

1. Birmingham, Bomb damage map

Peter J. Larkham

Replanning post-war Birmingham

Process, product and longevity

Introduction

The city of Birmingham represents an important example of major UK post-war replanning – the reconstruction of large sections of the bombed city centre, an inner ring road permitted by a private Act of Parliament, and the continuation of large-scale slum clearance and rebuilding conceived before the war – but all carried out by the staff of the (admittedly large) local authority without resorting to external consultants and apparently minimising the input of even local professionals and concerned bodies. This was an internal expert-driven, paternalist, approach to planning. Yet no overall plan was ever produced for the city, or even for the city centre. Birmingham was not alone in this, although it was an unusual approach in British post-war reconstruction. The key themes from this, which are widely applicable in UK and other reconstruction examples,¹ include the top-down planning approach; a technocentrism which prioritised vehicle movement;² and a willingness to ignore any value in what had been damaged or destroyed: the modernist mind-set was dominant.

This is shown by enthusiastic promotional pieces in the press and professional journals. One rather exaggerated example suffices to demonstrate this civic boosterism and way of thinking: »Birmingham [...] is undergoing what is probably the biggest and boldest scheme of comprehensive redevelopment ever undertaken in this country. Radical urban renewal is taking place from the centre to the periphery [...]. A new commercial centre worthy of the second city in the land is being created. A pattern of wide new streets is being imposed on the existing archaic road system [...]. Along the new frontages of the inner ring road, already under construction, developers are erecting buildings which will give to the principal shopping area something of the atmosphere of Regent Street

while retaining the essential character of this thriving west midland city.«³

It is appropriate to reassess Birmingham's reconstruction particularly since much research has been carried out on aspects of post-war reconstruction in the UK and other countries in recent years; and because the product of this reconstruction has been subject to critical reappraisal, demolition and replacement. The selected examples of process and product demonstrate the complexity and contradiction in restructuring a major city centre, and the quality of the resulting built environment. While Birmingham itself is not typical of the UK, the post-war reconstruction is everywhere being re-evaluated as it ages. Sustainability, and the longevity of the reconstruction landscape, are now dominant issues.

The wartime damage

Damage in Birmingham was extensive, but widely scattered across the city rather than consisting of large areas of completely-demolished property (Fig. 1). Even so, 76 sites of over half an acre were »devastated«.⁴ The two major inner-city areas were the Bull Ring/Market Hall, and the New Street/High Street corner known as the Big Top site (used for circus performances) (Fig. 2). The death toll was high for this early stage of the war: 2,227 were killed and 3,000 seriously injured by mid-1941.⁵

¹ See examples in Hein/Diefendorf/Yorifusa 2003; Düwel/Gutschow 2013.

² See Hendriks 1994 comparing car-dominated technocentrism and culture in Munich and Birmingham.

³ *Architect & Building News* 1959, 470.

⁴ Public Works Committee (PWC) report, 25/7/44, 480.

⁵ *Sunday Mercury* 11/11/1990.



2. Birmingham, Market Hall

In early 1941 the Cabinet Committee on the Reconstruction of Town and Country decided to review four sample heavily-bombed areas, and selected Birmingham, along with Coventry, Bristol and Southampton.⁶ Nevertheless the damage was insufficiently serious to qualify for special government approval for replacement retail and commercial development. In December 1946 the Public Works Committee (PWC) reported that 1,450 bombed properties had been demolished and 600 »dangerous properties« made safe; by March 1948 the number of demolitions had reached 6,985.⁷

Process

The administration of replanning

Many towns undertook a reconstruction and replanning process at this time, whether bomb-damaged or not, often using external consultants to produce a plan. Birmingham did not, nor did it produce such a city-wide plan. »The Corporation wanted to avoid discouraging developers by laying down a rigid planning

scheme; it preferred to attract them to Birmingham by the implied offer of freedom to build what they liked, and then to persuade them to introduce modifications into their schemes«.⁸ Its City Surveyor and Engineer Herbert Manzoni, a powerful and influential personality, was behind both decisions. Here, it is the influence of Manzoni and other professional officers, the elected members acting as Committee chairs, and the developers and their architects that was significant: an important example of agents and agency in reconstruction.⁹ Like many, Birmingham appointed a Reconstruction Committee, although in practice its influence on physical urban reconstruction was minimal. It also appointed advisory groups including representatives from interested organisations outside the council itself.

⁶ The National Archives (TNA) HLG 71/1570.

⁷ PWC Minutes 9/3/1948.

⁸ Sutcliffe/Smith 1974, 443.

⁹ This discussion is extended in Larkham 2014.

Manzoni and the myth and contradictions of reconstruction

At the same time that the PWC was explicitly considering ›reconstruction‹, Manzoni gave a forthright interview to the *Birmingham Mail*. He stated clearly that ›we have not got to start replanning Birmingham. All we want is the opportunity to carry out the plans we have already‹. He was asked whether the bomb damage had altered those plans, and the succinct reply was ›no‹. Damage was far from a ›clean sweep‹ and so ›any dream that a completely new city can emerge, Phoenix-like [...] is quite erroneous‹.¹⁰ In taking this view Manzoni was clearly at odds with a number of other professionals in the UK, for whom the bomb damage was ›the new opportunity‹ for large-scale replanning.¹¹ In some cases there seemed to be a tabula rasa mentality, although Manzoni and a few others were far more realistic.

To Manzoni, therefore, the relatively limited and scattered nature of the damage, and the existence of a range of plans and ambitions dating to zoning in 1913 and road plans of 1919 meant that Birmingham had no need for a ›reconstruction plan‹. He had already identified five slum clearance areas, which became the main focus for rebuilding, together with the inner ring road: ideas which predated the bombing.¹² He also commented that, when the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act was passed, ›we in Birmingham were ready, because our plans had already been drawn up in detail, and we took advantage of these powers‹ to acquire the five redevelopment areas. ›Other cities had not been so well prepared as we were, and this is why we were the only ones to acquire such large areas at this time‹.¹³ To a great extent the city was ready because of Manzoni's contacts and influence at the national level, not solely because of the pre-war planning. He said that Birmingham was ready ›because we'd shaped the legislation for it, or at least we had been there while it was being shaped‹.¹⁴ By ›we‹ Manzoni meant himself. Few cities were as well prepared.

But Manzoni was not in favour of an all-encompassing reconstruction plan, as many other cities were preparing at that time. Until he left office in 1963 he felt that they were ›often obsolete by the time they were put into effect‹, an opinion strengthened by his experiences with the city's civic centre proposals dating from the 1920s.¹⁵ In the light of this view, it

is interesting that, in a later paper on reconstruction to the Town Planning Institute, he should quote the American planner Daniel Burnham: ›Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood, and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans, aim high in hope and work [...]‹.¹⁶

Other personalities

Some of the replanning and the subsequent reconstruction – its nature, timing and extent – was heavily dependent upon personalities. Manzoni's personal influence was clearly pivotal; but he recognised that ›the influence of officialdom in town-planning in Birmingham has been very considerable, but from time to time there have been individuals who have played a very big part in initiating important ideas‹.¹⁷ The Town Clerk, Sir Frank Wiltshire, promoted the idea of seeking Parliamentary approval for the various proposals, to avoid the need for ›detailed step-by-step approvals from the various Ministries when the work came to be carried out‹.¹⁸ In retrospect this was a wise suggestion, despite the workload imposed.

Jack Cotton was a powerful influence. Birmingham born and educated, he operated a small estate agency from 1924 but was involved in major projects locally, nationally and internationally in the 1950s. In Birmingham his property company, City Centre Properties, became involved in a surprising number and size of projects. Many of these developments were designed by his own in-house architects, Cotton, Ballard & Blow. Although he had developed a large office block in Waterloo Street in the late 1930s that is sometimes described as his ›headquarters‹, his operation has also been described as being managed with ›a disarming naivety‹: in the post-war period

¹⁰ *Birmingham Mail* 27/2/1941.

¹¹ For example Tubbs 1942, 21; although even Manzoni used the term (Manzoni 1941).

¹² For example Manzoni 1955, 90.

¹³ Manzoni 1968, 2.

¹⁴ Interviewed by A. Sutcliffe 1967–1969, transcript in Birmingham Library.

¹⁵ Sutcliffe/Smith 1974, 448.

¹⁶ Manzoni 1955, 92.

¹⁷ Sutcliffe 1967–1969.

¹⁸ Borg 1973, 54.

at least, despite increasingly working at a national scale, Cotton »ran his show with two typists, an accountant, some clerks and a set of files he kept on the spare bed in his room at the Dorchester Hotel«. ¹⁹ The scale of his involvement in Birmingham is shown by the local references to Birmingham »B.C.«, i.e. »before Cotton«. ²⁰

Frank Price is an equally significant character. He stood for the Council in 1949 aged 27, became PWC chairman in 1954 and Lord Mayor in 1964/65. He was closely involved in the various negotiations to promote development sites, attract developers, lever funding from central government, and his personal influence underpinned the PWC's decisions through a crucial few years. He was always aware of his upbringing in the city's inner slums, and he was abrasive and outspoken. ²¹ But his sometimes unorthodox approaches did get things done where traditional »civil service« approaches had failed: his contribution therefore requires serious consideration.

In Birmingham, therefore, powerful personalities clearly played a significant part in shaping the reconstruction. Manzoni had started planning for slum reconstruction early, but distrusted city-scale master plans; he managed to influence the provisions of the 1944 Act to the city's advantage; he was professionally very well connected, tended to work well with his committee chairmen, and had a personal air of authority and confidence. He could make plans, but not even he could secure rationed construction materials so here, as virtually everywhere, the real rebuilding began some five years after the war and well over a decade since the first plans were made. Price pushed for, and achieved, construction; but his abrasive personal style caused some problems. What was actually achieved by the combination of Manzoni and Price was looked at askance by some of the younger post-war commentators. In preparing early for his retirement, and appointing Sheppard Fidler as the first City Architect, ²² Manzoni found that he had to work closely with one of these younger critics. The personal styles, values and attitudes of these two did not work well together, and Sheppard Fidler also had problems with local politicians advocating speed and volume of housebuilding, whereas he tried to promote design quality.

Product

The ring road as a frame for redevelopment

Rapidly-changing technology, especially for transport and communications, shaped many reconstruction ideas at this time. Ring roads became popular, and Birmingham became widely known for its adoption of an »armature« of civil engineering solutions – roads, flyovers and tunnels and a series of ring roads. The inner ring road provided not just a physical frame for the city core, constricting its growth, but conveniently also forms a frame for thinking about the process of reconstruction. ²³

Manzoni reported on »central city planning« to the PWC, focusing on a ring road, in 1941. ²⁴ One of the aims was to extend the area of the city centre, although a major design consideration for the road line was that no point within the centre would be more than 300 yards from the ring road, where bus stops and car parks would be concentrated: this was felt to be a reasonable distance to expect people to walk. »The intention was that people should not bring their cars into the city centre«. ²⁵ So the ring road had several apparent functions: to make adequate provision for what was already recognised as a major issue for the future, the rise of the private motor car; to assist in the traffic management of the city centre by diverting through traffic, providing parking places and bus stations; and it would delimit the city core. It is highly likely that a ring road would have been designed even without the impetus of bomb damage; however, the existence of bombed sites, together with the 300-yard walking radius, identified the line of the road as originally proposed. The PWC approved Manzoni's ideas in principle on 29 April 1943.

In July 1945 the full Council authorised the promotion of a Parliamentary Bill. It was the largest such local authority scheme to have come before Parliament but faced no significant technical objections, although issues of compulsory purchase and compensation were

¹⁹ Harwood 2002, 59.

²⁰ Cited in his obituary: *Time* 3/4/1964.

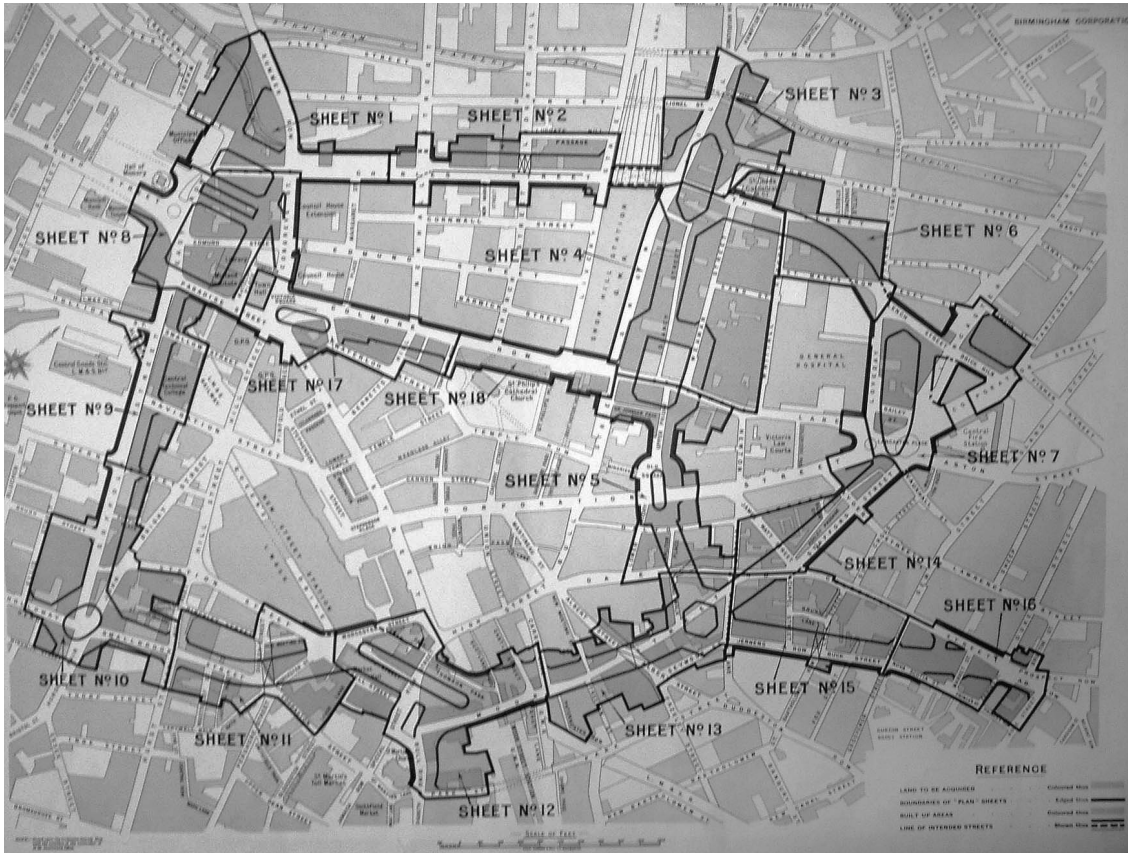
²¹ Price 2002.

²² Larkham 2018.

²³ Altrock/Fischer forthcoming 2018.

²⁴ Manzoni 1941.

²⁵ Manzoni 1968, 3.



3. Original planned route of Ring Road, showing land purchase requirements

debated. This became the Birmingham Corporation Act 1946, and gave powers for the road's construction and the compulsory acquisition of property (Fig. 3). The Council was anxious to acquire freeholds lining the street due to the control that landownership would bring.

The route was selected »as far as possible to avoid the most valuable property, and advantage was taken of sites where the buildings had been destroyed or damaged.«²⁶ Of note is the north-south link road and the widening of Colmore Row running east-west: this scheme was far more than a simple ›ring road‹. Colmore Row was not part of the original proposals, but was added at a late stage and was to be widened to 120 feet, taking a large section of the Cathedral graveyard.²⁷ The whole road would be »a city street

of novel character – it is not an urban motorway, nor principally a traffic street or a shopping street.«²⁸

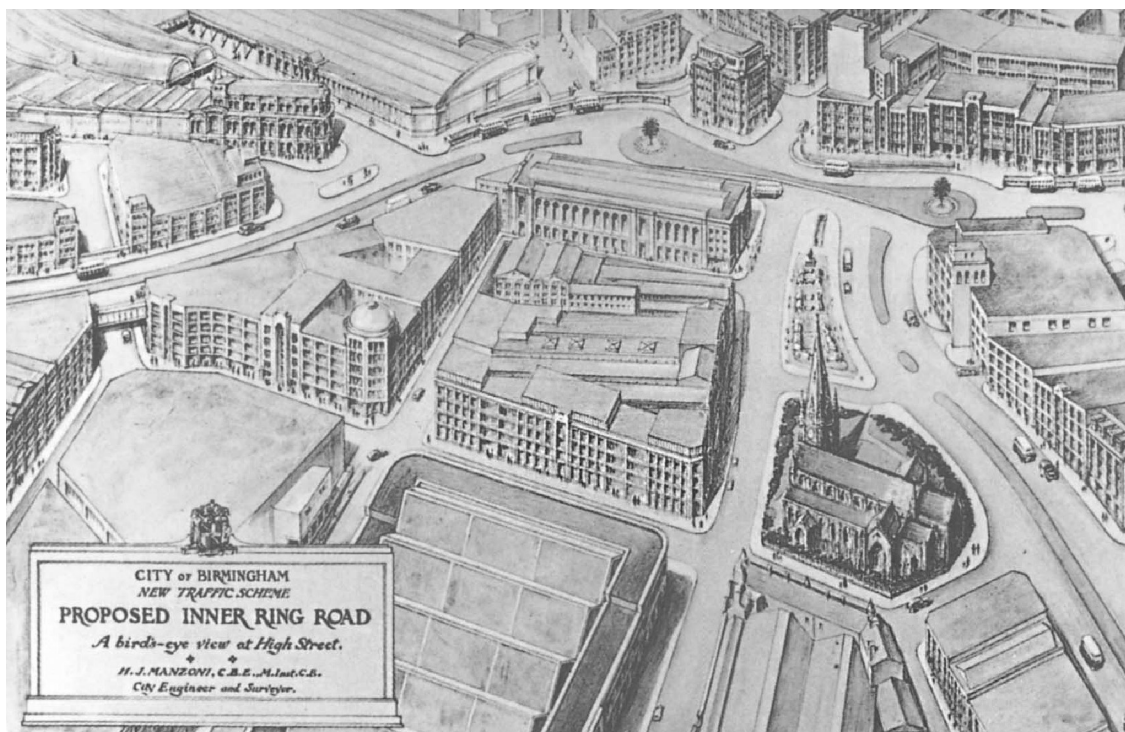
The plan changed considerably over time. The bombed Market Hall caused particular debate. The 1946 Act map shows the Market Hall demolished, but this was probably changed soon after »because of opposition from the market traders.«²⁹ One of the earliest, but undated, views of the ring road (Fig. 4) suggests that both New Street Station and the Market Hall would be repaired, and that the ring road would swing in front of the station entrance and north of the

²⁶ Manzoni 1961, 268.

²⁷ Borg 1973, 57.

²⁸ Manzoni 1961, 267.

²⁹ Ross, Estates Officer, interviewed in Sutcliffe 1967–1969.



4. Early perspective of Ring Road showing retention of Market Hall

Market Hall, with a central reservation stopping direct north-south traffic movement. The traditional design of the new buildings in this view is noteworthy.

Despite the powers acquired by the 1946 Act, the project was delayed by the post-war economic policies of successive governments. »Treasury funding was obtained only after the Corporation put up a stiff fight for what they rightly considered to be a vitally important road.«³⁰ The Minister visited Birmingham in February 1956 to inspect the proposals and the planning application was approved in May. The Minister was persuaded to approve funding for the scheme in January 1957.³¹ The road »was pushed ahead by the buccaneering, hard-headed officials and councillors«, probably a reference to Frank Price's determined lobbying (»bullying« according to Price) of the Minister.³²

At the start of construction, a redesigned road layout passed close on either side of the repaired Market Hall, leaving an elongated and awkwardly-sloping island. At the same time, a sketch of what

became Smallbrook Ringway (Fig. 5) showed bulky and boxy buildings on the north (left-hand) side, but the cinema had survived (right-hand side). The left-hand building, always planned as a hotel, would be built in different form in 1960–1962, designed by J. A. Roberts as the Albany, »the most luxurious hotel to be built at the time outside London«, although double glazing had to be installed soon after first occupation because of the traffic noise.³³ A report suggested that Roberts was designing Europe's tallest building for the central site for Property & General Investments Ltd, containing shops, a bank, a restaurant, car parks and flats. In an interesting perspective on the contemporary planning process, it was noted that »no detailed plans have been presented to the

³⁰ *Architect & Building News* 1959, 472.

³¹ Birmingham City Council 1956, 57.

³² Marriott 1967, 223; Price 2002.

³³ Marriott 1967, 223.



5. Early perspective of hotel on Smallbrook Ringway

public works committee, although it has approved the development.³⁴ This did not go ahead, and Seifert & Partners designed an office podium and tower there in 1972–1975.

Construction of the road itself began in 1957. The first section, Smallbrook Ringway, was opened in 1960. This section was raised above natural ground level, with car parks underneath the carriageway. But developers and retailers proved difficult to attract to sites fronting the proposed ring road but outside the traditional city core. Three large sites advertised in 1957 produced only three responses; one, from John Laing & Son, working with the developer Jo Godfrey, proposed to redevelop the entire three sites. The Council agreed, stipulating only that retail units should be let to Council nominees, and that the scheme should include a hotel.³⁵ The south side was designed by J. A. Roberts as a sinuous, narrow office block with ground-floor shops (Fig. 6). The narrowness was forced by the limited land available through the compulsory purchase scheme.

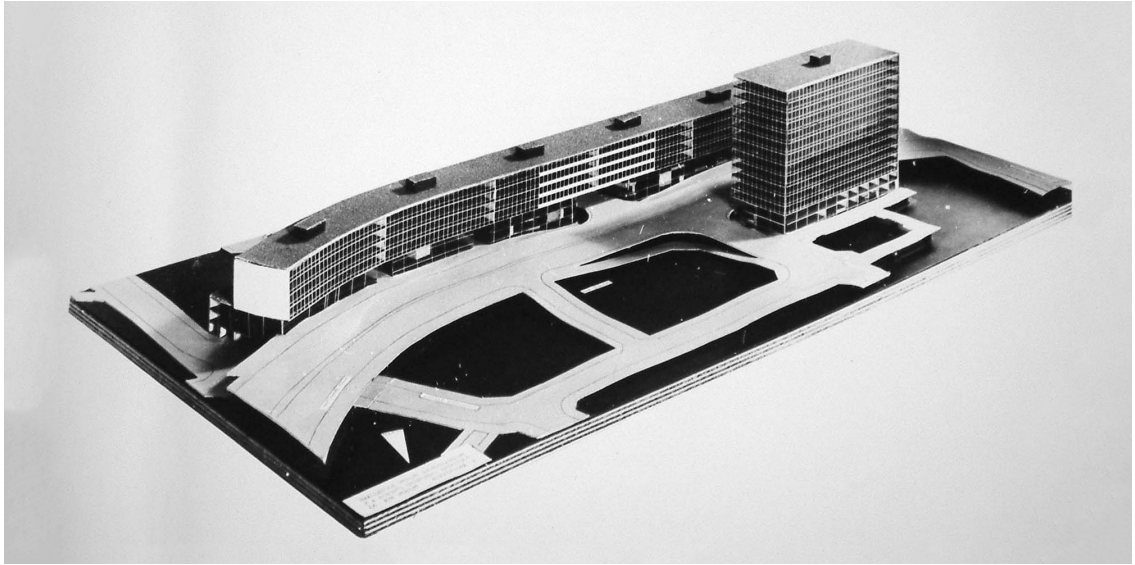
Godfrey also responded to the advertisement of a site at Moor Street/Bull Ring on which the PWC wished to see a multi-storey car park with some shops and offices. Godfrey's proposal would deliver that, together with shops within the subway linking that site to the city core, and development on a city-centre site adjoining the end of that subway. The latter became the Rotunda, a cylindrical office block, an icon of the rebuilt city. The PWC agreed to these innovative proposals and to granting a 99-year, rather than the usual 75-year, lease.³⁶ The original designs for the Rotunda were for only twelve storeys, with an equally high rectilinear building adjoining it on New Street. It eventually had 21 storeys, a bank, 100,000 sq ft of offices, and a revolving restaurant (never used).

The phasing of the ring road construction changed (Fig. 7), as did the detailed design of the road; and

³⁴ *Architect & Building News* 16/11/1960, 614.

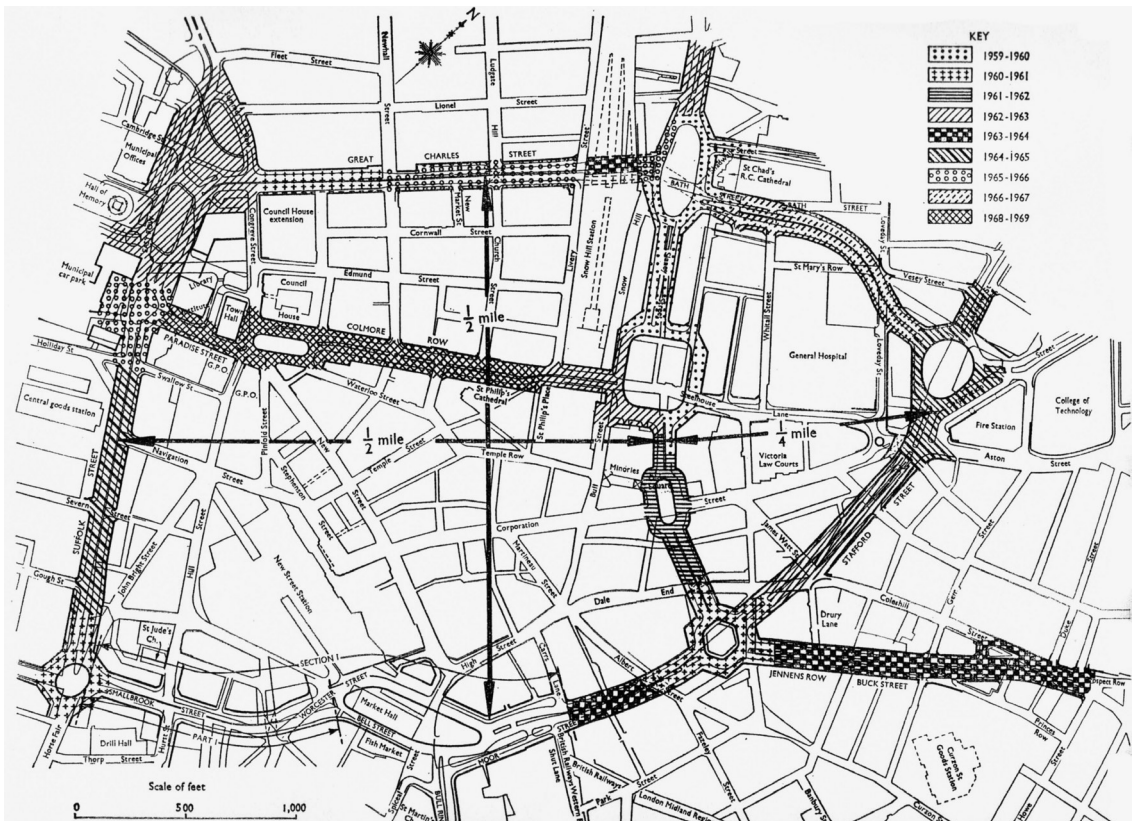
³⁵ PWC Minutes 5/11/1957.

³⁶ PWC Minutes 4/11/1958.



6. Early model of Smallbrook Ringway, with sinuous narrow office block and hotel

7. Ring road phasing



the development of commercial and retail buildings fronting the street was dropped. Price claims that he had realised that the frontage buildings were »wrong« but that there was no time to change plans before getting authorisation for the first phase; »then I had time to look at the plans. Then I began to see the defects of the scheme, in particular, at the Market Hall roundabout«. ³⁷ Once the Market Hall had gone, however, it was felt that requesting to alter the road line and elongated roundabout »would have meant an interminable discussion with the Ministry and in consequence long delays«: ³⁸ so the roundabout remained, thus shaping the Bull Ring shopping centre design. A Government ban on new office building was extended to Birmingham in 1965 and this ended the local development boom. ³⁹ Hence, as early as 1968, Manzoni noted that in contrast with the Smallbrook Ringway section, »other stretches of the road may not produce such a big return«. ⁴⁰

In 1971 the proposal to widen Colmore Row as part of the ring road scheme was dropped. The critic Ian Nairn had referred to this as »disastrous«. ⁴¹ By the late 1960s the economic climate had changed, and some Councillors felt that the imminent completion of the ring road would provide sufficient traffic capacity. Moreover, a new public and professional ethos was evident particularly following the Civic Amenities

Act 1967: this highlighted the growing influence of the conservation movement. The whole ring road was officially opened by the Queen on 7 April 1971. By then the land cost had risen from £12 to £21 million and the construction cost from £2.5 to £13.25 million, and by 1973, capital investment in new buildings in the central area totalled over £200 million. ⁴²

Related to the ring road development, and equally technocentric, were proposals for underground traffic links, servicing and rapid transit. There was some discussion of an underground system in the immediate post-war years, as when the PWC decided that the costs of building one to the north-east of the city centre were uneconomic. ⁴³ A populist polemic discussed east-west and north-south tunnels under the city core. Oddly they appear to intersect at an underground cross-roads (Fig. 8). ⁴⁴ Finally, there was pressure to extend the Big Top development's underground ser-

³⁷ Sutcliffe 1967–1969.

³⁸ Price 2002, 158.

³⁹ Marriott 1967, 183.

⁴⁰ Manzoni 1968, 3.

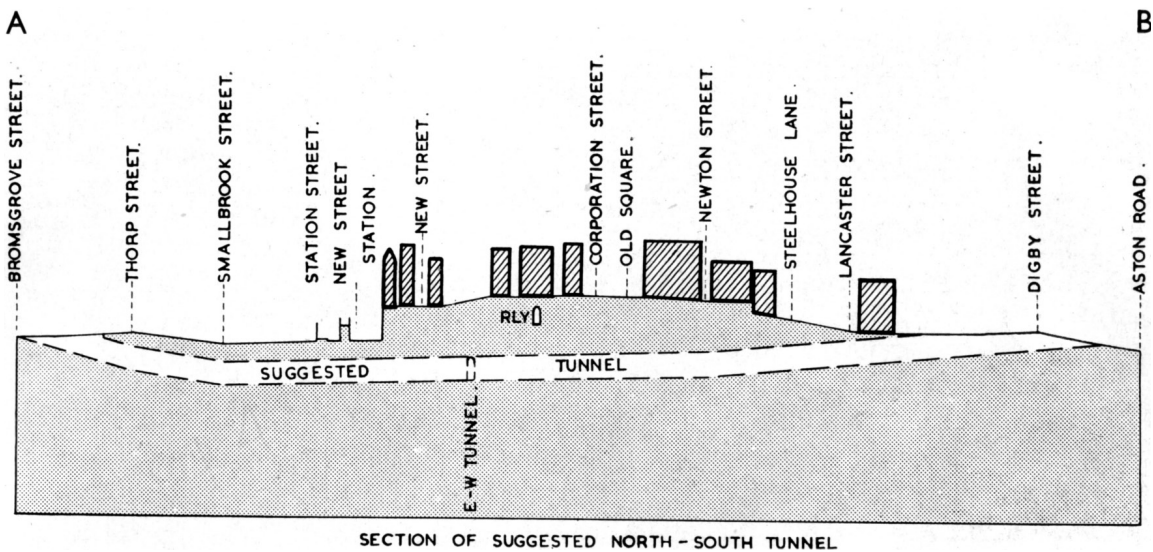
⁴¹ Nairn 1960, 114.

⁴² Borg 1973, 53, 71.

⁴³ PWC Minutes 27/7/1948, 881.

⁴⁴ Cadbury 1952.

8. Proposed road tunnel





9. The former Severn House, the first sizeable post-war office block in the city, by Cotton, Ballard & Blow



10. Grosvenor House, New Street, by Cotton, Ballard & Blow

vice road the length of New Street, using the fall of land to the south to gain access. In the mid-1960s these ideas were promoted by the Leader of the Council, and the PWC approved in principle a service tunnel under New Street.⁴⁵

The city-centre reconstruction

As the city's bomb damage was insufficient to draw in significant central government support, the Council needed to attract businesses, and felt that a redevelopment plan for the city centre would be seen as restrictive and counter-productive: their landholding could exert sufficient control while implying freedom to prospective occupiers.⁴⁶ Manzoni, of course, disliked such plans too. Nevertheless, a range of interesting ideas developed early in the planning process. In October 1941 the PWC noted in general terms that air raid damage gives »an opportunity to effect many improvements of a local character [and] to make good many defects of the past«.⁴⁷ Despite this planning activity at the local level, actual reconstruction was very limited in the early post-war years. Building materials were still rationed, and structural steel was made available to bomb-damaged cities as a result of a rationing process with Ministerial involvement.⁴⁸ It was not until late 1949, after pressure from MPs rep-

resenting bombed towns, that government announced that rebuilding »could not be indefinitely deferred, and had decided that a start should be made with the rebuilding of central areas in the heavily bombed cities where plans were sufficiently far advanced«.⁴⁹

The first sizeable post-war office block was designed and built by Cotton, Ballard & Blow, fronting the line of the future inner ring road but not part of that project (Fig. 9).⁵⁰ Cotton apparently received permission to build it despite the building restrictions, because he had secured the Ministry of Works as a tenant. The building is described as »a gaunt and graceless hulk« but it survives and has just been refurbished.⁵¹ The same company was also involved with an office development on New Street, for Shell-Mex BP, built 1951–1953 (Fig. 10).⁵² The first designs were equally plain but, although the application was

⁴⁵ Lewis 1968.

⁴⁶ Sutcliffe/Smith 1974, 442–443.

⁴⁷ PWC Minutes 23/10/1941 (and see note 11).

⁴⁸ See Flinn 2013.

⁴⁹ *Estates Gazette* 25/9/1949, 236; NA HLG 71/2222.

⁵⁰ Planning application 01538000, approved 23/12/1948.

⁵¹ Marriott 1967, 136.

⁵² Planning application 00816000, approved 26/5/1949.

approved, Manzoni asked for »some improvement in the architectural treatment«. The result is »flashy but undeniably effective». ⁵³ This building is now Listed. ⁵⁴

The Big Top site was rebuilt in 1956–1961. Again designed by Cotton, Ballard & Blow, this was the first major development within the ring road line. Although this was a commercial venture by Raventop Developments, the Council had agreed to pay for an underground service vehicle access from the inner ring road. When redeveloped, the site produced »some of the most valuable shops in the country-retailers in the best pitch in Birmingham take as much money per square foot as in almost any street in Europe». ⁵⁵

But professional ideas were changing, and Sheppard Fidler strongly argued in various widely reported meetings against buildings lining main roads (including the inner ring road), and instead recommended pedestrian precincts and towers within city centres. ⁵⁶ Many of these ideas were evident in contemporary architectural publications and in other rebuilt cities, although relatively few actually found place in Birmingham. They were present in the proposals by

the Corporation Street Estates Co. to build shops and an office block. The scheme had been modified to include a »raised shopping floor« with bridges over intervening streets. When built the segregation was achieved through underpasses (since removed). But at this time the city's Estates Officer was seeking to develop a shopping arcade east of, and parallel with, Corporation Street. He complained that »nobody knew of my plans, and the pedestrian subways built in connection with the Bull Street and Corporation Street improvements do not correspond with the exits of my arcade». ⁵⁷ Clearly there was a communication problem within the Council. These ideas were also evident in the 1962 plan for several blocks along Corporation Street. A series of controversial proposals from at least 1959 suggested the replacement of the

⁵³ Foster 2005, 111.

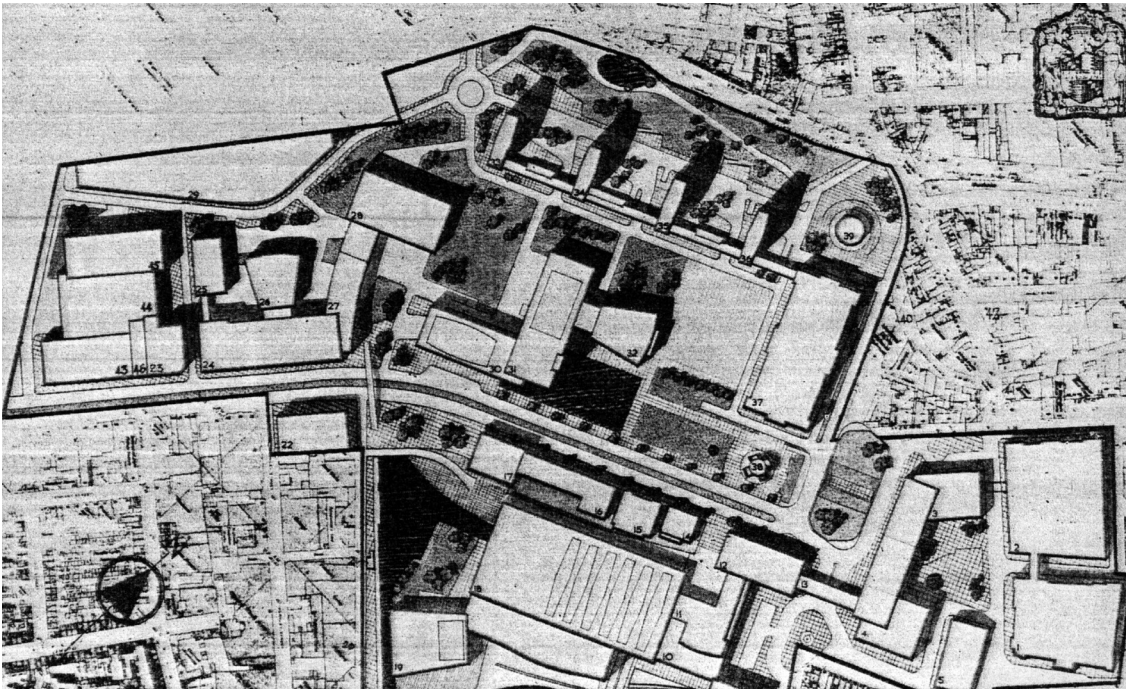
⁵⁴ Placed on a Government list for protection.

⁵⁵ Marriott 1967, 136–137.

⁵⁶ Sheppard Fidler 1959.

⁵⁷ Sutcliffe 1967–69.

11. Civic Centre new layout, 1958, by Sheppard Fidler





12. John Madin (second from right) and others reviewing an early model of the Library (Madin archive)

late-Victorian blocks on the corner of New Street and Corporation Street. The most developed of these suggested a 14-storey office tower and »broad shopping precincts, untroubled by traffic and reached by escalators from street level«, in a scheme proposed by Raventop Developments. It had »intricate low-rise courtyard planning« as well as the office tower.⁵⁸ Land Securities had purchased or acquired interests in a series of street-blocks in this part of the city centre. Early models show tower and slab blocks, with a fly-over or elevated block linking both sides of Corporation Street. The same developers proposed a scheme of shops and a multi-storey car park on the opposite side of Corporation Street, with both developments linked by an extension of the underground service road from the ring road to the Big Top site.⁵⁹ The total scheme would cost some £10 million, and the architect Walter Gropius had been involved in the design.⁶⁰ This was a novel development form; the beginning of a trend towards precinct design. Although the Press comment was very positive, this scheme was never built.

Sheppard Fidler had produced a campus-style new masterplan for the 1920s Civic Centre area in 1958 (Fig. 11). Baskerville House, begun before the war, would be completed, but all new civic functions would be in new, modern-styled buildings in a largely rectilinear layout (except for the projecting concert hall and auditorium, reminiscent of Coventry's first layout for rebuilding). Most of the office functions in the complex would now be housed in four tall, linked

tower blocks facing the canal. By this time, modernist precinct designs were dominating design thinking: new buildings and the spaces around them paid little or no heed to existing streets and street-block patterns, and this can be seen even more clearly in some of the city core designs of the following decade. The traditional urban model of buildings lining streets – seen so clearly in the Smallbrook Ring Road phase – had been replaced.

However, by 1965 Sheppard Fidler's masterplan was itself out of favour, superseded by a much revised plan by his replacement, J. R. Sheridan-Shedden, and local architect John Madin. The four office towers had become municipal flats, and the plan included a 460-foot column with a revolving restaurant, a monorail station, and the cost was over £8 million.⁶¹

By this time the new central library had taken virtually its final form as an inverted stepped pyramid (Fig. 12). The John Madin Design Group had been appointed to design this in 1964, when Sheppard Fidler's box was rejected. The library and its associated facilities had a long gestation, and the original crisp architectural form became cluttered by the proximity of other buildings. The structure was determined to a large extent by the column spacing needed for a proposed bus station on the ring road underneath the library itself. The original complex, including the bus station, was left incomplete after the onset of the oil crisis of the 1970s. Moreover, largely for reasons of cost, Madin's original vision of a building faced in travertine marble, set in landscaped gardens with fountains and waterfalls, was altered, and pre-cast concrete cladding panels were used. The unique library has recently been demolished (Fig. 13).⁶²

Not long after the start of the library project there was a more significant redesign of the south-eastern part of the civic centre, and the site was to be leased to ATV (Associated Television). Television production facilities would be built, together with office buildings (Fig. 14), but an exhibition hall would still be part of the site – but it was described as loss-making, »foisted upon ATV by the City Corporation as a condition in

⁵⁸ Foster 2005, 33.

⁵⁹ *Birmingham Post* 20/7/1962.

⁶⁰ *Guardian* 20/7/1962.

⁶¹ *Architect & Building News* 26/5/1965, 976; *Guardian* 26/5/1965.

⁶² Clawley 2015; Larkham/Adams 2016.

the lease of the magnificent site«. ⁶³ Madin felt that the lease to ATV had »wrecked the whole scheme« for the civic centre. ⁶⁴ The office towers at this development, named Paradise Circus, were designed by Seifert & Partners, although only one, Alpha Tower, was built (it is now Listed). The second block was replaced by a much more rectilinear hotel block set further back from the ring road.

Modernism was also most plainly evident on Colmore Circus, part of the inner ring road cross, in Kelly & Surman's Lloyd House (1963, eleven storeys) and Madin's Post & Mail building (1965, demolished 2005). This was, although alien in its scale and form, regarded by architects as »the finest commercial building of its time in the city«. ⁶⁵

A three-acre street block fronting Corporation Street and the inner ring road cross was designed by Frederick Gibberd as a £2 million pedestrian shopping

precinct over a car park. The client was Colonnade Developments, a company owned jointly by Ravenscroft Properties and Cotton's City Centre Properties. Although the shops were of 2/3 storeys, there was no office accommodation above them, owing to the saturation of the city's office market and concerns over streets becoming »concrete canyons«. ⁶⁶ The Colonnade development is seen as »Birmingham's best 1960s shopping development« and is characterised by a solid Portland stone façade with unusual thin vertical slit windows. ⁶⁷ It is currently threatened by redevelopment, temporarily reprieved by the global economic situation.

⁶³ *Architect & Building News* 11/9/1968, 54.

⁶⁴ Sutcliffe 1967–1969.

⁶⁵ Foster 2005, 92.

⁶⁶ *Architect & Building News* 30/10/1961, 682.

⁶⁷ Foster 2005, 102.

13. Demolition of central library, 2016





14. »ATV site« with Siefert's towers

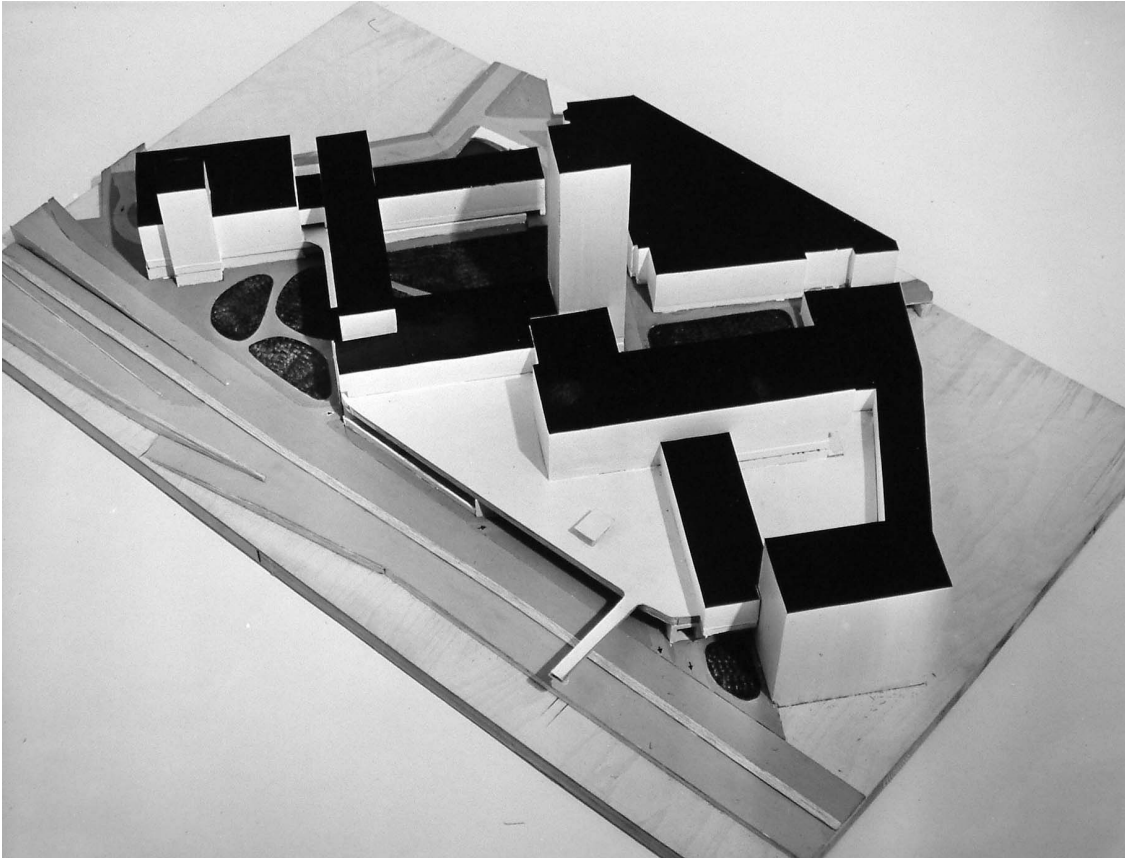
Also on Corporation Street is an eight-storey department store. Designed by T. P. Bennett & Sons and built in 1957–1961, this represented a deliberate attempt by the city, and Price in particular, to attract major retailers. Price had been approached by the chairman of Harrod's, who was interested in Broad Street. No site was quite suitable, but the Rackham's site in the city core was, if it could be redeveloped in conjunction with an adjacent site owned by the council. So Harrod's acquired Rackham's. »Having landed Harrod's, I hoped the news would bring in many other quality stores which had yet to be represented in the city and would help our plans towards expanding the size and quality of the central shopping district.«⁶⁸ However, a week before the new store was opened, Harrod's was taken over by House of Fraser, who retained the Rackham's brand in Birmingham.

Again in the early 1960s, discussions were well advanced on the redevelopment of two other areas as distinct »precincts« within the inner ring road. Both resulted in various proposals and architectural models, but neither was implemented. The sites were Temple Row, facing the Cathedral, and a site between the ring road and Corporation Street, for a development of law courts. Several Modernist proposals were drawn up for a legal precinct (Fig. 15).⁶⁹ New Law Courts were eventually built, but not until the 1980s.

The bomb-damaged New Street Station was eventually redeveloped, although more as part of the broader

⁶⁸ Price 2002, 154.

⁶⁹ Photographs of several models exist in the City Archives, Box 22/67.



15. *Law Courts precinct model, September 1962*

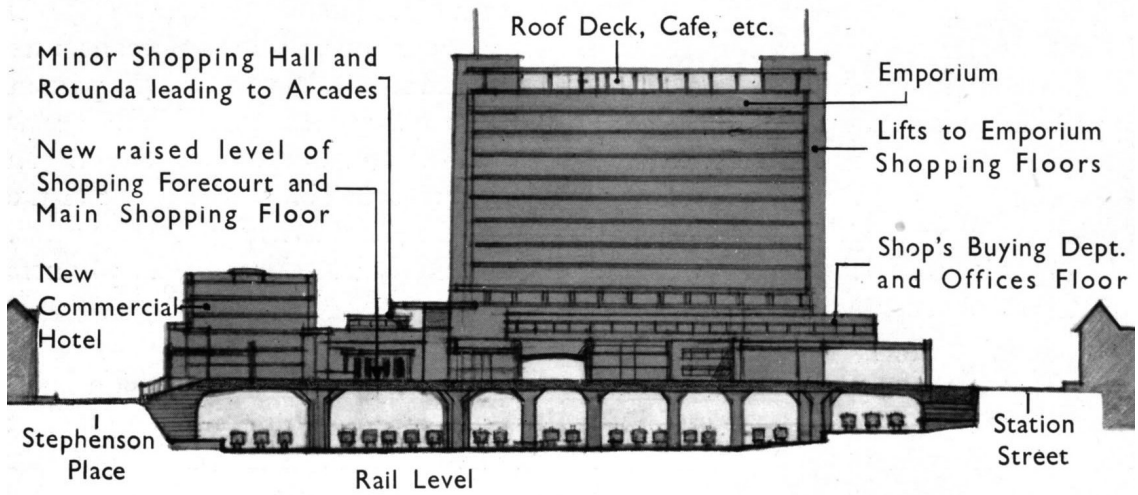
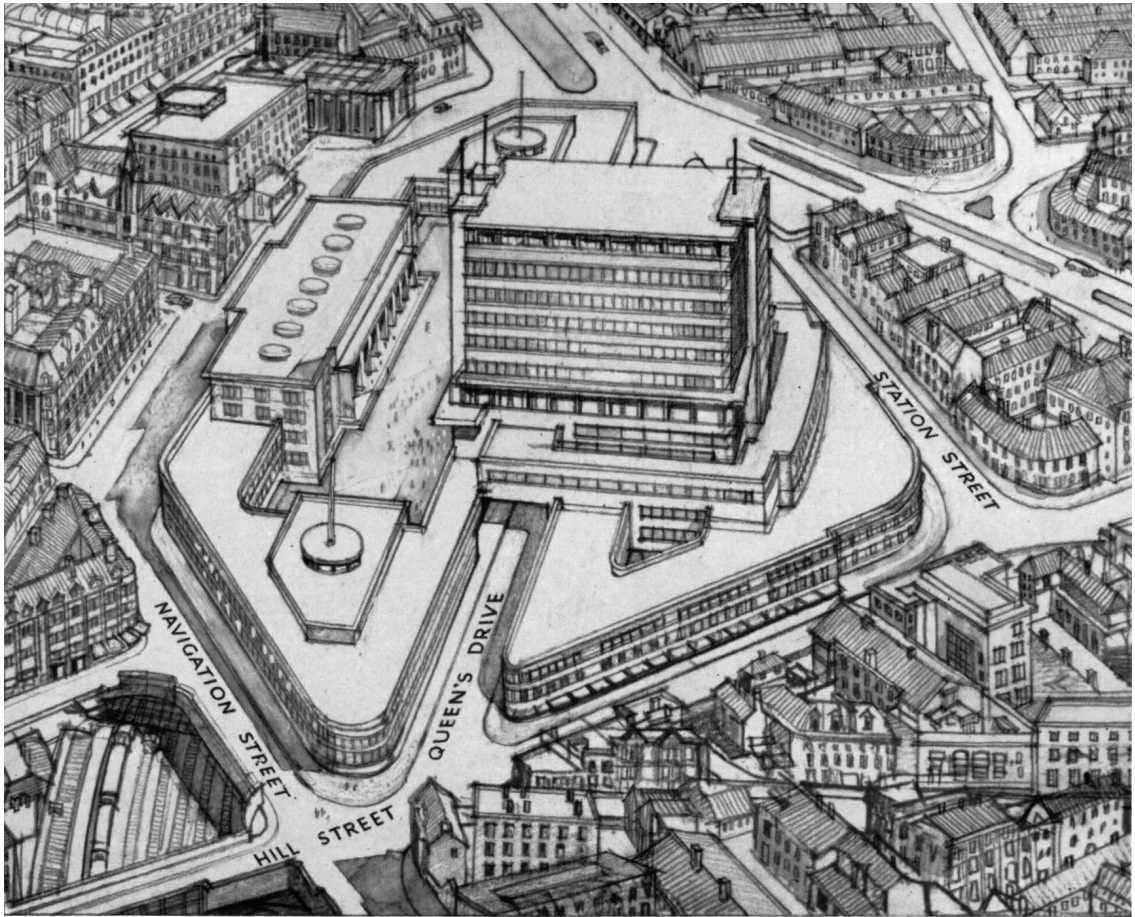
upgrading and electrification of the West Coast Main Line than as a direct response to damage. The main entrance was aligned towards the ring road, with all services being at ground level and platforms below ground, supported by over 200 concrete columns. The work began in 1964 and the whole £4.5 million station was opened on 6 March 1967.⁷⁰ Above the station itself a further 7.5-acre concrete raft supported a new shopping centre by Cotton, Ballard & Blow, costing a further £6 million and built in 1968–1970. Also associated with this scheme was a 21-storey block of flats, a multi-storey car park and a nine-storey office block. Interestingly a futuristic 1952 illustration (Fig. 16) is a more ›urban‹ development, with longer built-up active street frontages.⁷¹ The station and its shopping centre have recently been substantially upgraded, with a cloud-like mirror cladding.

Mention should also be made of the massive underground system of the Anchor Exchange and its accesses and services – a further technocentric project. This was one of three national communications hubs designed to be nuclear bomb proof. It was built in the mid-1950s under a cover story of constructing an underground rail system. This system lies between the telecommunications tower and the central library. Its technology soon became obsolete and was declassified in 1967. Although part used for other telecommunications purposes, it has been badly affected by rising groundwater levels and is now considered unsafe.⁷²

⁷⁰ McKenna 2005, 133.

⁷¹ Cadbury 1952, 56.

⁷² www.birminghamuk.com; www.birminghamanchor.co.uk.



16. Impression of New Street station redevelopment (not implemented)



17. Late aerial perspective of the Bull Ring (artist unknown)

The Bull Ring

The area around the bombed Market Hall – the Bull Ring – was the historic site of city markets. By 1959 the PWC held a conference to discuss the area. A key consideration was the Ministry of Transport’s preference that vehicular roads should be separated from pedestrian routes.⁷³ Despite earlier plans and a recent booklet,⁷⁴ this meeting agreed to demolish the Market Hall.⁷⁵ Price said that »the original plans had been changed to preserve the Market Hall [...] I got the Council to agree to the demolition of the Market Hall, in the face of quite strong opposition from those who believed that it had some architectural interest«. ⁷⁶ Shortly afterwards Godfrey approached the PWC proposing, on this now extensive redevelopment site,

a large covered shopping centre, bus station, car park etc., to be designed by J. A. Roberts. His ideas aligned with those of the City Architect.⁷⁷

However, at this time there were changes of Council officers and Committee members; and the Council established the principle that sites for lease should be

⁷³ Foster 2005, 85.

⁷⁴ Birmingham City Council 1956–1957.

⁷⁵ PWC Minutes 6/1/1959.

⁷⁶ Sutcliffe 1967–1969; see also Price 2002, 157–58. In contrast, Harwood 2002, 62 asserts that it was Godfrey who persuaded the Council to demolish the Market Hall, but gives no source.

⁷⁷ Marriott 1967, 224.

advertised rather than negotiated.⁷⁸ Ross, the Estates Officer, opposed the relatively low ground-rents suggested by the then-preferred developers and this was influential. Godfrey offered £50,000 per year; Ross wanted £75,000.⁷⁹ The site was advertised to developers by public tender. The specification left a great deal to potential developers: »since Birmingham [...] had not done any serious research on the potential of the Bull Ring site as a shopping centre, it was wise to leave the decision to somebody else«. ⁸⁰ The selected developer – the Laing Investment Co. – bid an annual ground rent of £109,000 and produced a design similar to Roberts’s for Godfrey, but using different architects: a process criticised at the time.⁸¹ Ross said that »We did not accept the highest bid [...] we accepted [Laing’s] because we knew that Laing’s were a good firm«. ⁸² This became the Bull Ring shopping centre (Fig. 17), on which work began in 1961. The scheme cost some £8 million,⁸³ and included 350,000 square feet of retail floorspace, the retail market, a 500-space car park, a seven-storey office block, and a bus station designed to handle 18 million passengers per year. The ring road cut through the site, but shoppers inside the centre passed over it by corridors and escalators, or under it via shop-lined underpasses, hardly aware of it. The island site formerly occupied by the Market Hall was partly an area for market stalls and partly landscaped public open space (later named Manzoni Gardens). But the centre was initially difficult to let, its technology was unreliable, by the 1980s there were discussions about redevelopment, and it was demolished by 2000.

Conclusions

It is difficult to present a coherent picture of post-war redevelopment in a city as large as Birmingham, where bomb damage was severe but at the same time diffuse, and where no single coherent reconstruction plan was ever formulated. This overview of a sample of projects unpacks the complexity and contradiction of process, and the nature, quality and longevity of the product. This was authoritarian, top-down development, shaped by key personalities:

›Planning‹ was virtually absent at least strategically. In thematic terms, it is difficult to separate consideration of roads – important as these are in

Birmingham’s rebuilding – from that of the buildings lining them. In Birmingham, the debate over shallow and long blocks, or deep blocks, lining the ring road was significant and was shaped in part by finance and the hurry to gain Parliamentary approval. Although new roads create a new morphological frame, there is great persistence of plan: in terms of the remnants of existing morphological frames,⁸⁴ and indeed of the infrastructures underneath roads to be removed.

The extent of ›reconstruction‹

In Birmingham, as elsewhere, the professional view was taken that bombing provided an opportunity for redevelopment: pre-war plans could be implemented, and pre-war ideas and aspirations were developed into implementable form. Once materials and finance became available – and there was over a decade of delay with this – then redevelopment proceeded rapidly, principally because plans *were* in place, and because of the decision to seek a private Act. The Act provided compulsory purchase powers and the necessary permission. Ingenious developers, particularly Jack Cotton, managed to begin rebuilding even when materials were rationed. After the end of rationing there was »an almost frightening volume of development now going on in the city«. ⁸⁵ Nevertheless, in the 1960s there were criticisms of the seemingly diffuse nature of the city centre’s redevelopment: »the master plan for the redevelopment and expansion of the civic area has not yet begun to take shape, and there is no apparent pattern in the redevelopment at the heart of the city«. ⁸⁶ Clearly there were problems in communicating the aspirations of city managers to the residents and other stakeholders. In all, despite the criticisms of the planning and of the resulting development, Birmingham’s flexible approach, not constrained by a

⁷⁸ General Purposes Committee Minutes 21/7/1959.

⁷⁹ Marriott 1967, 224.

⁸⁰ Marriott 1967, 224.

⁸¹ Ginsburg 1960, 189; supported by an Editorial in the same issue of the *Architects’ Journal*, 4/2/1960.

⁸² Sutcliffe 1967–1969.

⁸³ So says McKenna 2005; Marriott 1967, 215 says £5.5 million.

⁸⁴ cf Larkham 1995.

⁸⁵ *Architect & Building News* 1959, 474.

⁸⁶ *Evening Mail* 8/4/1965.

rigid plan and responsive to proposals by developers, was very successful in getting the city centre rebuilt and functioning. »Far more of the city was rebuilt than in other big provincial centres like Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, though all faced a similarly constrained city centre and shortage of shops«. ⁸⁷

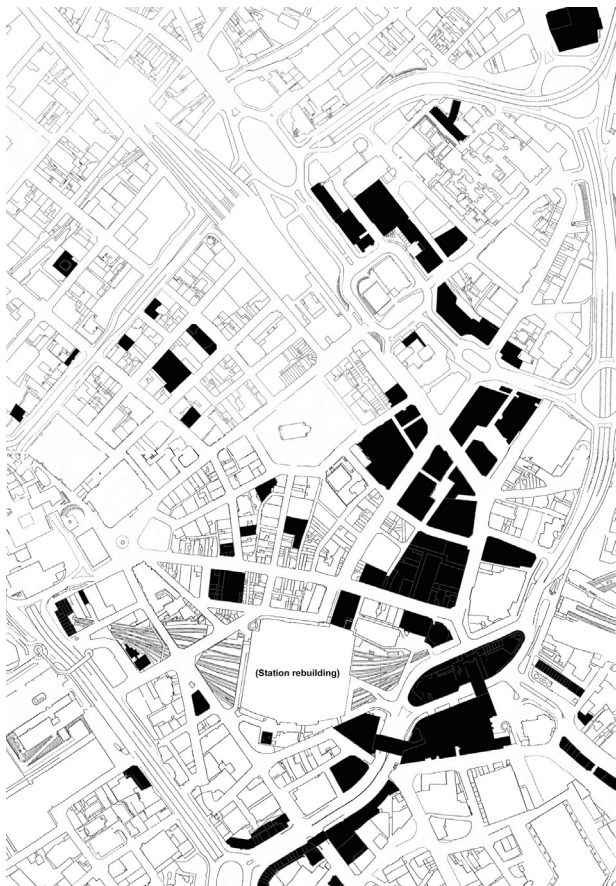
The phasing of reconstruction

From the early 1950s there was a decade of considerable activity, culminating in the Smallbrook Ringway and associated developments, many of which were designed by one local architect, J. A. Roberts. Despite the collapse of the office boom from 1964/65, activity continued throughout the 1960s with the ring road,

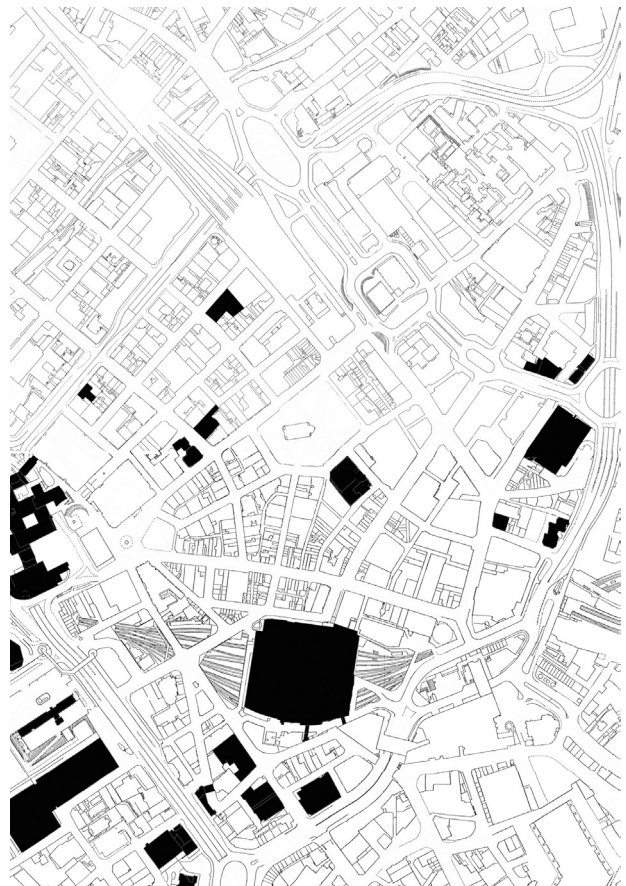
although it was no longer closely lined with shops and offices along the lines of Roberts's development. While construction of the central library began, the remainder of the civic centre failed; and the 1973 oil crisis and international financial problems led to work slowing virtually to a standstill. At much the same time, the rise of a conservation movement, reacting against the excesses and speed of the comprehensive redevelopments, led to a change in emphasis nationally and locally. It was probably the public campaign against demolition of the nineteenth-century Post Office on Victoria Square that marked the change in

⁸⁷ Harwood 2002, 62.

18. City centre redevelopment (dates of building completion), 1952–1967



19. City centre redevelopment (dates of building completion), 1968–c. 1974



direction of the city's post-war development. However, the earlier reversal of policy with respect to the widening of Colmore Row, and hence the wholesale demolition of its frontage buildings, seems at least as significant in marking a change in culture within the City and at the level of central government, including the Listing of some buildings on this route.⁸⁸

The UK's post-war reconstruction can be seen in several phases.⁸⁹ First, 1945–1951, when new statutory mechanisms for reconstruction and planning were devised. Very little was built in Birmingham during this period: a nurses' home and further work to the C&A store, begun before the war. Birmingham certainly suffered from the shortages, but the situation was little if at all easier between 1951 and the ending of rationing in 1954/55; whereas one could, with Manzoni, argue that the origin of the city's reconstruction really lay in the surveys and plans of the mid 1930s aimed principally at slum clearance.

The second phase is from the election of the Conservative government in 1951 to the end of the office-building boom in the mid-1960s. The economy was deregulated; building materials were no longer rationed from 1954/55, the 100% betterment levy on land was removed, and speculative developers forced the pace of change. There is broad agreement that the boom had ceased by 1965. This was certainly a period of enormous development in the city (Fig. 18). It became prominently featured in the national and international press, and remarked upon by academic critics throughout the post-war period, for the nature and extent of its redevelopment, which had probably a greater impact on the city's urban form and structure than was the case in any other city even including London.

Although there was a slowing of developments in the 1960s in general, it is difficult to suggest when such a second period should end since some projects were not, or not wholly, offices; and others, including some very major ones such as the Central Library, were ongoing until the oil crisis of the early 1970s. Fig. 19 shows developments between the start of 1968 and the end of 1974. Interestingly in terms of phasing, Tom Cowles, then the Deputy Planning Officer, claimed in 1968 that the city was then entering a »second round of city planning« (Manzoni's ring road had been the first), focusing on issues such as city-centre zoning, pedestrian movement and public transport.⁹⁰

Critiques of implementation

There have been significant criticisms of the administration of reconstruction – indeed of planning and development generally – in post-war Birmingham. There was no specialist planning committee, and planning was split, sometimes acrimoniously, between various committees and officers. Those officers, especially Manzoni and later Sheppard Fidler, were powerful individuals, influential in their professions and within the authority. Nevertheless, whether they really fit within the categorisation of »the dictatorship of the official«⁹¹ is debatable particularly towards the end of Manzoni's time in office, when the Labour group was more active in major planning issues. More influential were the committee chairmen, especially Frank Price; but the changing politics of the time did result in changes to the elected member/officer relationships. Ginsburg, founding Head of the Birmingham School of Planning, criticised the administration of reconstruction, with planning functions dispersed amongst »a dozen departments« and the redevelopment section had »only a small staff, with less than six qualified town planners and not a single architect«.⁹²

The lack of an overall plan for the city centre, although a deliberate approach by Manzoni with the agreement of the Public Works Committee, was clearly perceived to be a problem in some quarters. Ginsburg was outspoken in his criticism: the city should »be setting a positive example by replanning the properties under its leasehold control«.⁹³ This was at a point where Esher later suggested that an urgent necessity was, »generally by hiring planning consultants, to have a central area plan ready before developers' applications put one on the spot«.⁹⁴ Although the city could and did exercise control through its land ownership, the final result was less co-ordinated than might be desirable. Other cities, such as Nottingham, without overall plans were similarly criticised.⁹⁵

Both proposed and actual developments had a very mixed press, nationally and locally; lay and profes-

⁸⁸ cf Aldous 1975, 32.

⁸⁹ Bullock 1997.

⁹⁰ Lewis 1968.

⁹¹ Newton 1976, chapter 7.

⁹² Ginsburg 1959.

⁹³ *Birmingham Post* 1959.

⁹⁴ Esher 1981, 54–55.

⁹⁵ Harwood 2002, 66.

sional. The architectural critic Ian Nairn liked some of the civic centre proposals, but »in the rest of the centre proposed rebuilding is imposing at a quick look [...] disastrously ham-handed as it appears in the concrete.«.⁹⁶ Other buildings too were visually problematic: one was »a strange elevation in four quite different stages, but this is not surprising since there were many drawing-boards involved« resulting in »New Street's architectural disaster«.⁹⁷ However, much of the impetus for the bland designs nationally at this time was the pressure for speedy redevelopment, and the speed at which decisions could be taken.⁹⁸ Owen Luder (later RIBA President) felt that the Bull Ring was uninspiring, poorly related to the rest of the town centre, and unduly dominated by a complex road plan. Its basic lesson should be »that when roads and buildings are integrated in a three-dimensional layout they must be designed at the same time. To try to make the buildings fit afterwards as in this scheme is hardly likely to be very successful«.⁹⁹

The ring road was criticised: »unhappily this looks like being the greatest traffic and town design tragedy yet to afflict an English city«.¹⁰⁰ This was largely Manzoni's vision, and he was described by Madin as pushing highways rather than a conception of three-dimensional planning: »basically Manzoni was a road engineer [...] this was his limitation«.¹⁰¹ It was »essentially an engineer's strategy, first functional and only incidentally as an afterthought concerned with aesthetics or social fabric«.¹⁰²

Demolition, rebuilding and management

Buildings do, clearly, have a life cycle. This can be very short, even for structures not designed as temporary. Historically, though, infrastructure such as roads has tended to be considerably more resistant to change. Nevertheless, the natural fate of the vast majority of urban structures is demolition and redevelopment. In a case such as Birmingham's redevelopment, where Manzoni felt that the buildings »should have a built-in redundancy, to last no more than fifteen or twenty years«,¹⁰³ it should be no surprise that demolitions began only a couple of decades since construction.

However, as some contemporary architects saw the bombing as an opportunity, so can the demolition of the reconstruction-era buildings be seen today.

There is, it is suggested, a »constructive value of destruction«, a »creative demolition«.¹⁰⁴ Architects have been equally dogmatic: Le Corbusier said that »we must pull things down and throw the corpses onto the garbage heap«.¹⁰⁵ Buildings praised when first constructed, and those subsequently given the accolade of protection through Listing, have been threatened with demolition or actually demolished. The principal losses have been the Bull Ring, replaced by a new retail mall whose design has allowed the reinstatement of the direct pedestrian link between High Street and Digbeth. Madin's AEU Building has been replaced by the city's tallest tower block, and his Library, NatWest Bank and Post & Mail building have gone too. The Rotunda was threatened in early schemes for the Bull Ring redevelopment, but was reprieved and Listed; nevertheless it has been gutted, converted to apartments and reclad (Fig. 20), and perhaps more intrusive, a support for the new Bullring shopping centre has been driven through the podium block. Most strikingly, the Masshouse Circus raised ring road section has been demolished: removing the »concrete collar« to facilitate the regeneration of the east side of the city centre.

The appearance of the reconstruction-era commercial areas of the city is now changing fast. Refurbishment and recladding, regeneration and redevelopment are all having a cumulative effect. The crisp geometry of the reconstruction Modernism is being changed. At the scale of the city, one should expect this process, scale and rapidity of urban change. At the more local level, change is often resisted, and feared, by local communities. Continued incremental change can alter the character and appearance of areas to a considerable extent: some areas need change; in other cases, it is hard to resist the suggestion that this is virtually change for the sake of change. In Birmingham, though,

⁹⁶ Nairn 1960, 114.

⁹⁷ Pevsner/Wedgwood 1966, 126; Foster 2005, 111.

⁹⁸ Rose 1985, 150–153.

⁹⁹ Luder 1964, 401.

¹⁰⁰ Ginsburg 1959; *Birmingham Post* 1959

¹⁰¹ Sutcliffe 1967–1969.

¹⁰² Aldous 1975, 26.

¹⁰³ McKenna 2005, 127, no sources given.

¹⁰⁴ Schwarz 1931; Colby 1964, 54.

¹⁰⁵ Le Corbusier 1967, 96.



20. *The Rotunda, stripped for refurbishment, 2006 (more standard reconstruction-period building to left)*

longevity was not a major consideration, some of the technologies were experimental, and short building life was anticipated. Nevertheless, this is a crucial period in understanding how British cities repositioned themselves in a changing urban hierarchy, economy and socio-political milieu of the post-war future. It is, therefore, appropriate that the built form should be assessed at a point when it becoming increasingly subject to alteration or demolition. Not only should it be recorded, but its significance needs to be appraised in order that management decisions can be taken at the micro and meso scales: from buildings to urban quarters. In terms of management, what was good from this period? How might it be retained in the changing city? What lessons can be learned? This historical reassessment can make a contribution to the management process. There are conflicts between valuing the heritage of the (largely Modernist) reconstruction era and the pressures for contemporary urban regeneration and renaissance¹⁰⁶ that merit further consideration as cities change.

¹⁰⁶ While 2006; Larkham/Adams 2016.

Abstract

The problems and opportunities of post-war reconstruction in the UK are well demonstrated by the city of Birmingham, although what happened there is hardly typical of the country overall. The city was badly bombed, although damage was diffuse. Unusually, no formal ›reconstruction plan‹ was produced because city managers distrusted ›big plans‹, and because there were existing slum clearance plans and ring road aspirations. A new ring road and precinct developments dominated the rebuilt city centre, though the development process was slow and generated very mixed public responses.

The architectural and urban forms created were also mixed, but concrete and brutalism reshaped the city's image. Some of the buildings have not lasted well and were redeveloped after relatively short lives, and the technocentric, car-dominated approach has also failed, with sections of ring road also being redeveloped. This paper demonstrates that even a determined, single-minded approach to reconstruction takes decades to implement; and that changes in fashion and society may very quickly render that reconstruction obsolete.

References

No full reference is given here to short news items or Letters to the Editor in newspapers or professional journals: these are traceable from the edition date given in the text.

Aldous 1975

Aldous, Tony: *Goodbye, Britain?* London 1975

Altrock/Fischer 2018

Altrock, Uwe/Fischer, Karl (Eds.) *Windows upon planning history*. Abingdon, forthcoming 2018

Architect & Building News 1959

Ed.: The City of Birmingham rebuilds, in: *Architect & Building News* 15 April 1959, 470–482

Birmingham City Council 1995

Birmingham City Council (Ed.): *Architecture and Austerity: Birmingham 1940–1950*. Birmingham 1995

Birmingham City Council 1956/7

Birmingham City Council (Public Works Committee) (Ed.): *City of Birmingham Inner Ring Road*. Birmingham 1956/57

Birmingham Post 1959

Birmingham Post: Wanted: a Plan for the City Centre, in: *Birmingham Post*, 12 August 1959

Borg 1973

Borg, Neville: Birmingham, in: Holliday, John (Ed.): *City-Centre Redevelopment*. London 1973, 150–166

Bullock 1997

Bullock, Nick: Rebuilding Britain after World War II, in: Tabet, J. (Ed.): *The Reconstruction of War-Torn Cities*. Beirut 1997, 60–67

Cadbury 1952

Cadbury, Paul: *Birmingham Fifty Years On*. Birmingham 1952

Clawley 2015

Clawley, Alan: *Library Story, A History of Birmingham Central Library*. Birmingham 2015

Colby 1964

Colby, Jean: *Tear Down to Build Up*. Eau Claire WI 1964

Düwel/Gutschow 2013

Düwel, Jörn/Gutschow, Niels (Eds.): *A Blessing in Disguise. War and Town Planning in Europe 1940–1945*. Berlin, 2013

Esher 1981

Esher, Lionel: *A Broken Wave. The Rebuilding of England, 1940–1980*. London 1981

Flinn 2013

Flinn, Catherine: Reconstruction Constraints. Political and Economic Realities, in: Clapson, Mark/Larkham, Peter (Eds.): *The Blitz and its Legacy*. Farnham 2013, 87–97

Foster 2005

Foster, Andrew: *Birmingham. Pevsner Architectural Guides*. New Haven 2005

Ginsburg 1959

Ginsburg, Leslie: Town Planning or Road Building? in: *Architects' Journal* 130. 1 October 1959, 288–294

Ginsburg 1960

Ginsburg, Leslie: Birmingham's Bull Ring Centre, in: *Architects' Journal* 131. 3381, 1960, 187–189

Harwood 2002

Harwood, Elaine: White Light/White Heat. Rebuilding England's Provincial Towns and Cities in the Sixties, in: *Twentieth Century Architecture* 6. 2002, 56–70

Hein/Diefendorf/Yorifusa 2003

Hein, Carola/Diefendorf, Jeffrey/Ishida, Yorifusa (Eds.): *Rebuilding Urban Japan After 1945*. Basingstoke 2003

Hendriks 1994

Hendriks, Frank: Cars and Culture in Munich and Birmingham. The Case for Cultural Pluralism, in: Coyle, Dennis/Ellis, Richard (Eds.): *Politics, Policy, and Culture*. Boulder 1994, 51–69

Laing Development Company 1964

Laing Development Company (Ed.): *The Bull Ring Centre, Birmingham* (promotional brochure). London 1964

Larkham 1995

Larkham, Peter: Constraints of Urban History and Form upon Redevelopment, in: *Geography* 80. 1995, 111–124

Larkham 2014

Larkham, Peter: A new vision. The role of municipal authorities and planners in repanning Britain after the Second World War, in: Conzen, Michael/Larkham, Peter (Eds.): *The Shapers of Urban Form*. New York 2014, 230–250

Larkham/Adams 2016

Larkham, Peter/Adams, David: The Un-necessary Monument? The Origins, Impact and Potential Conservation of Birmingham Central Library, in: *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* 60. 2016, 94–127

Larkham 2018

Larkham, Peter: Alwyn Gwilym Sheppard Fidler, 1909–1990, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford 2018

Le Corbusier 1967

Le Corbusier: *The Radiant City*. New York 1967

Lewis 1968

Lewis, J.: Second Round of City Planning, in: *Birmingham Post*, 28 February 1968

Luder 1964

Luder, Owen: Birmingham's Bull Ring, in: *Architect & Building News*, 28 August 1964, 400–410

Manzoni 1941

Manzoni, Herbert: *Central City Planning. Preliminary Report*. Confidential typescript, 16/10/1941 (copy bound with Birmingham Library's copy of PWC Minutes of 23/10/41)

Manzoni 1955

Manzoni, Herbert: Redevelopment of Blighted Areas in Birmingham, in: *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, March 1955, 90–102

Manzoni 1961

Manzoni, Herbert: The Inner Ring Road, Birmingham, in: *Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers XVIII*, March 1961, 265–283

Manzoni 1968

Manzoni, Herbert: *The Development of Town Planning in Birmingham*, Notes from the History of Birmingham Seminar 2, Birmingham 1968 (copy in Birmingham Library, Local Studies, LP56.4)

Marriott 1967

Marriott, Oliver: *The Property Boom*. London 1967

McKenna 2005

McKenna, Joseph: *Birmingham. The Building of a City*. Stroud 2005

Nairn 1960

Nairn, Ian: Birmingham Liverpool Manchester, in: *Architectural Review* 127. 762, 1960, 111–116

Newton 1976

Newton, Kenneth: *Second City Politics. Democratic Processes and Decision-Making in Birmingham*. Oxford 1976

Pevsner/Wedgwood 1966

Pevsner, Nikolaus/Wedgwood, Alexandra: *Warwickshire*. Harmondsworth 1966

Price 2002

Price, Frank: *Being There*. Kibworth 2002

Rose 1985

Rose, Jack: *The Dynamics of Urban Property Development*. London 1985

Schwarz 1931

Schwarz, D.: New Wrecking Technique Speeds Up Building of Skyscrapers, in: *New York Times*, 5 July 1931

Sheppard Fidler 1959

Sheppard Fidler, Alwyn: The Redevelopment of Urban Centres, paper presented at the conference of the Royal Society of Health 1959

Sutcliffe 1967–1969

Sutcliffe, Anthony: *Transcripts of interviews with prominent Birmingham people 1967–1969*. Birmingham 1967–1969 (copy in Birmingham Library, Local Studies, LF71)

Sutcliffe/Smith 1974

Sutcliffe, Anthony/Smith, Roger: *History of Birmingham 1939–1970*. London 1974

Tubbs 1942

Tubbs, Ralph: *Living in Cities*. Harmondsworth 1942

While 2006

While, Aidan: Modernism vs Urban Renaissance. Negotiating Post-War Heritage in English City Centres, in: *Urban Studies* 43. 2006, 2399–2419

Photo credits

Fig. 1, 3: reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham — **Fig. 2:** Ginsburg collection, Birmingham City University — **Fig. 4:** Birmingham City Council 1995/8 — **Fig. 5:** Birmingham City Council 1956/7 — **Fig. 6:** reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham, BCC Acc. 1999/077 box 22/66, undated — **Fig. 7:** Manzoni 1961 — **Fig. 8, 9, 10:** Cadbury 1952, 53, reproduced by permission of Bournville Village Trust — **Fig. 11:** *Architect & Building News* 4/6/58, 733 — **Fig. 12:** Madin archive — **Fig. 13, 20:** Photo: Peter Larkham — **Fig. 14:** *Architect & Building News* 11/9/68, 52 — **Fig. 15:** reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham, BCC Acc. 1999/077 box 22/67 — **Fig. 16:** Cadbury 1952, 56; reproduced by permission of Bournville Village Trust — **Fig. 17:** Laing Development Company 1964 — **Fig. 18, 19:** base map compiled from Ordnance Survey sheets, 1960s–1970s. Crown copyright reserved