

AN ANGLO-AMERICAN VISION OF MODERNITY: Re-planning the Post-WW2 Portsmouth

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1. Introduction

This paper analyses the post-WW2 planning and development of the city of Portsmouth, UK, during the early 1940s¹. By doing so, it traces the process of *Re-planning*² in the city, and places it into its ideological planning context at both a national and international level. Portsmouth presents itself as a unique case study due to its stringent geographical restrictions, its historic formation pattern, its entire raison d'être, and its detrimental liaison with the Second World War. Indeed, this island-city³ – which up to the mid 1800s consisted of four separate towns (Verenini, 2011) that historically had established themselves as the home of the British Royal Navy through housing its vast dockyards – was the 8th most blitzed city in England and maintained the record of being the most damaged after London (Harrison, 1976; Patterson, 1976). For this reason, it was selected by the wartime Government as a testing ground for post-war reconstruction in the immediate aftermath of the early enemy air raids (Hasegawa, 2000). Overall, the research is interested in the analysis of the city's re-planning ideology formulated in the immediate aftermath of the blitz and, through this, Portsmouth's pursuit of modernity within that unique timeframe. Initially, re-planning will be succinctly contextualized. Through this, the politicization of planning as means of raising the spirit of an entire nation in the grips of war will become apparent. A discussion of Portsmouth's particular vision will follow, through the analysis of primary sources drafted during the 1940s. Specifically, F. A. C. Maunder's *Interim Report* (1943) – the pinnacle of nearly three years of research and design – will be subject of scrutiny, as this represents the most intact, holistic, and bold vision of modernity the city of Portsmouth has witnessed. Following on from a presentation of the re-planning aims, this paper will proceed to dissect the diverse influences that can be grasped at its core. Both national and international notions will be exposed to reinforce the thesis that in the early re-planning years, the vision of reconstruction was

¹ The paper is informed by a qualitative research methodology heavily based on first hand archival resources identified and analysed by the authors. These comprise of original official documents of plans and schemes as well as contemporary newspaper articles on the subject, statistics, meeting minutes, previously undisclosed documents and maps. Second hand sources were also used to solidify the argument, and contextualize Portsmouth's particularities within a national and international perspective.

² *Re-planning* is a term which has appeared consistently throughout the research in primary sources dealing with the reconstruction of the British blitzed-city. It is a term which captured the process of drafting a vision of reconstruction during the 1940s, rather than the reconstruction process itself which occurred subsequently throughout the '50s and '60s.

³ An island-city is a city that is defined by its geographical constraints in the form of an island. Thus, the urban boundary and the geographical edge are the same. Portsmouth is the only island-city in England, and just one in a few to be found throughout Europe.

not bred by one, but by an amalgamation of diverse ideologies, contextualized to suit the specificity of the British setting and the individual city itself. Through the use of Portsmouth's case study, a wider critique and analysis of post-war British 1940s re-planning process and its many influences responsible for shaping its ethos is offered.

2. With Great Destruction Comes Greater Opportunity: The Politicization of Planning as Panacea for the Masses

Shortly after the destructive power of the Luftwaffe blitzed London, the German offensive shifted from focusing on the capital to targeting secondary strategic towns throughout England. Being the centre for the British Royal Navy, a garrison town, and a major industrial hotspot in the south coast, Portsmouth became the site of ferocious attacks. Between July 1940 and July 1944, the city was atrophied by 67 air raids amounting to over 56,000 bombs dropped, more than 3,000 casualties of which 930 civilians (Stedman, 1995), and in excess of 80,000 properties damaged⁴ (PRO: BT 64/3408). Overall, the majority of the injuries were received between 1940 and 1942⁵ (CoP, 1936-45, p.153-6, p.183-90; Easthope, 1945), and in particular, by a blitz which Portsmouth endured on the night of January 10th, 1941 (Evening News, 11 January 1941; Evening News, 11 January 1962; Stedman, 1995; Patterson, 1976). The so-called 'Great Fire Blitz' saw a total of over 25,000 incendiary bombs being deployed along side similar numbers of high-explosive charges by 300 German bombers. The offensive lasted over seven hours, killed 171 people, injured 430, and rendering 3,000 homeless (CCM40A/2). More than 2,300 fires swept through the city and continued to disseminate destruction well after the skies were cleared from enemy aircrafts (Evening News, 30 November, 1942). The event was an attempt to annihilate the city as an entity rather than destroy its martial and industrial zones. Thus, alongside the expected military, naval and manufacturing sites, social, leisurely and religious buildings were singled out as targets. Commercial hubs were not spared either and by the end of the night laid in ruin (Haskell, 1989). Furthermore, the civic core had been severely damaged with the Guildhall, its architectural and symbolic centrepiece, gutted by a direct hit and charred by subsequent heavy fires.

Consequently, by the early months of 1941, to quote Stedman, "*everywhere there was patching up to do*" (1995, p.9). It soon became apparent, however, that the devastation that had swept across Portsmouth was to turn itself into one of the biggest prospects which this city had been presented with in history. Nationally and internationally, the pre-blitzed city had continued to be an object of criticism since industrialization shaped its form and encouraged its sprawl throughout the XIX and

⁴ If considered that at the time Portsmouth only counted 70,000 properties, this indicates that some suffered damages multiple times at the hands of war. Out of these, it was reported that 6,625 premises had been totally destroyed and another 6,549 seriously damaged.

⁵ The first raid was on the afternoon of the 11th July 1940. Although the last bomb to fall on Portsmouth was on the 15th July 1944, most of the damages and casualties incurred by the city were between 1940 and 1941. More specifically, on August 1940, January and March 1941. Indeed, it was reported on the Evening News in November 1942 that 65,000 out of the 70,000 properties (houses) in the city were damaged (Evening News, 30 November 1942). Knowing that the total damages sustained by the city throughout the war amounted to 80,000 properties (PRO: BT 64/3408), the figures clearly show that 81.25% of the damage that Portsmouth was to receive from the blitz was in fact delivered to the city by the end of 1942. Stedman attributes this to the fact that after the 22nd June 1942, Hitler was fighting on two fronts due to his attempt to invade the USSR (1995, p.6). Thus, more effort was placed on behalf of the Germans to secure that Russian frontline and bombing raid concentrated on the east rather than on the west.

XX century (Ashworth, 1954; Benevolo, 1967; Meller, 1997; Mumford, 1940; 1961). In the case of Portsmouth, its particular geography and industrial emphasis on the Navy meant that the city had suffered from accommodating vast slum conditions. These were brought forth by an unwarranted urban density of 200 people per acre (HCC, 2001), with a population which counted over 230,000 by the time war broke out⁶. Furthermore, the city complained of exhibiting an increasingly “*out-of-date urban layout*” (Hasegawa, 2000, p.45). It has come to be recognized that, at large, the pre-WW2 Portsmouth was not a city exuding functionality or beauty (Haskell, 1989). These problems were not, in many ways, specific to the case of Portsmouth, but were rather urban anguishes felt nationally (Ashworth, 1954; Abercrombie, 1944). Issues of overcrowding, unsanitary living conditions brought forth by haphazard growth, countryside-threatening sprawl, as well as severe congestion following the boom of car and lack of recreational and green space, only continued to demonstrate how the British city was considered unsuited for the lifestyle its society was moving towards. It quickly became apparent that these festering problems could be remedied and eradicated through reconstruction. The extensive damage suffered at the hands of war had rendered it necessary and viable to rebuild the city at a grand scale. Accordingly, the so-called ‘re-planning’ process of the post-war British city became a means “*to sweep away the inadequacies of the past*” (Cherry, 1988, p.108). Increasingly, war shifted from being a threatening shadow upon the British nation, to becoming an opportunity for significant change.



Fig. 1: Front cover of Tubbs’ book outlining a Re-planning strategy for Britain (1942). In just a few pictures in sequence (with assigned keywords), this image completely personifies the spirit and ambition planning embodied in the 1940s. (Source: Tubbs, 1942)

Like a phoenix from the flames, the city was determined to rise stronger than it had been before its destruction, and a greater civilization was expected to flourish from it by default⁷ (Tubbs, 1942; also refer to fig. 1). This aspiration was in turn invigorated by central government, which encouraged the authorities operating within blitzed areas to “*plan boldly*” (Hasegawa, 2000, p.45; Evening News, 21 March 1941). In

⁶ Portsmouth became the second densest city in Britain after central London, a record which is still being maintained today.

⁷ Increasingly, war shifted from threat to opportunity. The events of the city, and their future prospect, embodied a certain symbolism behind the notion of re-planning. For some, war took a far deeper social significance, which in turn was being pushed through planning as can be seen through the words of MARS member Tubbs: “*The war is no mere conflict between nations, it is part of a great battle for the establishment of civilization, in which mankind may live in friendship, in conditions that make a full life possible. The preparation now to ensure that these conditions are realized is an essential part of our war effort*” (1942, p.27).

Portsmouth, this message of optimism was actively pushed to the masses through both the media and the politicians throughout the 1940s. In turn, the vision of a “*Greater Portsmouth*” (Evening News, 29 October 1941b) became highly politicized. During his Mayor election speech, Sir Denis Daley spoke:

It is said that out of evil cometh good, and in as far as the war is concerned, with assistance of the Government, we shall be able to re-plan the City on modern and model lines. We are determined that good is to come out of the awful scars that we see around us today. (Sir Denis Daley’s Mayor election speech, 9th November 1942 In: CoP, 1939-45, p. 245-6)

Between 1941 and 1945, the local media campaigned to back such a quest. An example is found through Mr. William G. Easthope, editor of the leading local newspaper the Evening News, who continued to publish politically charged messages of optimism throughout the 1940s⁸. Planning and architecture was becoming a political instrument for a new-found social propaganda, which complemented the on going war effort as a type of panacea for the war torn British society. Locally, the psychological benefits of such actions were clearly understood, as evidenced through the words of members of the city council at the time:

These proposals [referring to the re-planning of the city] were of tremendous value for the point of view of public moral. To let the public know that they [referring to the authorities] were planning, not only for victory but for a resounding victory and reconstruction. (Councillor R. Mack paraphrased in Evening News, 29 October 1941a)

After the destruction and desperation of the previous months, the foresight of a restored future and the promise of a better city gave people hope: a potent emotion to evoke in a subdued nation at the grips of fighting a terrible war. Re-planning was thus pursued not just as a means of socio-urban modernization or as a vehicle for post-war reconstruction, but as a powerful beckon of hope shining through the smoke eclipsed skies of wartime Britain. Vision was what was needed to win the war, as “*without vision men perished*” (Councillor A. J. Pearson, quoted in Ibid). Thus, albeit some criticism loomed over the idea⁹, in the immediate aftermath of the terrible raid of 1941, Portsmouth sets its sights to the future and began re-planning for a new post-

⁸ Easthope is seen summarizing his continued support for the vision of a re-planned Greater Portsmouth in the subsequent quote: “*We are neither conquered nor dismayed. We have firmly resolved that from the ruins [...] there shall arise a new and better Portsmouth. As the terrible experiences of 1940 and 1941 were in Mr Churchill’s phrase, our ‘finest hour’, so the desolation that surrounds us to-day is our grandest opportunity*” (1945, p.4).

⁹ In Portsmouth, some were expressing doubt at the idea of re-planning at such an early stage of a fierce war whose outcome was still very much uncertain. The majority of the criticism came from the Navy, who asked: “*was this the time to waste time; was this the time to waste effort?*” (Alderman A. Johnson, quoted in Evening News, 29 October 1941a). A possible reason for such opposition on behalf of the navy can be traced to their military role in the conflict. In their role, members of the Royal Navy probably felt that re-planning and thinking of life after the war would be a dangerous distraction away from the most pressing problems of actually having to win the war. Some members of the council seconded the Navy’s concerns as some believed that the city was “*putting the cart before the horse*” (Councillor G. Wallis, quoted in Ibid) and that “*it was a farce to at the present time to plan at all*” (Councillor J. Price, quoted in Ibid) as ultimately “*none of them [referring to the council] could foretell what the City would be like at the end of the war*” (Councillor N. Harrison, quoted in Ibid). The majority of the politicians, however, regarded re-planning favourably as they deemed that that “*the public wanted leadership*” (Councillor L. Glanville, quoted in Ibid) and the re-planning showed that.

war city. This effort was encouraged by an official visit from Minister of Works and Buildings Lord John Reith, in March the same year. He urged the city “to plan boldly and on a large scale” in pursuit of a “new and better Portsmouth” (Lord Reith quoted in Evening News, 21 March 1941). In Portsmouth, this vision will reach its peak in 1943, through the presentation of an Interim Report by F. A. C. Maunder, who worked as Deputy City and Re-Construction Architect on behalf of the City Council’s ‘Special Committee as to the Re-planning of Portsmouth’ (most commonly referred to as SCRPP), which had been set up in the immediate aftermath of the Great Fire Blitz for the sole purpose of drafting a master-plan for a new, modernized, post-war city. What is interesting to observe, is how this new vision can be identified as not belonging to one ideology, but rather being formed by a multitude of national and international influences, contextualized to suit its specific site and braided together into a unifying, holistic strategy.

3. Portsmouth’s Re-planning Vision: Dissecting the Amalgamation of National and International Influences.

Although perceived as just a draft proposal, F. A. C. Maunder’s 1943 ‘*Interim Report*’¹⁰ represent the most substantial record of the city’s reconstruction ambitions and vision¹¹. The proposal presents itself as an ideologically multifaceted strategy of modernization; a mechanism for relieving the city from its industrially inherited socio-urban problems, as well as dealing with new war-led priorities¹². Maunder’s reasoning throughout the report follows a logical framework of problem solving. As discussed, urban density was perceived as the mother of all evils. Consequently a solution was sought to reduce congestion as a priority. Remarkably, rather than focusing solely on the city, we see re-planning take the form of a grander regional strategy¹³; suggesting the transformation of Portsmouth into a central regional “*Parent City*” (Maunder, 1943) supported by independent settlements in the countryside comprising of existing suburbs and new “*Satellite Towns*” (Ibid), whose role was to accommodate the overspill population. Yet another fundamental priority was the preservation of the countryside to avoid the sprawling city transforming the region into a giant suburban typology. As such, a series of environmental barriers were proposed as “*Greenbelts*” (Ibid) to restrict the growth of the urban areas and thus to

¹⁰ The full name of Maunder’s Interim Report reads as *Interim Report of the Deputy City Architect* (1943). Few images remain in regards to the vision itself, which have been published mainly through the local newspaper - the Evening News - throughout 1941-1943. In this paper, some of the images that best showcase the overall vision for the city itself will be used. Unfortunately, a regional plan diagram of the time does not exist, and thus we can only base judgment through the words Maunder used.

¹¹ Part of the reason behind this, was that in 1943, the issue of Reconstruction was still being pushed heavily by central government as a political instrument. Thus, bold vision was strived for and not necessarily practical realization. For this reason, the discussion hardly fell on budget constraints. Indeed, in the early years of re-planning, the issue of finance seldom was seen as a driving feature behind the plan (Evening News, 29 October 1941a). Locally, the view was that reconstruction was going to be an endeavour funded by central government, and thus was not regarded as a hindrance to design. For this reason, the 1943 plan – which will then be the basis for all the subsequent re-planning and reconstruction strategies – showcases a vision which had yet to be diluted by the harsh economic realities of post-war Britain.

¹² The latter being rehousing as well as rebuilding the commercial and civic core of the city which had been critically damaged through air raids.

¹³ This is the birth of regional planning in Portsmouth. For a wider discussion on this topic, its history, and its context in Britain, please refer to Hall & Tewdwr-Jones (2011).

preserve its adjacent natural landscape¹⁴. Accordingly, the scheme's motto became “*concentration and decentralization*” and the preservation of the distinct fabric of city vs. country (Ibid, p.80).

In résumé, Maunder's suggestion was a holistic re-think of how both the city and its surroundings could work in conjunction to produce a functional, liveable, healthy, and attractive environment for future generations to enjoy. It targeted residential, commercial and industrial activity as well as being concerned with a wider urban green agenda incorporating within it the notion of leisure. With these in mind, a set of key principles were set out, which in turn become the very essence of the vision of what Portsmouth was to be reconstructed as in times of peace. These were: decentralization to relieve the overcrowded and unsanitary existing city; housing (or rehousing) as a consequence of both decentralization, modernization, and reconstruction post-blitz; communications (i.e. circulation) to link the parent city to its regional context (i.e. Satellite Towns), as well as inner-city traffic network to reform its circulatory infrastructure and make it more accessible to both pedestrians and car users; centrality and the creation of a focus at both at an urban and a regional level; and recreation to improve the quality of life for the masses.

Portsmouth's central dictum, its shift in perspectives from city to regional planning, as well as the logical rational of problem solving was not original to this particular city. Instead, it epitomized the common foundation between the different ideological groups emerging throughout England at the time: be it the Townscape movement, Garden City thinkers and the New Town movement, or the British Modernist MARS Group (Abercrombie, 1943; 1944; Osborn, 1942; Sharp, 1940/1945; Richards, 1940; Tubbs, 1842; Purdom, 1949). This common ground shows how the various ideologies co-existing nationally in the 1940s, although each nursing a particular agenda, were not as divided in those years as perhaps it has been imagined. Instead, they were unified under one overriding objective, being the modernization of Britain and the preservation of town and country. This was being often sought out through regional plans in exceptionally similar methodical fashions, albeit competing ideological differences might suggest (refer to fig. 2).

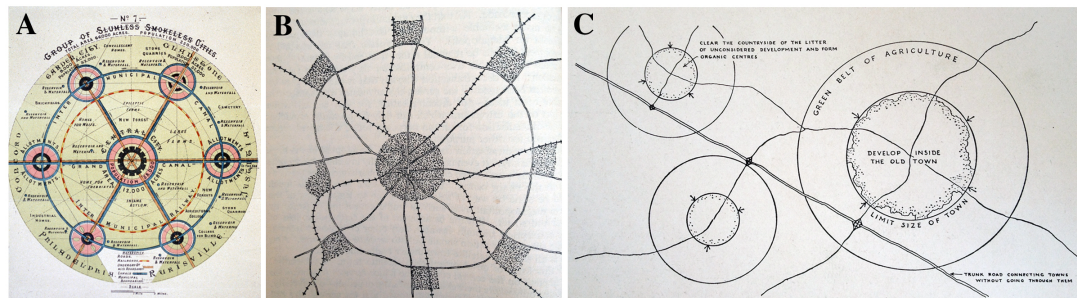


Fig. 2: Examples of three regional strategies: first by ‘Garden City’ founder Ebenezer

¹⁴ The notion of town and country as two very separate complimentary elements was central to the re-planning discourse. In a way, this was both a reawakening as well as a denunciation of the Garden City creed. Reawakening because it wished to pursue Howard's original vision, and denunciation because it refused what the Garden City had been turned into through the 1920s and 30s widespread use as a suburbanization vehicle. This was a sentiment which was being felt nation wide, shared by the different ideological groups, be it from the next generation of Garden City theorists such as Abercrombie (1943), to members of the MARS Group such as Ralph Tubbs who's re-planning motto was “*town or country, not universal suburbia*” (1942, p.30); or indeed the official governmental stance in the issue, published through the Scott Report (1942), which in itself carried a strong Townscape attitude due to having employed Thomas Sharp as a key consultant (Stamp, 1943).

Howard (A), the second by 'Townscape' central figure Thomas Sharp (B), and the final by MARS Group Secretary Ralph Tubbs (C). Note how, albeit their ideological differences, all three plans are remarkably similar in concept as they each envision a parent city connected with satellite towns all of which equipped with greenbelts. (Source: Howard, 1909; Sharp, 1940/1945, Tubbs, 1942)

Portsmouth is therefore placed solidly within the context of British re-planning. The city's re-planning vision suggests an interpretation of multiple ideologies at work, making it a hybrid compound in its own right. That being acknowledged, it is equally important to highlight a particular 'Townscape' sentiment transpiring from Maunder's text. In his book Town Planning (1940/1945), Thomas Sharp – one of the founding fathers of the movement – describes the vision of what 'Townscape' was to symbolize:

Here is a picture of the towns we might build. Planned for light and air and good living. Built for beauty as well as convenience. Fine sheer towns that will make their inhabitants proud to live in them. Sheets of serene houses with occasional tower of houses lifting into the air. A sufficiency of public and private gardens to emphasize their urbanity by contrast: but not so much as to reduce them to suburbianity. A combination of concentration and openness. Towns of new urban order, organic¹⁵, vital, clear, and logical¹⁶. (Sharp, 1940/1945, front cover)

Reading Sharp's words alongside Maunder's own, a distinct connection between the two is hard to miss. Aside from the fact that Townscape thinkers, such as Sharp himself, were beginning to be increasingly active in the 40s through the publications of many articles in the *Architecture Review Journal*, Maunder's connection with the ideology might even stretch further. When he first started working in Portsmouth during the 1940s, Maunder was a novel graduate from the School of Architecture at Durham University. Coincidentally, Sharp begun teaching at the very same institution in 1937 (*Thomas Sharp – Town Planner*, 2011). Thus, it is more than likely that their paths might have crossed at some point, and that Townscape principles had been introduced to Maunder from his formative years as an architectural student. Furthermore, Sharp had become advisor to numerous re-planning reports that were being disseminated nationally (such as the Dudley Report (CHAC, 1944) and the

¹⁵ The word 'organic' here does not hold the same meaning that perhaps we associate with today in the discipline of architecture. It does not mean free to grow or emergent, it simply implies the use of soft forms instead of rigid straight lines when dealing with streets as well as the use of vegetation throughout the urban landscape. This, however, remained a very planned process, controlled through strict designs which were intended to make the city look like a traditional village, but not grow like a historic one.

¹⁶ Townscape sentiment appears in more subtle ways as well through the terminology employed by Maunder in his report. When discussing the new urban settlements to be built regionally as part of the decentralization of the inner-city population into the adjacent countryside, Maunder refers to the term 'Satellite Towns' rather than 'New Towns'. In short, the two terms signify the same concept but whereas the second was used by the likes of Osborn (1942) and fellow Garden City enthusiasts, the first happened to be the one referred to by Sharp himself (1940/1945). Terminology aside, some more specific concepts which are featured in Portsmouth resound a strong traditionalist voice. Specifically, the notion of the "Shopping Squares", which were to be modernized versions of traditional English village market squares to be implemented as "district centres" and commercial precincts in Portsmouth's various precincts (Maunder, 1943). This idea of renewed traditionalism moulded on model and modern lines, is very much at the heart of the Townscape ideology of which Sharp was an attributed founder (Sharp, 1940/1945; 1968).

Scott Report (Great Britain, 1942)¹⁷), which in themselves helped establish the Townscape ideals within the national backbone framework of reconstruction policy at this early stage (Pendlebury, 2009).

Aside from the acknowledged diverse national ideas inherent in Portsmouth's 1943 vision, what emerges as perhaps the most interesting phenomena are the various influences that have made their way from across the Atlantic. Indeed, many of the core mechanisms found in this particular case study can be traced to their origins in the pre-war USA urban ideological arena. This surge of American concepts can be explained through their country's direct involvement with WW2 in aid of Britain and its allies. In that respect, the presence of American influences within the mainstream British re-planning process is conceivably justified, as it is understandable that the USA's involvement in the war was not only accountable for shipping over soldiers to the frontlines, but also disseminating concepts throughout Europe¹⁸. The dialogue between Europe and America through the XIX and XX century is a fascinating ideological cross-pollination, as indeed many ideas which had been imported to Britain during the war from America, had in turn originated through ideas borrowed from the XVIII century European traditions of what Choay would call 'Critical Planning' (1969). In particular these had to do with what Choay further defines as 'Regulatory' interventions (Ibid), such as Haussmann's Plan of Paris (Jordan, 1995), Vienna's example of the Ringstrasse of the mid-1800s, or the British urban park solutions of people like Paxton (Chadwick, 1966). This is particularly acknowledged and seen in the American City Beautiful movement, for example (Burnham & Bennett, 1909). Yet, these foreign concepts went through a process of mutation in order to contextualize themselves with the different cultural, historical, and ideological foundations of their new host country. This showcases how ideas are not static, but are rather permeable objects that not only travel throughout continents and across oceans, but also adapt to suit particular roles. In terms of the Anglo-American traditions, it is interesting to see how both countries are tied through a relationship of mutual influence within diverse historical periods. Hence, we can say that the re-planning visions which have been bread in 1940s Britain through the adoption of American ideas, are in fact a means of national modernization through the resurfacing of traditional European XVIII century urban traditions. In Portsmouth's case, we see different ideas originating from the USA, being: the use of Neighbourhood Units; the adoption of the concept of *Parkway* and *Park-systems*; and the pursuit of more general City Beautiful planning reference.

3.1 Neighbourhood Units vs. Neighbourhood Districts

One of the key principles behind the proposed new Portsmouth was the concept of rationalizing the living arrangements of the city into equally proportioned areas which Maunder defines as "*Neighbourhood Districts*" (Evening News, 27 February 1942;

¹⁷ Both the Dudley and the Scott reports belong to a series of semi-official government documents which had been drafted to report and collect data on various issues which had been of major concern to planners in the years proceeding the war (Meller, 1997). The Dudley Report regarded the issues of housing, whilst the Scott Report discussed the utilisation of rural land and the preservation of the countryside.

¹⁸ One must remember that by the end of the War, the USA had solidified its role as a supreme world superpower. Their role helped spread their national ideas throughout war torn Europe, which now looked up at this superpower for inspiration just like the USA had previously done in the late XIX - early XX century through adopting European XVIII century models.

Mauder, 1943). This scheme derives from Clarence Perry's precedent, the Neighbourhood Unit featured in the 1929 *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs* (1929). Essentially, it was a zoning mechanism for residential neighbourhoods which in themselves would be self sufficient in as much as they would provide recreational and green areas within them as well as social ones (school, church or community centres) and commercial amenities (shops) for the benefit of the locals. Like Perry, Mauder envisioned new inner-city circulation arteries that would double up as containment edges to each unit, so that traffic wouldn't compromise life within the sectors themselves. Neighbourhood Units (or Districts), appear referenced nationally throughout the 1940s British re-planning policy (such as in Abercrombie, 1944), eventually being crystalized through the Dudley Report¹⁹ (CHAC, 1944; Pendlebury, 2009). The latter took the American principle and distorted some key elements to suit the British context. There were three distinguishable differences between what Perry advocated, and what the British counterpart promoted, as evidenced in table A below.

Key Principles	Clarence Perry (1929)	Dudley Report (1944)
Circulation vs. Commercial Zones	<i>Dual system:</i> peripheral main roads (edge of unit) also to house commercial activity.	<i>Separation of use:</i> circulatory routes to provide edge of neighbourhood unit which would hold commercial activity at its heart.
Use of Open Space	Central to Neighbourhood unit to provide recreational focus.	Along peripheral edge of neighbourhood unit to provide buffer between units and between roads.
Size of Unit	Population size limited to amount, which could be serviced by one elementary school.	Target of 10,000 people

Table A: Key differences between the original Neighbourhood Unit by Clarence Perry and the British version outlined in the Dudley Report (Source: Perry, 1929; CHAC, 1944; Goss, 1961).

In the case of Portsmouth, Mauder's Neighbourhood Districts envisioned by display a further hybridization between the American and the national definitions. This Anglo-American crossbreed solution is also found in Abercrombie's own Neighbourhood Unit design in the *Greater London Plan* (1944), in a remarkably similar fashion to Portsmouth's (refer to fig. 3). Similarly to Perry, Mauder uses recreational grounds as well as greens and public planted gardens to form a central feature to the residential zones. Nevertheless, the use of greenery as buffer also feature, as the main arterial roads were designed as '*parkways*', yet another American-bred idea which will be discussed subsequently. However, Portsmouth example is adamant that circulatory infrastructures should be distinctly separated from commercial usage to avoid the pre-war conditions of severe congestion and disruption to commerce through an integrated system. In this case, it is in synch with Dudley's

¹⁹ The 'Dudley Report' was a report commissioned by central government discussing the issue of what dwellings and housing mechanisms to propose for the British context in the post-war reconstruction (CHAC, 1944). Its views on neighbourhood planning are influenced by Sharp's own (Sharp, 1940/1945), and this is understandable, as he was directly involved with the report taking the role as key advisor (Pendlebury, 2009).

views, and is an example of how an American idea has been critically altered to suit a different historical urban context²⁰.



Fig. 3: Example of Neighbourhood Unit designs. The first is an example by American Clarence Perry (A); the second is by Sharp and it is the basis of Dudley's recommendations (B); and finally a Neighbourhood Unit for 12,000 people in West Ham, London, designed by Abercrombie as part of his Greater London Plan of 1944 (C). The latter illustrates an Anglo-American hybrid which is almost identical to the one described by Maunder. Note how the commercial zones (drawn in blue) are predominantly concentrated in the centre of each unit and not at its periphery on the containing roads. Schools (drawn in red) are also a central feature to the unit. Also worth a note is the use of green (and in this case blue, i.e. water) strips running along the edge of the unit as buffers between the road system and the housing as well as the allocation of central green recreational and leisurely zones. (Source: Perry, 1929; Sharp, 1940/1945; Abercrombie, 1944)

3.2 Parkways and Park-Systems

The American landscape designer F. L. Olmstead is accredited to devising the concept of *Parkway*, which he developed in the late XIX century to promote a tree-lined boulevard which allowed for the separation of traffic users; be it pedestrian, cycle, or vehicular (Wilson, 1989). This system was heavily used in Burnham and Bennett's

²⁰ Britain, has a very different history to its younger cousin, the USA. In turn, this is reflected through the physicality of the city, which through time assumed the role of palimpsest. This historical layering offers depth to the urban, but also unique obstacle which have been inherited through the transcending historic context of the European city (Kostof, 1999; Vance, 1990).

Plan of Chicago (1909), a quintessential City Beautiful vision of the American city (Wilson, 1989). The term ‘parkway’ appears directly referenced in Maunder’s vision already in 1942, through one of his first renditions of the overall vision, (*Evening News*, 27 February 1942). In Portsmouth, parkways were essentially proposed as they appeared in Chicago; major roads connecting the city to its environs, characterized by the heavy use of green and trees and the concept of allotted traffic system subject to users (Maunder, 1943; Burnham & Bennett, 1909).



Fig. 4: Parkways and Park-Systems as shown in the *Plan of Chicago* (A), *Tubbs Plan of London* with parks depicted in black (B), and a concept diagram by Abercrombie (C).
(Source: Burnham & Bennett, 1909; Tubbs, 1940; Abercrombie, 1943)

Furthermore, the notion of ‘Park-System’, which like the parkway is heavily featured in the *Plan of Chicago* (1909), appears implied (although never directly defined through the specific term) through the proposal’s intentions. The latter refers to a parkways system which connects itself with green spaces throughout its route, making it as it were, a ribbon of green circulatory and leisurely infrastructure. The very same aspiration appears noted in Maunder’s text, when he discusses how the proposed parkways in Portsmouth will not only serve as inner city communications or major links from city to country (and Satellite Towns), but also as means of connecting existing and proposed parks, green spaces and leisure grounds within Portsmouth (Maunder, 1943). Moreover, the park-system was a concept that was also beginning to emerge referenced in other national re-planning contemporary strategies of the diverse ideological orders previously mentioned. In particular, this can be seen in MARS Group Honorary Secretary Ralph Tubbs’ ‘*Plan of London*’, exhibited in 1940 (Marmaras & Sutcliffe, 1994) and published in 1942 (Tubbs, 1942, p.31) as well as Abercrombie’s designs (refer to fig. 4). This further testifies to the nation-wide spread of Americanized planning solutions impregnating the British reconstruction

ideologies nationally, which sought to adapt it to the British case in pursuit of a better way of living in the city post-war. Portsmouth is particular, however, due to it being an island with a strong north-south axis defined by its adjacent mainland. Thus, the park systems, which unlike in the case of London's proposal or Chicago appear radiate from multiple angles, in Portsmouth permeate to the island through the mainland to the north. To further suggest the idea of countryside pushing into the urban through green systems, Maunder proposed to reclaim some land to the north shores of Portsmouth, and by doing so physically anchoring it to the countryside.



Fig. 5: Maunder's 1943 proposal (left) and a diagram (right) showing the green infrastructure including parkways and park systems. (Source: *Evening News*, 24 February 1943; diagram by Verenini)

3.3 A Grander City Beautiful Ambition

The link to the City Beautiful and Portsmouth's pursuit of such objectives goes further than the implications posed through the use of parkways and park systems. In 1941, when the fervour of re-planning was publicly politicized through high ranking visits to Portsmouth, Mr. A. C. Townsend – regional representative on the Reconstruction Committee of the RIBA – addressed the city's re-planning group. Townsend's agenda was reported by the *Evening News*, in an article entitled *Aiming at the City Beautiful* (1941, 1 December). Although the term City Beautiful appears solely in the title, in as much as the broader vision was concerned, many of the ideas that he presented had to do with that specific American movement. A few months later, in Maunder's 1942 preliminary plan detailing new circulatory infrastructure (in which he also originally introduced the concept of parkways), the USA-inspired reference is perceived through the presence of axial road designs leading into the proposed new civic core (*Evening News*, 27 February 1942). Maunder suggested grand boulevards flanked by trees and adorned by gardens, whose linear language

connected local landmarks throughout the town, such as the Guildhall and the new railway station, or indeed the city centre and the bathing shores. Thus, the new city would be defined by communication infrastructure expressed through the linear tension of key landmark building or site. In turn, this is reminiscent of the morphological framework found in Washington D.C. The so-called *McMillan Plan* of 1901-02 also took the form of a grand axial route adorned by civic buildings and green spaces which in itself was an American example of Haussmannisation. Like Chicago, of course, Washington represents a significant example of American City Beautiful aesthetics (Hines, 1991; Wilson, 1989; Rose, 1996). In the 1940s, we see this foreign influence from across the Atlantic being contextualized in Portsmouth, through the formal processional boulevards Maunder devised and the green agenda it entailed within what was to become the new civic core for both the city and its region.

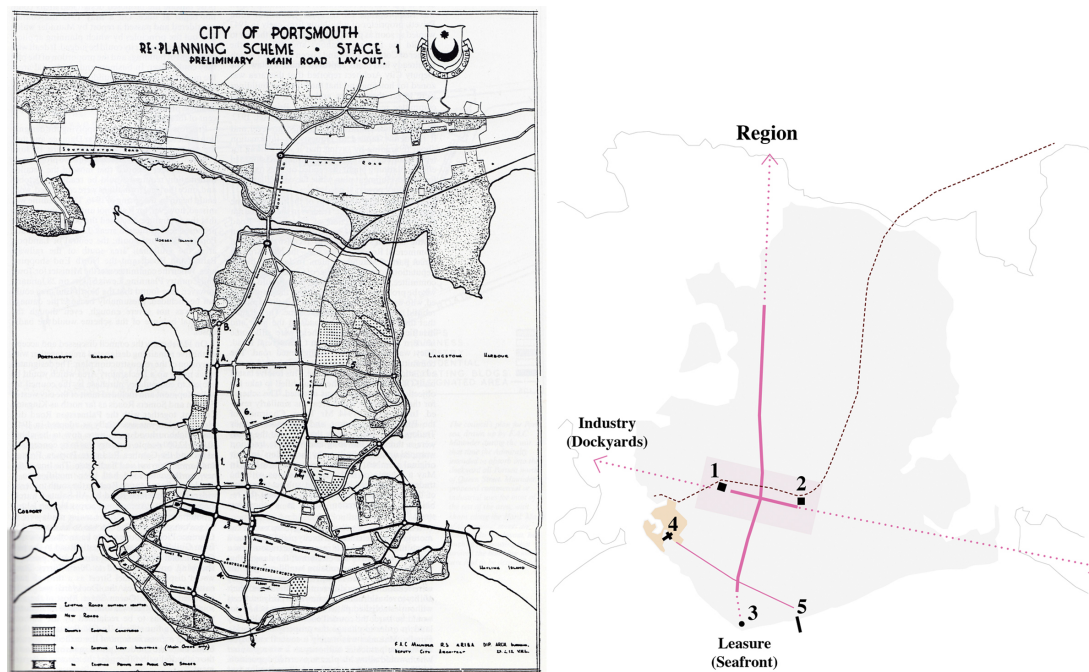


Fig. 6: Maunder's initial 1942 road layout diagram (left) and a diagram (right) showing the City Beautiful inspired axial 'parkway' boulevard layout running in a linear fashion in tension between key monuments, buildings, and sites. The diagram shows the new primary road layout, which assumes a cross shape. Running east-west is the new civic core (faded pink square) with its central boulevard connecting the Guildhall (1) to a new central train station (2, the railway line shown as a dotted black line). A new north-south boulevard crosses the civic core is also imagined to connect the region to the centre to the seafront and Henry VIII's Southsea Castle (3). A secondary east-west axis crosses the latter to connect the historic town (shaded in orange) and its Cathedral (4) with the late Victorian resort of Southsea, characterised by its Pier (5) is also envisioned. (Source: *Evening News*, 27 February 1942; diagram by Verenini)

4. Conclusion

We have seen how the 1940s process known as Re-planning had been carried forth in the specific case study of Portsmouth, UK. A discussion of the politically charged motivation behind this process lead us to study this city's particular outcome in the form of Maunder's Interim Report of 1943. Through this, the aspirations of modernization have been summarized, which directly related to the pre-war

problematic the city had continued to suffer since its industrialization. National influences to the Re-planning process of Portsmouth have shown us how these early reconstruction visions did not emerge from a single, but rather a braid of diverse ideological movements united by a dominant core objective. Most interesting, we have traced some key influences to the American tradition of late XIX - early XX century planning. The latter have gone through a process of contextualization to permit these ideas to operate within the British context. Thus, the case study of Portsmouth allows us to capture a key moment in history, when a war ravaged state sought refuge in the hope of a better tomorrow through the vision of reconstruction. In itself, this research has shown how such a vision came to be formed by a hybridization of local and foreign concepts in pursuit of the modernization of a nation.

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CoP = City of Portsmouth
HCC = Hampshire City Council
HMSO = His Majesty's Stationary Office

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