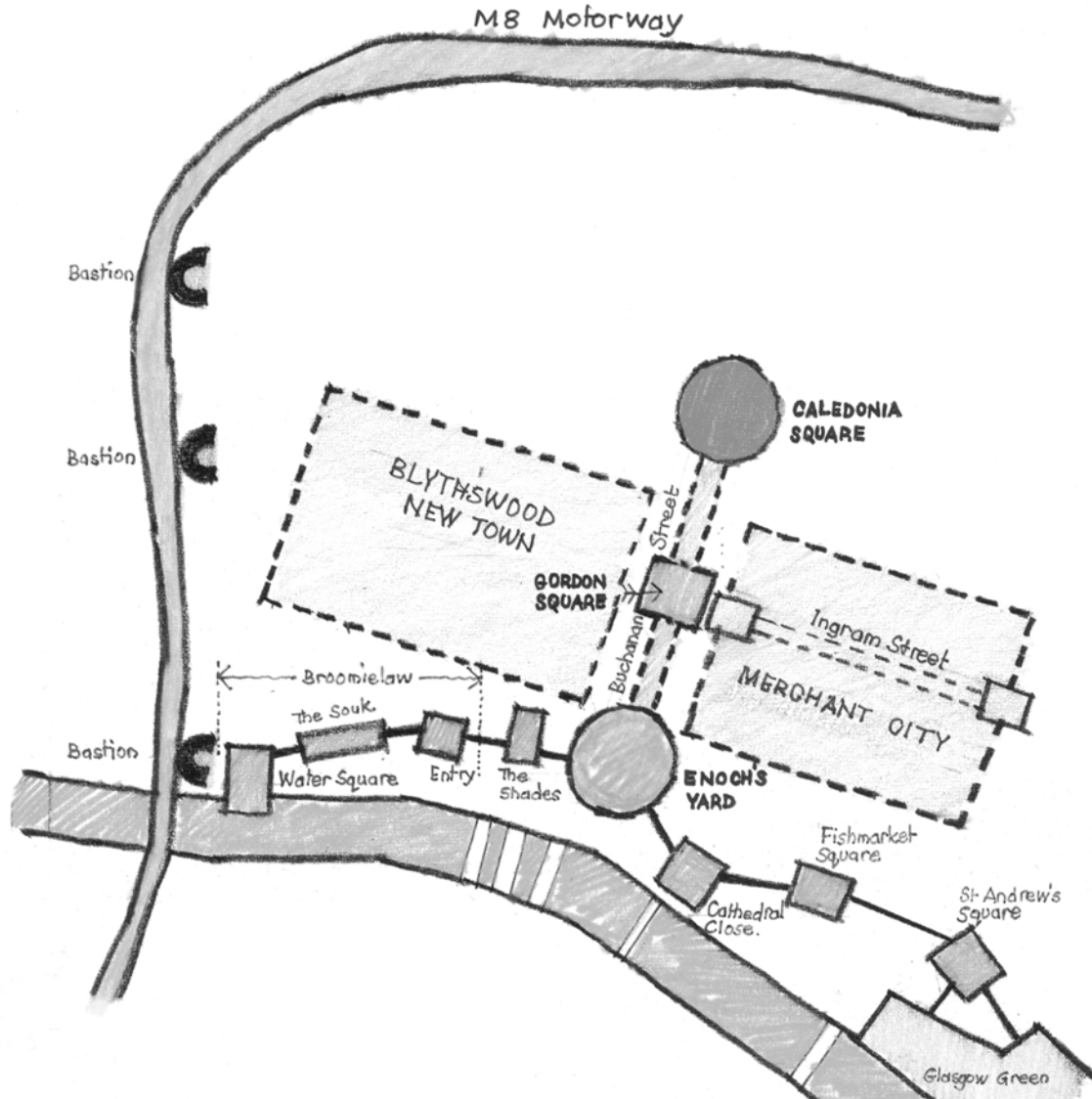


Fig. 17: Gordon Cullen, scheme for Glasgow's City Centre, 1985. The M8 Motorway is to be accentuated as a "city wall" that provides entrance to the city centre. Entry points are to feature new mixed-used developments with landmark buildings like bastions of a medieval fortification. Buchanan Street is to become the main shopping street, with new squares on both ends (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

Cullen's design proposal made ample use of historic references. The ring road, the M8, once conceived as a quick way to leave the city, was now to become a contemporary "city wall" and visible marker of the centre (see figure 16). Its crossings were to be highlighted in the same way as the bastions of a medieval city.⁶⁹ The centre itself was to be strengthened as the most important part of the city, with Buchanan Street as its "spine" and the new Concert Hall as one of its most eminent buildings marking the street's northern end. On the southern end another development was planned to include shops and public buildings. It was later named the St Enoch Centre and eventually opened as a shopping mall in 1989. The square on the northern end, which was already laid out in Martin's 1968 proposal and that now features the semi-circular steps, was to be extended and christened "Caledonia Square." Cultural and educational buildings were to enhance its significance.

⁶⁹ Scottish Development Agency, *The Potential of Glasgow City Centre* (Glasgow: Scottish Development Agency, 1985), 46.

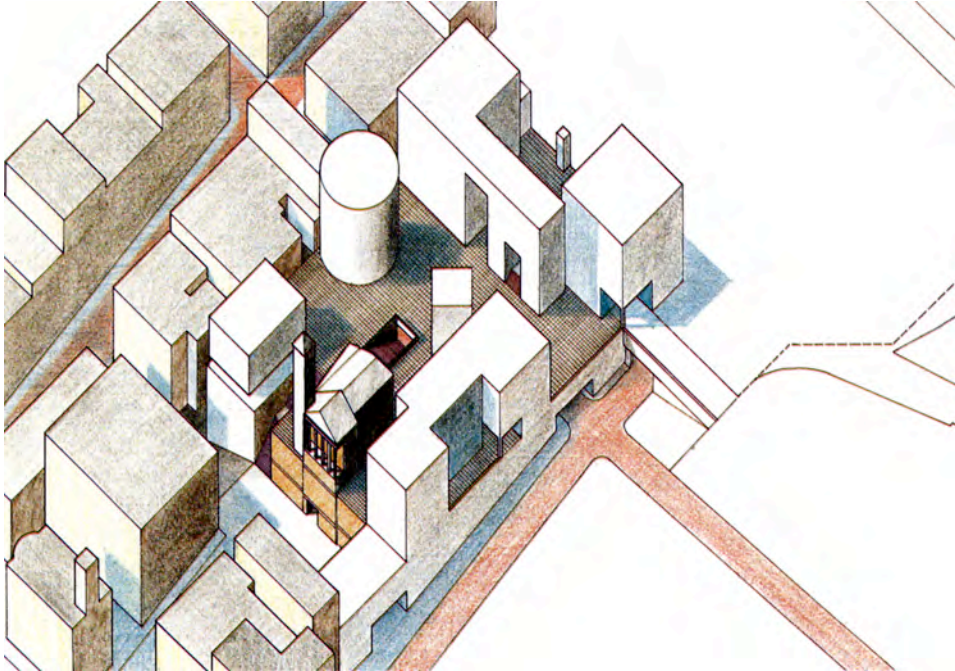


Fig. 18: Gordon Cullen, massing scheme for Caledonia Square on top of Buchanan Street with the relocated Caledonia Road Church by Alexander "Greek" Thomson below the cylinder, 1985. Cullen proposes an elevated square that consists of a pedestrian deck (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

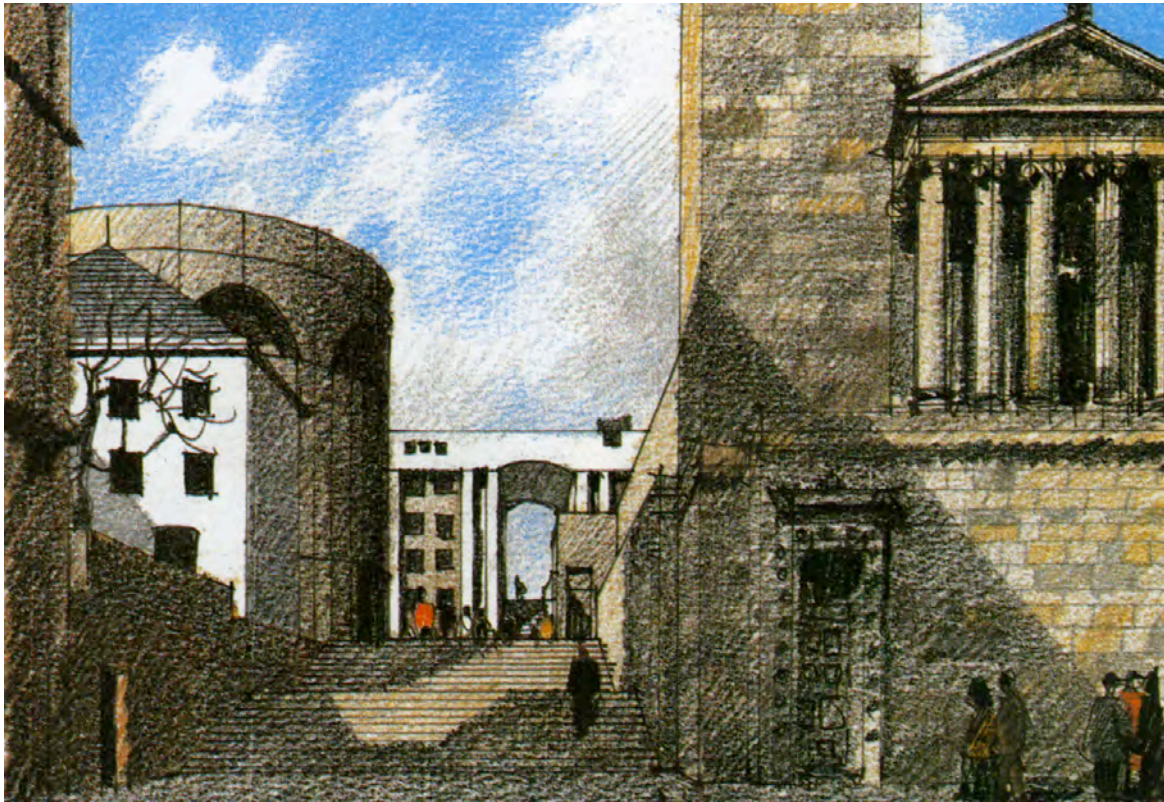


Fig. 19: Gordon Cullen, proposal for Caledonia Square, 1985 looking north along Buchanan Street. The relocated Caledonia Road Church is on the right (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).



Fig. 20: Gordon Cullen, proposal for Caledonia Square, 1985 (Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services).

Among the most bizarre aspects of the plan was the relocation of Caledonia Road Church to Caledonia Square, as "a flamboyant gesture to Glasgow's Victorian heritage." The church was to house the Registry of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, and thus to provide "a celebrational location to get married" (see figures 18 and 19).⁷⁰ Built in 1856 in the Gorbals a few miles further south, it was the work of Glasgow's most renowned nineteenth-century architect Alexander "Greek" Thomson. The Gorbals, once a notorious "tenement slum," had been ravaged by 1960s urban renewal and at the time consisted mainly of bleak dilapidated tower blocks. The church itself had suffered considerable damage in a 1965 fire, which had left it little more than a shell. The damage itself, however, would have barely justified a demolition and rebuilding at a different location. The blonde sandstone façade with a temple-like front and steeple still bore witness to its characteristic design and impressive composition.

The publication of the McKinsey report and Cullen proposal included several visualizations of Caledonia Square, which differed in their details. The colourful drawings suggest that they were not intended to convey a worked-out design but rather to stimulate the imagination. Cullen depicted the new hub as an elevated plaza, but quite different from the one proposed by Jury twenty years earlier. The square was smaller and surrounded by perimeter block buildings. The diagram (figure 18) as well as one of the renderings (figure 19) show a round building at the corner of Sauchiehall and Buchanan Streets – a typological reference to a tower, a bastion, or a Pantheon-inspired temple, but at the same time an allusion to the staircase shown in Leslie Martin's drawings. The circular "hinge" of the two streets would reappear in most following proposals, sometimes as a building, and sometimes as an access stairwell. Only a faint reference to this proposal would eventually be built: the semi-circular "navel" at the first-floor entrance to the Royal Concert Hall.

The massing of Caledonia Square (figure 18) bears a strong resemblance to the typological studies carried out since the late 1960s by the Italian neo-rationalists of the *Tendenza* group,

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

most notably Aldo Rossi.⁷¹ Rossi insisted on the civic value of architecture and interpreted the elementary forms of a particular city as the repository from which future design was to be taken. Architecture for him thus affirmed the collective that constituted the city.⁷² Along the same lines Cullen aimed at developing a spatial structure from the geometries of the surrounding city. His buildings were unadorned geometrical bodies and yet a reflection of the existing urban fabric. The drawings (figure 19 and 20) show an elevated plaza whose architecture is composed of cubes and cylinders that converge into arches and columned walkways. The rendering conveys a classical feel, not so much through the actual buildings, which are modern and mostly unadorned, but rather through the niches with marble statues on the left and right (figure 20), the Italianate vine-covered pergola over the street, and particularly the staged groups of chatting neighbours that appear to be taken from a renaissance painting. The aesthetically refined drawing of promenading citizens on an elevated plaza with open-air steps in front of a temple-like entrance also recalls Leon Krier's famous 1985 proposal for "Atlantis," a resort and university town on the island of Tenerife that was never built.⁷³ Like Krier's utopian design, Cullen's drawing contains an element of nostalgia, evoking an ideal civic community conditioned by timeless classical forms.

Cullen's remarkable proposal evidences a twofold strategy of historic referencing that soon became emblematic for the design of Glasgow's city centre. On the one hand, he instrumentalized an iconic architect such as "Greek" Thomson to boost local pride – and the same would later happen during the Charles Rennie Mackintosh revival. On the other hand, he used eclectic historicism as a generic signifier for the old and respectable, giving a certain cachet for a city that too long had felt ashamed of its humble past as an industrial hub.

What started out as a general attempt to "catch the imagination" was afterwards developed into a fully-fledged design proposal. In 1986 the developer Douglas Loan of the company Classical House Ltd commissioned architect John Lane of the Glasgow firm Lane, Bremner, and Garnett to work out a proposal.⁷⁴ Loan was a 36-year-old structural engineer with a love of historic buildings.⁷⁵ Lane was a well-established architect in his fifties. He had been the president of the Glasgow Institute of Architects and the president of the Royal Institute of Scottish Architects (RIAS). Lane's proposal was a compound of neohistorical buildings with the Caledonia Road Church as its centrepiece. The title page of the Glasgow Herald showed drawings of four-storey pitched-roofed buildings with horizontally structured neoclassical façades whose columns and pediments were modelled after the Thomson church. The buildings were supposed to be made "of a stone similar to the church" and would house both shops and offices.⁷⁶

Lane's design received ample support from the politicians and businesspeople. Council leader Jean McFadden called it "bold and attractive,"⁷⁷ while the Glasgow Action group lent its support.⁷⁸ The Glasgow Herald celebrated "some high-quality construction in white sandstone

⁷¹ Rossi's typological studies are best summarized and illustrated in Rafael Moneo, "Aldo Rossi: The Idea of Architecture and the Modena Cemetery" [1973] *Oppositions* 5 (summer 1976), reprinted in K. Michael Hays, ed., *Oppositions Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 105-134. See also Aldo Rossi, *The architecture of the city* [1966] (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).

⁷² Aldo Rossi, *The architecture of the city* [1966] (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 28-57.

⁷³ Léon Krier, *Atlantis: centre international culturel, scientifique, politique et économique à Tenerife, Islas Canarias* (Brussels: Archives d'architecture moderne, 1988).

⁷⁴ Lewis Blackwell, "Glasgow plan could put pressure on Martin's hall" *Building Design* 14 February 1986, 3.

⁷⁵ His first major development was the restoration of the Georgian villa Aitkenhead House in Glasgow and converted into flats. "Restoring a classical splendour," *Glasgow Herald* 11 March 1986, 18.

⁷⁶ David Steele, "Harmony key note in concert hall plan," *Glasgow Herald* 8 February 1986, 1.

⁷⁷ Jean McFadden, quoted in David Steele, "Harmony key note in concert hall plan," *Glasgow Herald* 8 February 1986, 1.

⁷⁸ Lewis Blackwell, "Glasgow plan could put pressure on Martin's hall," *Building Design* 14 February 1986, 3. See also Norman Macfarlane, chairman of Glasgow Action, quoted in Murray

instead of concrete," in comparison to the Martin scheme, which would have resulted in "a shopping centre with a concert hall thrown in."⁷⁹

In April 1986 the City Council eventually decided in favour of Martin's scheme, with its many revisions. The decision was taken despite the fact that it was projected to cost 60 million pounds compared to 30 million pounds for the Loan and Lane proposal with the rebuilt church.⁸⁰ The City Council's Planning Department had supported Martin's design, and it is likely that the inclusion of a large shopping centre with high private contribution to the construction cost had turned the balance.⁸¹ The fact that Martin's proposal was already worked out in detail might also have influenced the decision.⁸² The press nevertheless noted that the neo-historical proposals had put significant pressure on Martin's design.⁸³ Neo-historicism, it seems, had become acceptable in a city that was disillusioned about the outcomes of the modernist vision, and that at the same time had developed an increasing culture of real or imagined local traditions.

The new approach heralded by McKinsey, Cullen, and Lane also promoted a new way of urban life. Instead of light and air, design now aimed at the creation of an urban atmosphere. In the words of the McKinsey report:

"What can inject the variety, the wonder, the cheerful hurly-burly that makes people want to come into the city and linger there? Magnetism is the crux of the problem – all the values of urban life are its by-products. To create an atmosphere of urbanity and exuberance is not a frivolous aim. But how to create this atmosphere?"⁸⁴

The answer that McKinsey proposed and that was readily adopted was "implosion" – avoiding sprawl and concentrating on the city centre.⁸⁵ In the accompanying plans, Glasgow's commercial boulevards were strengthened and shopping was connected to entertainment and the experience of historical architecture. The neo-historical proposals thus had a strong long-term impact. Cullen's formulation of Buchanan Street as the city's "earthwire" was frequently reproduced.⁸⁶ His general premises – concentration on the Victorian city centre, neo-historical

Richie, "Excellence is the only yardstick – concert hall planning lesson for city fathers," *Glasgow Herald* 17 February 1986, 20.

⁷⁹ Murray Richie, "Excellence is the only yardstick – concert hall planning lesson for city fathers," *Glasgow Herald* 17 February 1986, 20. See also Iain Gray, "£60m Buchanan Street plan likely to win the go-ahead," *Glasgow Herald*, 8 April 1986, 46. The paper also printed several letters to the editor that applauded the scheme. See for example A. Priester, "Letter to the editor," *Glasgow Herald* 5 March 1986, 56, Leslie Fleming, "Letter to the Editor," *Glasgow Herald* 17 March 1986, 8.

⁸⁰ Several council meetings are announced for the following days in Iain Gray, "£60m Buchanan Street plan likely to win the go-ahead," *Glasgow Herald*, 8 April 1986, 46. The fact that the Loan/Lane scheme subsequently is no longer mentioned in the press suggests that the decision was taken in favour of the Martin scheme.

⁸¹ Iain Gray, "£60m Buchanan Street plan likely to win the go-ahead," *Glasgow Herald*, 8 April 1986, 46.

⁸² This was suggested by Stuart Gulliver, the former Director of Development for the Scottish Development Agency. At the time, Glasgow had already prepared the bid for the designation "1990 European City of Culture," which was accepted in summer of 1986. Any major revision would have made it unlikely that the Concert Hall was finished by 1990. Stuart Gulliver, conversation with the author, Glasgow, 28 May 2012.

⁸³ Lewis Blackwell, "Glasgow plan could put pressure on Martin's hall," *Building Design* 14 February 1986, 3. Douglas Loan was also quoted as being prepared to work together with Leslie Martin. See David Steele, "Harmony key note in concert hall plan," *Glasgow Herald* 8 February 1986, 1.

⁸⁴ Scottish Development Agency, *The Potential of Glasgow City Centre* (Glasgow: Scottish Development Agency, 1985) ["McKinsey Report"], 35.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Stuart Gulliver, conversation with the author, Glasgow, 28 May 2012

elements, image marketing through design – formed the bases on which Glasgow's new inner city was designed over the following decades.

Culture and Commerce: The new Royal Concert Hall, 1990

The first wave of Glasgow's post-modern "reinvention" began with the 1983 "Glasgow's miles better" campaign and peaked in 1990 with the celebration of the "European City of Culture." Much has been written about how this somewhat unexpected title was used to assemble the remaining resources of the ailing city and generate an image of hope and confidence.⁸⁷ Glasgow became a textbook example of the post-modern "festivalization of urban politics," that is, a strategy that centres on big celebrations to promote urban development and economic growth.⁸⁸ Scholarship has also pointed to the flipside of such policy, such as the gentrification of central neighbourhoods, a concentration of the benefits on comparably few inhabitants, and an increasing social polarization between rich and poor.⁸⁹ In both respects the new Concert Hall related to the new economic policy.

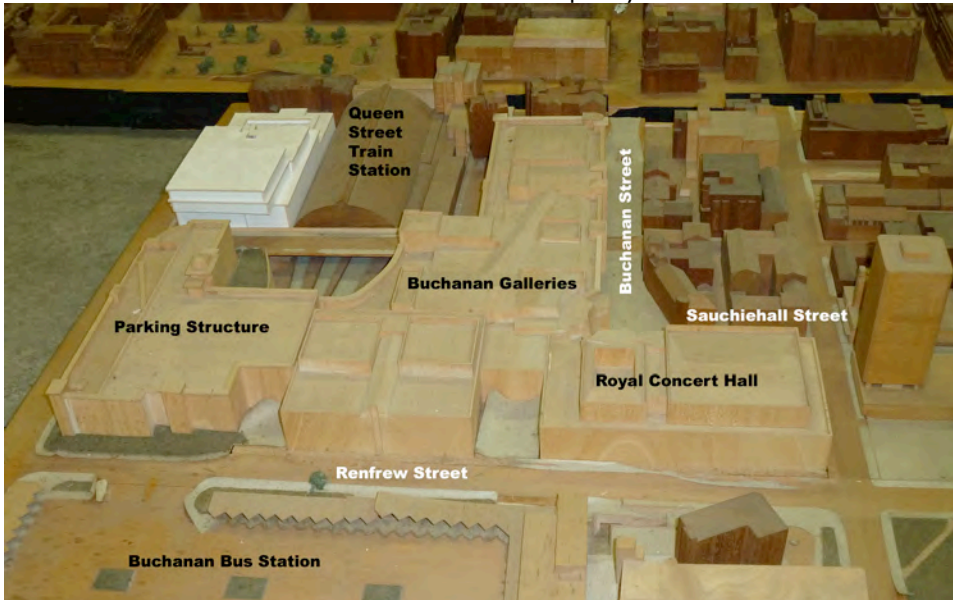


Fig. 21: A model of Glasgow's city centre as it was eventually built. The model shows the state of the early 1990s, looking south onto the "backside" of the Concert Hall/Shopping Centre development (model: Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, photograph: author).

⁸⁷ See for example Steve Tiesdell, "Glasgow – Renaissance on the Clyde?" in John Punter, ed., *Urban Design and the British Urban Renaissance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), Mark Boyle, Christopher McWilliams and Gareth Rice, "The spatialities of actually existing neo-liberalism in Glasgow, 1977 to present," *Geografiska Annaler* 90 n. 4 (2008), 313-325, María Gómez, "Reflective Images: The Case of Urban Regeneration in Glasgow and Bilbao," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22 n. 1 (1998), 106-121, or Michelle Thompson-Fawcett, "Reinventing the tenement: transformation of Crown Street in the Gorbals, Glasgow" *Journal of Urban Design* 9, n. 2 (2004), 177-203.

⁸⁸ A critical account of this strategy can be found in Hartmut Häußermann and Walter Siebel, "Die Politik der Festivalisierung und die Festivalisierung der Politik" in Hartmut Häußermann and Walter Siebel, *Festivalisierung der Stadtpolitik. Stadtentwicklung durch große Projekte* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 1993), 7-31.

⁸⁹ For Glasgow see for example Gordon MacLeod, "From Urban Entrepreneurialism to a 'Revanchist City'? On the Spatial Injustices of Glasgow's Renaissance," *Antipode* 34 n 3 or Neil Gray, "The Tyranny of Rent," *Variante* (Glasgow) 37 (spring 2010), 37-43, Mark Boyle, Christopher McWilliams and Gareth Rice, "The spatialities of actually existing neo-liberalism in Glasgow, 1977 to present," *Geografiska Annaler* 90 n. 4 (2008), 313-325 or Neil Gray, "The Tyranny of Rent," *Variante* (Glasgow) 37 (spring 2010), 37-43, Eliot Tretter, "The Cultures of Capitalism: Glasgow and the Monopoly of Culture" *Antipode* 41 n. 9 (2009), 111-132.

In the context of the "European City of Culture" the Royal Concert Hall was a key factor for the change of the city image from industry to culture. Once Glasgow's bid was accepted in 1986, council leader Pat Lally was particularly keen on including the new music venue in the celebration.⁹⁰ When opened in October 1990, it became "the heart that symbolises Glasgow's cultural renaissance," as a journalist put it.⁹¹ The official report on the City of Culture pointed out that the concerts in the new venue were a significant part of the city's cultural performance during that year, "probably overstating the impact of the Year of Culture [because]... these facilities could have been established in the absence of Glasgow 1990."⁹² At the same time, the Concert Hall was commended for "stimulating interest in the arts in Glasgow" and boosting the city's "emerging arts and entertainment district."⁹³

The effects of these measures are hard to assess. Glasgow's unemployment rate hovered around 12 percent of the workforce in 1990 and subsequently increased and decreased along with that of Scotland.⁹⁴ Claims for any particular impact of local image marketing are therefore somewhat spurious. Likewise, the City of Culture's lasting economic effect on the entire city was probably small.⁹⁵ The critics of the new policy attacked the ineffectiveness of the City of Culture campaign in reducing poverty and unemployment.⁹⁶ On the other hand, the efforts to put Glasgow on the international mind-map were highly successful and might have had positive consequences in the long run.⁹⁷ Glasgow's reputation improved considerably, and the image change was perceived as mostly positive.⁹⁸

⁹⁰ Stuart Gulliver, conversation with the author, Glasgow, 28 May 2012.

⁹¹ Michael Tumelty, "Creating the heart that symbolises Glasgow's cultural renaissance" *Glasgow Herald* 9 August 1989.

⁹² John Myerscough, *Monitoring Glasgow 1990* [Myerscough report on Glasgow City of Culture 1990], available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, 167.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 167 and 19.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 172-4.

⁹⁵ The official report stated that the City of Culture's net gain in employment was approximately 5,000 jobs, mainly in the tourist industry. John Myerscough, *Monitoring Glasgow 1990* [Myerscough report on Glasgow City of Culture 1990], available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, 173.

⁹⁶ The most prominent critics were the group Workers City, formed in 1988. See for example Farquhar McLay, ed., *Workers City* (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1988), Farquhar McLay, ed., *The Reckoning – Public Loss, Private Gain* (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1990), or James Kelman, *Some Recent Attacks: Essays Cultural and Political* (Stirling: AK Press, 1992).

⁹⁷ After the City of Culture, in September 1990, 49 percent of Glaswegians interviewed in a Saatchi and Saatchi survey agreed that "Glasgow was rapidly changing to the better," compared to only 34 percent a year before. The same was believed by 48 percent of Britons. During the same time, the percentage of those believing that "Glasgow is rough and depressing" decreased from 48 to 35 percent. John Myerscough, *Monitoring Glasgow 1990* [Myerscough report on Glasgow City of Culture 1990], available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, 176-177.

⁹⁸ This is evident from the press coverage of the year of culture. See for example Terry Trucco, "Glasgow's No Mean City Anymore," *Wall Street Journal* 14 January 1988, Gregory Jensen, "Glasgow – a city reborn," *Chicago Sun-Times* 1 July 1988, Peter Fischer, "Glasgow ist viel besser, als man glauben möchte," *Die Presse* (Vienna) 31 December 1988, Bill Bryson, "Glasgow isn't Paris, but..." *New York Times Magazine* 9 July 1989, Alberto Cañagual, "Glasgow, capital cultural de Europa" *El Periódico - dominical* (Madrid), 14 January 1990, Peter Sager, "Glasgows großes Comeback", *Zeit-Magazin* (Hamburg) 9 March 1990, B. Junanov, "Glasgo берет revansh" *Sovetskaja Kultura* (Moscow) 26 August 26 1989.



Fig. 22: The Royal Concert Hall's south façade with the semi-circular square, looking northwest (author's photograph).



Fig. 23: The Royal Concert Hall's north façade towards Renfrew Street, looking southeast. On the picture's left edge one can see the north wall of Buchanan Galleries and the parking structure (author's photograph).



Fig. 24: Buchanan Street, looking north. The photograph shows Buchanan Galleries on the right and a part of the Royal Concert Hall on the left behind the glass-covered subway station (author's photograph).

Irrespective of the rather small economic impact the new policy had a significant effect on the architecture of the city centre. The design that was eventually realized was enabled by the commercial element, that is, the Buchanan Galleries shopping arcade. The developer of this part, the French company Société des Centres Commerciaux, proudly announced in 1985 that after difficult negotiations they had found the anchor store for the new shopping centre and could therefore finalize the planning.⁹⁹ A year later the award of the "Capital of Culture" title was announced, and another three years later, in 1988, the foundations of the new Royal Concert Hall were finally laid out. The ceremony was headed by Council Leader Pat Lally and concluded 28 years of debate.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Alan MacDermid, "Orchestra presses council over site for concert hall," *Glasgow Herald* 9 January 1986, 3.

¹⁰⁰ City of Glasgow, Public Relations Department, Press release on "Glasgow Royal Concert Hall", dated 12 September 1990, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "Tourism-Cultural Industries."

After planning permission was initially obtained in 1983 the design underwent significant changes. In 1986 the firm Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall and partners (RMJM) was appointed executive architect to carry out Leslie Martin's design. The company's founder Robert Matthew, who had died in 1975, had been a close associate of Martin's and a co-designer of the London Royal Festival Hall in 1951. RMJM's most important contribution to the Glasgow plan was the semi-circular flight of stairs at the Concert Hall entrance, an adaptation of the circular buildings and stairwells that had already been visible in earlier sketches.¹⁰¹ The "navel" – the raised rotunda at the top of the steps – was praised for its "breathtaking view that swoops down Buchanan Street and over the River Clyde to the hills of Lanarkshire beyond."¹⁰²

Glasgow's "Hall of Fame" was also an exceptional building in other respects. It was one of only five new concert halls built in Britain since the Second World War, and second in capacity only to the Royal Festival Hall in London.¹⁰³ Since the building was erected on the site of an old quarry, piles had to be driven eight metres deep to reach a solid base, avoiding the Victorian tunnel that carries the subway.¹⁰⁴ Its roof was made up of two separate layers of precast concrete planks. The building was clad in Woodkirk Natural York Stone and deemed the "largest natural stone project in the UK in recent years."¹⁰⁵ Critics celebrated the "pared down modern classicism with a hint of Asplund" and suggested that Martin, in his old age, had adhered "to a style whose influence pushed his generation into post-war modernism."¹⁰⁶

The adjacent Buchanan Galleries shopping centre was started in 1992 and opened in 1999 (figure 24). On a conceptual basis, it reflected the new recipe of retail plus culture to boost inner city revitalization. The stone-clad façade resembled that of the Royal Concert Hall in terms of colour, height, and material. At the same time, the mall's ostentatious pilasters and over-dimensioned cornice seemed to mock Martin's carefully proportioned design and draw it into an eclectic mishmash of neo-traditionalist fantasies. Bordering the mall and a parking structure with similar historicizing ornaments, the hall's austere harmony clashed with the mall's eclectic post-modernism. In urban terms the complex is a double-edged sword. On its southern side it forms if not a civic square then at least an attractive pedestrian-friendly space. On the northern and eastern side, however, the urban fabric is ripped apart (see figures 21 and 23). The surrounding areas are cut off by the parking structure's forbidding fronts, and the bordering streets are effectively deprived of street life. Mall and parking structure form an impregnable barrier. Even pedestrians are only allowed to cross the complex during shop opening hours and at the risk of getting lost in a labyrinth of corridors, which follow the rules of sales psychology rather than those of effective orientation. The Concert Hall's architectural clarity thus stands in stark contrast to its confusing urban setting.

At a formal level, Leslie Martin's columned façade, which was eventually built, could well serve as evidence for a "resurgence of classicism" in Glasgow's late twentieth-century architecture.¹⁰⁷ As part of a citywide design strategy it was anything but. Rather than a

¹⁰¹ Leslie Martin, "A note on the linked porticoes" in Peter Carolin and Trevor Dannat, eds., *Architecture, Education and Research – The Work of Leslie Martin: Papers and Selected Articles* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), 111.

¹⁰² Martin Spring, "Glasgow's Hall of Fame," *Building* 19 October 1990, reprinted in Peter Carolin and Trevor Dannat, eds., *Architecture, Education and Research – The Work of Leslie Martin: Papers and Selected Articles* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), 99.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁰⁴ City of Glasgow, Public Relations Department, Press release on "Glasgow Royal Concert Hall", dated 12 September 1990, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "Tourism-Cultural Industries."

¹⁰⁵ City of Glasgow, Public Relations Department, Press release on "Glasgow Royal Concert Hall", dated 12 September 1990, available at Glasgow City Council, Development and Regeneration Services, Folder "Tourism-Cultural Industries."

¹⁰⁶ John Welsh, "Patience Rewarded," *Building Design*, 12 October 1990, 10.

¹⁰⁷ Miles Glendinning, Ranald MacInnes, Aonghus MacKechnie, *A History of Scottish Architecture from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,

Florian Urban, "Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall and the Invention of the Post-modern City"
Journal of Architecture 18 n. 2 (2013), 254-296.

monumental celebration of high culture, Glasgow's rebuilt city centre was a post-modern amalgamation between culture and commerce, between entertainment and living, between diverse individuals and a collective image. The result was a city that is more colourful and stimulating than thirty years before, but also more unequal and more polarized.

The Concert Hall as a Catalyst for Urban Form: Conclusion

Not only from the perspective of Glasgow's semi-circular square on Buchanan Street the connection between post-industrial economy and post-modern urban form is obvious. Nonetheless it is more complex than it appears at first glance. It is clear that all over Europe and North America post-modern design principles evolved concomitantly with the shift from heavy industry to service economy. This includes the use of traditional typologies and historic quotations, the goal of density and mixed-use, an awareness of the existing context, and an increasing significance of marketable images. It is also clear that to a certain extent the redesign catered to the needs of new city-based actors such as private businesses and young urban professionals, which were also the main beneficiaries of the economic shift. The obvious explanation therefore might be that these actors pushed for the new design.

The Glasgow example nonetheless suggests the contrary. Glasgow's redesigned city centre did not grow from the rising influence of private companies but was rather supported by the very forces that a few decades before had been responsible for the modern city: local authorities and other state institutions. Their changing design policy was mostly motivated by non-economical factors: on the one hand a conviction that certain design would attract private business and thus boost the economy, and on the other hand a preference for certain forms that was shared by large parts of the local population.

The proposals for the Concert Hall changed in relation to the shifts from an industrial to a post-industrial economy. However, only on very few occasions was the design change a direct outcome of economic circumstances. The most obvious example is Leslie Martin's first proposal, which in the early 1970s failed for lack of money. Quite often cultural factors were more decisive. Both Jury's costly "island of culture" and Martin's exuberant megacomplex were developed by a City Council that was economically struggling, but nonetheless attempted to act in line with the dominant cultural preferences at the time. And Jury's scheme was not scrapped because it required too many resources but because car-oriented islands and patriarchal expert attitudes were no longer considered appropriate

Rather than a measure for economic shifts, the Concert Hall's design was a seismograph for the socio-cultural state of affairs. Long before the idea of the car-oriented city became outmoded the "island of culture" had been rendered unrealizable. And long before image marketing and urban entrepreneurialism became mainstream policy the Concert Hall plans were used to promote an image of urban regeneration. Architecture did not generate urban change, but architectural debates made the change apparent. In this respect, they are not only paradigmatic for both the success and failure of Glasgow's self-reinvention, but in the same way for those of countless post-industrial European and North American cities which in the late twentieth century experienced enduring battles over new design and urban imagery.

I would like to thank my interview partners and in particular Alistair MacDonald, Head of Planning and Building Control with the Glasgow City Council, who generously made the City Council's unpublished documents available to me.

1997), 483. The authors relate Martin's design to similar columned façades in Scottish postmodern architecture, such as Keppie, Henderson and Partner's Sheriff Court of Glasgow (1980-86).