

**TOWNSCAPE CHANGE AND LOCAL PLANNING MANAGEMENT IN CITY CENTRE  
CONSERVATION AREAS: THE EXAMPLE OF BIRMINGHAM AND BRISTOL**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis considers townscape change and the operation of conservation policies within two city centre conservation areas in Birmingham and Bristol during the 1970s and 1980s. The study combines character assessment of the two areas, from an urban morphogenetic perspective, and micro-scale examination of local authority planning application data to consider the impact of conservation management.

Utilising the concepts and terminology developed by M.R.G. Conzen for the analysis of the townscape, the study identifies distinct units of townscape within the conservation areas. The use of an historical basis for conservation area character exposes the arbitrary nature of many conservation area boundaries, enclosing clusters of listed buildings rather than coherent areas of townscape. This approach also exposes the static nature of area character assessments based on architecture alone. These assessments provide an inflexible basis for character preservation and enhancement, one which under-values minor commercial and industrial heritage.

While the influence of national economic trends, planning policies and architectural fashions produced a similar trajectory of conservation policy development in both areas, important local differences existed. Differences in the local office market and the extent of building listing produced contrasts in the 'success' of conservation policies. The high percentage of listed buildings in Bristol produced greater success in policy development and application than in Birmingham, by providing greater access to grant funds and the strength to sustain refusals at appeal. Consequently, in Bristol, contextual styles were used exclusively for new building from the mid-1970s onwards, and redevelopment using façadism was limited. This also aided the development of landscaping and building enhancement schemes, helping to tackle the erosion of character through minor change. In Birmingham, amid a pro-business climate and with limited listing of the Victorian fabric, the transition to contextual styles was more muted and façadism remained a key option for new commercial development. These circumstances also delayed and limited the development of enhancement strategies until the mid-1980s.

In the late-1980s, rising commercial pressures exposed the weaknesses of conservation control in both areas. Limitations to their character

assessments reduced the ability of the two areas to resist trends towards universal historicist styles for new building, and the use of standard 'corporate-heritage' elements for building interiors and exteriors. The lack of extra control offered by area designation for the regulation of interior and functional change reduced the ability of the local authorities to monitor and control the micro-scale processes of change, leading to further character erosion.

**FOR MY PARENTS**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION</b>	1
<b>CHAPTER TWO : PLANNING, CONSERVATION AND THE CITY</b>	8
Conservation and local authority planning practice	8
The development of conservation legislation	8
Listed buildings	11
Conservation areas	13
Key concerns for conservation control	15
Criticisms of area designation policies	16
Criticisms of character definition and management	17
The conservation ethic	19
Artistic and national heritage justifications	21
Psychological and social justifications	25
Economic justifications	29
An urban morphological approach to conservation management	32
The development of urban morphology in Britain	32
The contribution of MRG Conzen to townscape study	37
Town-plan analysis techniques	37
Townscape analysis and management	41
Conclusion	43
<b>CHAPTER THREE : STUDY AREAS AND SOURCES</b>	47
Choice of study areas	47
Period of study	52
Birmingham	55
The development of central Birmingham	55
Conservation in central Birmingham; the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area	58
Bristol	63
The development of central Bristol	63
Conservation in central Bristol; the City and Queen Square Conservation Area	68
Development control data sources	74
Development control data; planning applications	78



Data storage and recording	83
LPA data storage	83
Recording of information	86
Data recording issues - double counting	88
Multiple proposed change	89
Multiple applications for a single site	90
Listed building consent applications	93
Development control data, policy analysis and supplementary data	96
Supplementary files	97
Development control officer interviews	98
<b>CHAPTER FOUR : THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER</b>	<b>100</b>
Introduction	100
Problems in the analysis of townscape character	101
Roots of the problem	101
The limitations of current approaches	103
Problems of area heterogeneity	105
Architectural character and local meaning	106
Conzenian perspectives on townscape conservation	108
Historicity: townscape as the 'objectivation of the spirit of society'	109
Morphological periods	111
Defining townscape units	113
Townscape analysis of the study areas	120
Analysis of the plan	120
Built form	126
Land and building utilization	130
Delimitation and analysis of townscape units	133
Plan unit boundaries	136
Building form unit boundaries	152
Land utilization unit boundaries	166
The delimitation of townscape regions	172
Assessment of character using townscape units, Birmingham	177
Assessment of character using townscape units, Bristol	184

Conclusion	192
<b>CHAPTER FIVE : MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER</b>	<b>195</b>
Factors influencing major fabric change	197
Building cycles	197
Development control policy context	204
Time taken to process applications	205
Applications refused and withdrawn	211
Appeals to the Secretary of State for the Environment	215
National changes in architectural style in the post-war period	218
Neo-vernacular styles	221
Replication and pastiche styles	221
Façadism	222
Major redevelopment and changing area character: the introduction of new architectural styles	224
New building in the study areas prior to 1970	224
From modernism to contextualism: the development of conservation character concerns in the 1970s	227
The general temporal and spatial patterns of major development activity	227
The changing planning climate	233
Protecting and enhancing character: the introduction of neo-vernacular contextual styles	234
Limited transition to neo-vernacular styles: Birmingham	234
Total transition to neo-vernacular styles: Bristol	242
Protecting area character: the use of façadism	253
Controlled use, Bristol	253
Encouraged use, Birmingham	257
Growing tensions between conservation and redevelopment: development in the 1980s	262
The general temporal and spatial patterns of major development activity	262
Protecting policy gains from the 1970s: major development in Bristol in the 1980s	269
Declining stylistic control: the dilution of the neo-vernacular style	269
Growing eclecticism in new building style	276

Restyling modern buildings	284
Façadism	287
Developing clearer conservation objectives: major development in Birmingham in the 1980s	291
Growing historical eclecticism in new building styles	291
Façadism	306
Late-Modernism	312
Conclusion	316
Changing character of the conservation areas in the 1970s	316
Changing character of the conservation areas in the 1980s	320
<b>CHAPTER SIX : THE EROSION OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER THROUGH MINOR CHANGE</b>	<b>324</b>
The nature and amount of minor change in the two study areas	327
Sign and façade alterations and changes of use	332
Refurbishment, internal alteration and minor alterations	337
Countering erosion of character: sign and shopfront controls and control of internal alterations	342
Early sign and shopfront controls	345
Bristol	351
Birmingham	353
The development of sign and shopfront control policies in the 1980s	355
Bristol	358
Birmingham	363
Reusing old buildings: the control of interior alteration	370
Character erosion through functional change	376
The incursion of new office development into warehouse and industrial areas	378
Office displacement of residential uses	383
The incursion of office functions into retail areas	385
Countering erosion of character: enhancement	390
Landscaping improvements	391
Conservation area enhancement and functional vitality	394
Conservation area enhancement and retailing	395
Conservation area enhancement and the development of tourist and leisure uses	397

Conclusion	400
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN : CONCLUSION</b>	<b>405</b>
<b>APPENDIX ONE : INFORMATION FROM PLANNING FILES INCLUDED ON THE COMPUTER SPREADSHEET</b>	<b>427</b>
<b>APPENDIX TWO : FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>429</b>
<b>APPENDIX THREE : LIST OF PLAN, BUILDING FORM AND LAND UTILIZATION UNITS IN THE BIRMINGHAM AND BRISTOL STUDY AREAS</b>	<b>431</b>
<b>APPENDIX FOUR : LIST AND PLATES OF TOWNSCAPE UNITS IN THE BIRMINGHAM AND BRISTOL STUDY AREAS</b>	<b>440</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>475</b>

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Research traditions within urban morphology: a schematic genealogy, showing a sample of authors.	34
Figure 2.2	Processes of plot transformation in central Newcastle.	40
Figure 3.1	Location of Birmingham and Bristol.	50
Figure 3.2	Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area, Birmingham: area boundary.	53
Figure 3.3	City and Queen Square Conservation Area, Bristol: area boundary.	54
Figure 3.4	Page one of the pro-forma for the collection of development control data.	87
Figure 3.5	Comparison of applications with elements for the two study areas.	91
Figure 3.6	Number of applications by type of permission sought in the two study areas.	92
Figure 3.7	Decisions on applications in the two study areas.	94
Figure 3.8	Applications by type, over time, in the two study areas.	95
Figure 4.1	Alnwick - types of plan-unit.	115
Figure 4.2	The plan divisions of Alnwick.	115
Figure 4.3	Ludlow - morphological regions.	116
Figure 4.4	Ludlow - morphological regions.	116a
Figure 4.5	The systematic form complexes as morphological regulators in the old town, Ludlow.	118
Figure 4.6	Analysis of street system development and change in central Newcastle.	122
Figure 4.7	The morphogenetic plan units of central Newcastle.	122a
Figure 4.8	Analysis of the plan, Birmingham.	124
Figure 4.9	Analysis of the plan, Bristol.	125
Figure 4.10	Building types, Ludlow.	127
Figure 4.11	Building form, Birmingham; buildings present in 1970.	128
Figure 4.12	Building form, Bristol; buildings present in 1970.	129
Figure 4.13	Functional classification.	132
Figure 4.14	Land utilization, Birmingham 1970.	134
Figure 4.15	Land utilization, Bristol 1970.	135
Figure 4.16	Plan unit boundaries, Birmingham.	137

Figure 4.17	Plan unit boundaries, Bristol.	138
Figure 4.18	Building form unit boundaries, Birmingham.	153
Figure 4.19	Building form unit boundaries, Bristol.	154
Figure 4.20	Replacement of the Georgian fabric in the 1860s and 1870s.	157
Figure 4.21	Baldwin Street/Clare Street c1956 showing the Victorian commercial fabric.	163
Figure 4.22	Prince Street c1952 showing the remnant Georgian fabric prior to redevelopment as Narrow Quay House and the Unicorn Hotel.	165
Figure 4.23	Land utilization unit boundaries, Birmingham.	167
Figure 4.24	Land utilization unit boundaries, Bristol.	168
Figure 4.25	Townscape unit boundaries, Birmingham.	173
Figure 4.26	Townscape unit boundaries, Bristol.	174
Figure 4.27	The systematic form complexes as morphological regulators in central Birmingham.	175
Figure 4.28	The systematic form complexes as morphological regulators in central Bristol.	176
Figure 5.1	Ratio of major to minor townscape change in the two study areas.	196
Figure 5.2	Gross domestic fixed capital formation in building 1948-1982.	199
Figure 5.3	Planning decisions by District Councils	200
Figure 5.4	The amount of major townscape change in the two study areas.	203
Figure 5.5	Speed of planning decisions by District Council	206
Figure 5.6	Time taken in determining applications in the two study areas.	207
Figure 5.7	Time taken in determining applications, differentiated by type of change, in the two study areas.	209
Figure 5.8	Percentage of applications approved, refused or withdrawn over time in the two study areas.	212
Figure 5.9	Percentage of applications approved, refused or withdrawn by type of change, in the two study areas.	214
Figure 5.10	Percentage of refusals coming to appeal in England and Wales, 1981 to 1990/91.	216
Figure 5.11a	Floorspace additions approved in the Bristol study area in the 1970s.	229
Figure 5.11b	Demolition approved in the Bristol study area in the 1970s.	229
Figure 5.12a	Major rebuilding approved in the Bristol study area in the 1970s.	230

Figure 5.12b	New building approved in the Bristol study area in the 1970s.	230
Figure 5.13a	Floorspace additions approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.	231
Figure 5.13b	Demolition approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.	231
Figure 5.14a	Major rebuilding approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.	232
Figure 5.14b	New building approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.	232
Figure 5.15	Victorian Society proposals for the redevelopment of the post office site, Birmingham.	239
Figure 5.16	Artists impression of the proposed CWS redevelopment, 1973.	251
Figure 5.17a	Floorspace additions approved in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.	264
Figure 5.17b	Demolition approved in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.	264
Figure 5.18	Major rebuilding approved in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.	265
Figure 5.19a	New building approved in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.	266
Figure 5.19b	New building refused or withdrawn in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.	266
Figure 5.20a	Floorspace additions approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.	267
Figure 5.20b	Demolition approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.	267
Figure 5.21a	Major rebuilding approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.	268
Figure 5.21b	New building approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.	268
Figure 5.22	Dock Workers Social Club design brief.	275
Figure 5.23	Proposals for the redevelopment of the 'O' Shed, Bristol.	275
Figure 5.24a	Proposals for the redevelopment of Princes Hall, Bristol 1982.	277
Figure 5.24b	Proposals for the redevelopment of Princes Hall, Bristol 1988.	277
Figure 5.25	Proposals for the redevelopment of 37 Welsh Back, Bristol .	279
Figure 5.26	Proposals for the redevelopment of 1-2 King Street, Bristol.	282

Figure 5.27	Refronting of Kent House Prince St., Bristol.	285b
Figure 5.28	Proposals for the redevelopment of the 'Rackhay', Bristol.	285b
Figure 5.29	Proposals for the redevelopment of Venturers House, Bristol.	285b
Figure 5.30	Initial scheme proposed for the City Plaza development, Birmingham.	293
Figure 5.31	Proposals for the redevelopment of 33-41 Newhall St., Birmingham.	296
Figure 5.32a	Proposals for the redevelopment of 33-41 Newhall St., Birmingham.	296
Figure 5.32b	Proposals for the redevelopment of 33-41 Newhall St., Birmingham.	296
Figure 5.33	Proposals for the redevelopment of 75-77 Colmore Row., Birmingham (rear).	303
Figure 5.34	Proposals for the redevelopment of 55-73 Colmore Row., Birmingham (rear).	303
Figure 5.35	Proposals for the Fountains development, Edmund Street, Birmingham.	305
Figure 5.36	42-43 Waterloo St., Birmingham (prior to demolition)	314a
Figure 6.1	The ratio of major to minor change in the two study areas.	325
Figure 6.2	Amount of minor townscape change in the two study areas.	328
Figure 6.3	Time taken in determining applications, by type of change in the two study areas.	329
Figure 6.4	Percentage of applications approved, refused or withdrawn, by type of change, in the two study areas.	331
Figure 6.5	Applications by type, over time, in the two study areas.	338
Figure 6.6	Problems of advertising hoardings in the two study areas in the 1950s and 1960s. a; Advertising clutter - Broad Quay, Bristol in 1950. b; Advertising clutter - Colmore Row, Birmingham in 1957.	343
Figure 6.7	Contrasting shopfronts in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.	344
Figure 6.8	Façade alterations approved in the Birmingham study area. a; applications approved in the 1970s. b; applications approved in the 1980s.	346
Figure 6.9	Sign changes approved in the Birmingham study area. a; applications approved in the 1970s. b; applications approved in the 1980s.	347



Figure 6.10	Façade alterations approved in the Bristol study area. 348 a; applications approved in the 1970s. b; applications approved in the 1980s.	
Figure 6.11	Sign changes approved in the Bristol study area. 349 a; applications approved in the 1970s. b; applications approved in the 1980s.	
Figure 6.12	Sign changes refused or withdrawn in the 1970s. 350 a; applications refused or withdrawn in the Birmingham study area. b; applications refused or withdrawn in the Bristol study area.	
Figure 6.13	Signage in Broad Street, Bristol in the late-1960s. 351	
Figure 6.14	Sign changes refused or withdrawn in the 1980s. 361 a; applications refused or withdrawn in the Bristol study area. b; applications refused or withdrawn in the Birmingham study area.	
Figure 6.15	Façade applications refused or withdrawn in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s. 364	
Figure 6.16	Internal alterations approved in the Bristol study area. 372 a; applications approved in the 1970s. b; applications approved in the 1980s.	
Figure 6.17	Internal alterations approved in the Birmingham study area. 374 a; applications approved in the 1970s. b; applications approved in the 1980s.	
Figure 6.18	Changes of use approved in the 1970s. 380 a; applications approved in the Birmingham study area. b; applications approved in the Bristol study area.	
Figure 6.19	Changes of use approved in the 1980s. 381 a; applications approved in the Birmingham study area. b; applications approved in the Bristol study area.	
Figure 6.20	Changes of use refused or withdrawn in the Birmingham study area. 389 a; applications refused or withdrawn in the 1970s. b; applications refused or withdrawn in the 1980s.	

#### LIST OF PLATES

Plate 5.1	Bristol and West Building, Bristol	226
Plate 5.2	31-32 Queen Square, Bristol	226

Plate 5.3	Shell Mex House, Birmingham	226
Plate 5.4	C&A Corporation Street, Birmingham	226
Plate 5.5	Bank House, Birmingham	235
Plate 5.6	35-39 Gt. Charles St., Birmingham	235
Plate 5.7	Scottish Equitable House, Birmingham	235
Plate 5.8	Bristol and West Building, Birmingham	240
Plate 5.9	1 Victoria Square, Birmingham	240
Plate 5.10	45-47 Church St., Birmingham	240
Plate 5.11	15-21 Queen Charlotte St., Bristol	243
Plate 5.12	'Brygstowe' Welsh Back, Bristol	243
Plate 5.13	St. Johns Court, Bristol	243
Plate 5.14	30 Queen Charlotte St., Bristol	243
Plate 5.15	22-23a King Street, Bristol	247
Plate 5.16	3-4 Tailor's Court, Bristol	247
Plate 5.17	10-11 Small Street	250
Plate 5.18a	10 Queen Square, Bristol	250
Plate 5.18b	10 Queen Square, Bristol	250
Plate 5.19	53 Queen Charlotte St., Bristol	250
Plate 5.20	Broad Quay House, Bristol	250
Plate 5.21	Bristol and West Extension, Bristol	250
Plate 5.22	53-55 Queen Charlotte St., Bristol	256
Plate 5.23a	43-45 Queen Square, Bristol; Victorian warehouses	256
Plate 5.23b	43-45 Queen Square, Bristol	256
Plate 5.23c	43-45 Queen Square, Bristol (elevation to The Grove)	256
Plate 5.24a	Queens College Chambers, Birmingham (front)	259
Plate 5.24b	Queens College Chambers, Birmingham (rear)	259
Plate 5.25	27-37 Waterloo Street, Birmingham	259
Plate 5.26	104-106 Colmore Row, Birmingham	259
Plate 5.27	118-120 Colmore Row, Birmingham	259
Plate 5.28	Louisa Ryland House, Birmingham	259
Plate 5.29	Grand Hotel extension, Bristol	270
Plate 5.30	11-12 King Street, Bristol	270
Plate 5.31	3-5 & 6-8 The Grove, Bristol	270

Plate 5.32	'X' Shed Welsh Back, Bristol	273
Plate 5.33	'C&D' Sheds Welsh Back, Bristol (before demolition)	273
Plate 5.34	'C&D Sheds Welsh Back, Bristol (new development)	273
Plate 5.35	24-26 King Street, Bristol	279
Plate 5.36	45 Welsh Back, Bristol	279
Plate 5.37	17-29 Prince Street, Bristol	279
Plate 5.38	43-45 Queen Square, Bristol	282
Plate 5.39	39-42 Queen Square, Bristol	282
Plate 5.40	33-35 Queen Square, Bristol	282
Plate 5.41	Royal London House and 1st on Queens, Bristol	285b
Plate 5.42	Law Courts Small St., Bristol	289
Plate 5.43a	City Plaza, Birmingham (St. Philips Square elevation)	293
Plate 5.43b	City Plaza, Birmingham (Cannon St. elevation)	293
Plate 5.44	33-41 Newhall St., Birmingham	296
Plate 5.45a	15 Colmore Row, Birmingham (Victorian buildings before demolition)	299
Plate 5.45b	15 Colmore Row	299
Plate 5.46a	158-170 Edmund St., Birmingham	299
Plate 5.46b	158-170 Edmund St., Birmingham	299
Plate 5.47	Windsor PH Cannon St., Birmingham	299
Plate 5.48	75-77 Colmore Row, Birmingham (rear elevation)	303
Plate 5.49	55-73 Colmore Row, Birmingham (rear elevation)	303
Plate 5.50	'Chateau' development, Birmingham (new building to rear of retained P.O.)	305
Plate 5.51	42-43 Waterloo St., Birmingham	314b
Plate 5.52a	Snowhill, Birmingham (front)	314b
Plate 5.52b	Snowhill, Birmingham (side)	314b
Plate 5.53	Livery Street, Birmingham	314b
Plate 5.54	Embassy House, Birmingham	314b
Plate 5.55	Colmore Gate, Birmingham	314b
Plate A4.1	Unit IAa	448
Plate A4.2	Unit IAb	448
Plate A4.3	Unit IB	448
Plate A4.4	Unit IC	448

Plate A4.5	Units IC & IEa	449
Plate A4.6	Unit IEb	449
Plate A4.7	Units IF & IG	449
Plate A4.8	Unit IIA	449
Plate A4.9	Unit IIB	450
Plate A4.10	Units IIC & IC	450
Plate A4.11	Units IIE & IIF	450
Plate A4.12	Unit IIEii	450
Plate A4.13	Unit IIE	451
Plate A4.14	Unit IIIA	451
Plate A4.15	Unit IIIBi	451
Plate A4.16	Unit IIIBii	451
Plate A4.17	Unit IIIBii	452
Plate A4.18	Unit IIIC	452
Plate A4.19	Units IIIDi & IIIDiia&b	452
Plate A4.20	Unit IIIDiic	452
Plate A4.21	Unit IIIEia	453
Plate A4.22	Unit IIIEib	453
Plate A4.23	Unit IIIEib	453
Plate A4.24	Unit IIIEiia	453
Plate A4.25	Unit IIIEii	454
Plate A4.26	Unit IIIF	454
Plate A4.27	Unit IIIGa	454
Plate A4.28	Unit IIIGa	454
Plate A4.29	Unit IIIGb	455
Plate A4.30	Unit IIHi	455
Plate A4.31	Units IIIJi & IIIJiia	455
Plate A4.32	Unit IIIKi	455
Plate A4.33	Unit IIIKii	456
Plate A4.34	Unit IIIKiia	456
Plate A4.35	Unit IVA	456
Plate A4.36	Unit IVB	456
Plate A4.37	Unit IVC	457

Plate A4.38	Unit IVDiii	457
Plate A4.39	Units IVDi & IVDii	457
Plate A4.40	Unit IVE	457
Plate A4.41	Unit IVE	458
Plate A4.42	Unit IVF	458
Plate A4.43	Unit VA	458
Plate A4.44	Unit VBia	458
Plate A4.45	Unit VBib	459
Plate A4.46	Unit VBib	459
Plate A4.47	Units VBii & VCi	459
Plate A4.48	Unit VCia	459
Plate A4.49	Unit VCiii	460
Plate A4.50	Unit Ciiic	460
Plate A4.51	Units VDa,b,c	460
Plate A4.52	Units VDC,d,e,f	460
Plate A4.53	Unit VE	461
Plate A4.54	Unit VEii	461
Plate A4.55	Units IAia&c	462
Plate A4.56	Units IAi & IAiii	462
Plate A4.57	Unit IAii	462
Plate A4.58	Unit IAiv	462
Plate A4.59	Units IAiv & IAiic	463
Plate A4.60	Unit IAiv	463
Plate A4.61	Unit IAv	463
Plate A4.62	Unit IAv	463
Plate A4.63	Unit IAvi	464
Plate A4.64	Unit IAvi	464
Plate A4.65	Unit IAvii	464
Plate A4.66	Unit IAvii	464
Plate A4.67	Unit IAviiia	465
Plate A4.68	Units IAviiib & IBv	465
Plate A4.69	Unit IAx	465
Plate A4.70	Units IAXi & IAXii	465

Plate A4.71	Unit IAXii	466
Plate A4.72	Units IAix & IAXiii	466
Plate A4.73	Units IAXiii & IAXiv	466
Plate A4.74	Units IAXiv a&g	466
Plate A4.75	Unit IBi	467
Plate A4.76	Unit IBii	467
Plate A4.77	Units IBiii & IBiv	467
Plate A4.78	Unit IBv	467
Plate A4.79	Units ICia & ICiii	468
Plate A4.80	Unit IC	468
Plate A4.81	Unit IDi	468
Plate A4.82	Unit IDiii	468
Plate A4.83	Units IDiv, IDvd & IDvic	469
Plate A4.84	Unit IDv	469
Plate A4.85	Unit IDv	469
Plate A4.86	Units IDvi & IDvii	469
Plate A4.87	Unit IDvig	470
Plate A4.88	Unit IDviii	470
Plate A4.89	Unit IIA	470
Plate A4.90	Unit IIAva	470
Plate A4.91	Unit IIC	471
Plate A4.92	Unit IIIAia	471
Plate A4.93	Unit IIIAia	471
Plate A4.94	Units IIIAia & IIIAvii	471
Plate A4.95	Units IIIAia,g,h	472
Plate A4.96	Units IIIAij&k & IIIAix	472
Plate A4.97	Unit IIIAiv	472
Plate A4.98	Unit IIIAv	472
Plate A4.99	Units IIIAv & IIIAii	473
Plate A4.100	Unit IIIAvic	473
Plate A4.101	Units IIIAvii & IIIAviii	473
Plate A4.102	Units IIICia & IIICii	473
Plate A4.103	Unit IIIDii	474



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1	Planning decisions by type of development.	201
Table 5.2	Annual percentage increase in office floorspace rents, Bristol.	204
Table 5.3	Birmingham appeals	217
Table 5.4	Bristol appeals	217
Table 6.1	Birmingham appeals	334
Table 6.2	Applications with multiple elements, Birmingham	335
Table 6.3	Bristol appeals	336
Table 6.4	Applications with multiple elements, Bristol	337



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### General

CAAC	Conservation Areas Advisory Committee
CAP	Conservation Advisory Panel
DoE	Department of the Environment
GDO	General Development Order
HBMC	Historic Buildings and Monuments Council
LPA	Local Planning Authority
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance

### Type of development

ADD	Extension (horizontal and vertical) to an existing building and building of freestanding auxiliary structures
COU	Change of use (between DoE use classes)
DEM	Demolition of all or part of a building
FAC	Front facade and shopfront alterations
INT	Internal alterations
MAJ	Major rebuilding (demolition of all but part of the building and construction of a new structure)
MIN	Minor alterations
MIS	Miscellaneous non fabric alterations
NEW	New building (new structure on cleared site)
REF	Refurbishment of building (no major alterations)
SIG	Illuminated and non-illuminated signs

### Type of permission applied for

FUL	Full planning permission
LBC	Listed building consent
MAX	Maximum advert consent (5 years)
OUT	Outline planning permission
RET	Retention of a structure, sign, or use
TEM	Temporary permission for signs, structure, or use

## CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

In Britain, over the last thirty years, urban development trends have precipitated a considerable amount of change, in both the size and character of cities and, more importantly, in attitudes towards their management. One of the most important changes in attitude has been the growing significance of conservation to the planning of urban areas (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990; Burtenshaw et al, 1991; Larkham, 1993). Current conservation concerns have now expanded beyond a simple preoccupation with the historic preservation of particular buildings, to embrace the broader concept of 'heritage' (Cullingworth, 1992; Ashworth and Larkham, 1994; Larkham, 1995a). Urban conservation concerns have also expanded geographically and have moved beyond their initial focus of operation within nationally recognised 'historic' towns to include a more functionally and temporally diverse range of townscapes (Pearce et al, 1990; Ross, 1991). Consequently, urban conservation is now central to the current process of urban redevelopment and affects a wide range of cities and city areas. Yet, far from consolidating the role of conservation within urban development, these changes have served to complicate the cause of conservation and have called into question not only its methods of operation, but also its innate desirability.

Presently, there is an unprecedented degree of activity concerned with the contemplation, recovery and reconstruction of the past (Lowenthal, 1985). Over the last twenty years, a 'conservator society' has developed (Relph, 1982) as the conservation movement has grown from small groups promoting building preservation to become a more popular re-engagement with the past. It has been argued that this retreat into nostalgia has developed as a direct response to recent economic and social uncertainties, a trend that has been evident in other economically unsure times in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Cannadine, 1989). This growing popular interest in heritage is evident in the growing numbers of conservation societies (Larkham, 1992) and in the increase in magazines and television programmes concerned with conservation and heritage (Corner and Harvey, 1991). As a result of this media popularisation, heritage has increasingly become part of everyday life. This is particularly evident in its mobilisation as a motif of consumerism, where history is selectively refashioned as a contemporary heritage product

(Ashworth, 1994; Gottdiener, 1995). However, this rise in the popularity of conservation and heritage has been criticised by a number of writers for promoting a 'museum-based culture' in Britain (Worskett, 1982; Hewison, 1987; Lumley, 1988).

In particular, the increasing use of heritage in the 'selling' of products and places has been heavily criticised by many writers for promoting a false and sanitized history (see for example, Hewison, 1987; Corner and Harvey, 1991). Criticism has centred around the selectivity of the heritage conserved and promoted within commercial schemes. These often seek to exclude aspects of local heritage deemed 'unsaleable' to tourists or investors (Boyle and Hughes, 1991; Wishart, 1991; Kearns and Philo, 1993). Therefore, despite the popularisation of conservation and heritage, there has not been a democratisation of conservation, as the selection and promotion of heritage is still bound by the motives of powerful elites. Consequently, conservation and heritage concerns remain largely based on nationally defined values of historic and artistic worth, by which priorities are determined and the value of artifacts is judged.

The development of conservation concerns within urban development generally, and the built environment professions in particular, have been motivated by the wider upsurge of interest in the cultural heritage of cities. Within architectural practice, the cause of conservation has been aided by the growing appreciation and use of historicist styles, associated with the post-modern reaction to modernist styles that dominated the early post-war period (Esher, 1981; Jencks, 1987; Whitehand and Larkham, 1989; Punter, 1990). The widespread adoption of these historicist styles has been encouraged by the design guidance produced by local planning authorities (LPAs), which has promoted the use of local vernacular forms (Larkham, 1986; Chapman and Larkham, 1992). The current popularising of this debate, beyond the realm of architectural practice alone, has been linked to a number of high profile criticisms of modern architectural styles (see for example HRH Prince of Wales, 1989). This criticism has built on general public disquiet concerning the use of modern architecture, which has become associated with disruption, alien architectural forms, the use of discordant scales and materials, and the erosion of the unique attributes of place (Relph, 1976; Worskett, 1982).

However, the increasing use of historicist architectural styles for new development has been criticised for stifling architectural creativity and promoting an equally banal and insensitive conservation-area-architecture (Rock, 1974; Adam, 1975; Larkham, 1988a; Punter, 1990).

The increase in conservation awareness within urban development is most strikingly illustrated by the growing amount of the built fabric afforded official protection through the listed building and conservation area systems. Within the planning profession, the growth in building listing and, particularly, conservation area designations can be seen as part of an increasing concern for aesthetics within local planning. Principally, these moves have resulted from criticisms of the planning profession's past disregard for human scale and local diversity (Healey, 1989; Goodchild, 1990). The increasing importance attached to the quality of the built environment and urban life within mainstream planning has led to the reorientation of planning practice around the promotion of aesthetics and detailed urban design (Punter, 1986; Tibbalds, 1988; Rogers and Fisher, 1992). Often it is the conserved environment, and reference to traditional local forms in new buildings and spaces, that have provided the basis for this design guidance, from the level of the individual plot to the city centre (Chapman and Larkham, 1992).

However, the development of conservation concerns within planning has also been viewed, more negatively, as a strategy pursued by LPAs to curtail the increasing power of national corporate concerns in the redevelopment process (Morton, 1991; Stansfield, 1991; Larkham, 1995a). Commentators have argued that the increasing dominance of corporate strategies in development have produced a less diverse and culturally impoverished city centre environment (Newby, 1994). Through the increasing control in aesthetic matters afforded by conservation, planners have sought to redress the weaknesses in their ability to direct design that resulted from central government action to streamline local planning throughout the 1980s (Ambrose, 1986; Punter, 1986). Consequently, it has been argued that the growth in the numbers of conservation areas seen throughout the 1980s is, to a large extent, a direct expression of this desire for greater control of change in the built environment (Larkham and Jones, 1993). This proliferation of areas, and the perceived ambiguity in the reasons behind designation, have resulted in rising

criticism of the conservation area concept. Principally, there has been a questioning of the inherent conservation-worthiness of some of the areas that have been designated, and accusations that the concept of the conservation area itself has become debased (Morton, 1991).

As the built heritage has become an increasingly important component in the management and promotion of cities, there has been renewed urban geographical interest in exploring the issues and tensions surrounding this (Newcomb, 1979; Holdsworth, 1985; Larkham, 1986; Tunbridge, 1987). Recently, within this strand of urban geographical study, there has been a shift in emphasis from the study of the practicalities of conservation towards a consideration of the social and economic impact of this broader heritage management and promotion. These new analytical approaches have increasingly drawn on critical work concerning heritage landscapes which has been developed within sociology (see for example Urry, 1990). However, the majority of these critical heritage studies have tended to concentrate primarily on specific landscape developments such as theme and heritage parks (West, 1985; Gottdiener, 1995), gentrified areas (Burtenshaw et al, 1991; Jacobs, 1992) or waterfront developments (Tunbridge, 1987; Mellor, 1991), rather than townscapes of local significance within urban conservation areas.

A conspicuous deficiency in the recent literature on conservation has been critical assessment of the requirement for conservation, the scope of conservation or how conservation might best be accomplished within urban townscapes generally (Larkham, 1993). It is apparent that the increasing appreciation of heritage, and the prominent role of the conserved built environment within this, has served to focus attention on the growing tensions within conservation practice. Generally, conservation philosophy and policies have been slow to respond to the challenges posed by the expanding temporal and geographical spread of conservation concern and the changing principal justifications for its promotion. It has become increasingly evident that conservation policy and practice have acted to the disadvantage of particular townscapes and cultures, fuelling intense debate. It has been suggested that many of these problems stem from the absence of a clear understanding of a conservation ethic:

"conservation is in as much danger from itself as it is from the old enemies of speculation, inhuman planning and insensitive architecture. This inner danger lies in the total absence of any understanding of a conservation ethic" (Worskett, 1982; p129).

Few studies have addressed the issue of the conservation ethic directly. Of those that have, many have been confined to low visibility publications (Briggs, 1975; Faulkner, 1978; Worskett, 1982), while others have remained as under-developed academic ideas (Conzen, 1966; 1975), outside of mainstream planning practice.

Worskett (1982), formerly chief planner/architect for the City of Bath, identifies a number key issues, both theoretical and practical, that need to be addressed for conservation to progress. Principally, he recognises a need to redefine ways of viewing historic townscapes, particularly the need to question notions of what is historic, and to develop a considered rather than a reactionary approach to the issue of conservation. He suggests that this can be used to develop a more widely acceptable, clearer and practically applicable conservation ethic. Many of Worskett's suggestions have a resonance with the earlier theoretical and practical ideas of the geographer M R G Conzen concerning the practice of townscape conservation. He argued that the morphogenetic tradition of urban morphology offered a basis from which historical analysis could be linked to the future management of the urban landscape, particularly where conservation was a priority (Conzen, 1966; 1975). It has been suggested that Conzen's analytical contribution to townscape management, in providing a conception of how some parts of the urban landscape have a character distinct from others that relates to their history and that of the society that created them, and of how individual developments from different historical periods fit together, can provide a theoretical underpinning for conservation practice where it is most needed (Whitehand, 1987a). However, the practical aspects of this approach are as yet poorly worked out (Whitehand, 1987a; Larkham, 1991).

The two principal aims of the thesis lie within the issues identified above. First, to consider the ways in which historic townscapes are viewed through a consideration of the issue of defining townscape character for the purposes of management. The thesis seeks to demonstrate the relevance of Conzen's ideas concerning the detailed urban morphological analysis of local townscape development, and the process of delimiting morphological regions,

to conservation area character assessment in particular and conservation planning in general. Secondly, building on this character assessment, the thesis seeks to examine the tensions surrounding the operation of conservation management within complex and functionally dynamic city centre environments, where the values underpinning conservation have been increasingly challenged. The thesis employs well-proven morphological data sources and analysis, utilising the information contained within local authority planning files, to examine conservation area change and to assess conservation policy operation in these areas.

The structure of the thesis reflects these two principal aims. Chapter Two provides the basis for the research. It considers the development of the conservation control framework within local planning in England and Wales and examines the multi-faceted nature of the conservation ethic, specifically the competing justifications for conservation. The chapter also introduces Conzenian urban morphology and its contribution to townscape conservation. Chapter Three also provides context, by considering study areas and sources. The chapter outlines the choice of study areas and study period. It provides a brief historical overview of the development of the commercial cores of the two study cities, Birmingham and Bristol, and the development of local authority conservation control within these areas. Chapter Three also considers the use of development control data, from local authority planning files, as a source through which to examine townscape change and conservation area management.

Chapters Four to Six provide the analytical core of the work, addressing the principal aims of the thesis. Chapter Four considers the current problems besetting the definition of conservation area character, arguing the case for the use of townscape regions, as developed by M R G Conzen, as the basis for a more historically informed definition of area character. The chapter utilises detailed morphogenetic analysis to identify townscape regions within the two conservation areas under investigation, in order to provide an assessment of character at designation to compare with the assessments offered by the two local authorities, and to expose their limitations. In Chapters Five and Six, this character assessment is then used as a basis from which to evaluate townscape change and the operation of conservation policies in the

study areas, from 1970 to 1989. Chapter Five considers the impact of major changes on the two study areas; principally the impact of demolition, new building and major rebuilding. Specifically, it considers the impact of conservation control on the style of major development in the two areas. Chapter Six considers the impact of minor changes on the two study areas, exploring the problem of character erosion through accumulated minor change in commercial conservation areas. The thesis concludes with a synthesis of the results of the research, which is provided in Chapter Seven.



## **CHAPTER TWO : PLANNING, CONSERVATION AND THE CITY**

"The success or failure of the conservation of the architectural heritage is ... inextricably bound up with town planning concepts, practice and procedures" (Worskett, 1982 p131).

As conservation has become a major force within urban planning, its underlying philosophies, effectiveness and desirability have been increasingly questioned. In addition, the incorporation of conservation control into the mainstream development process has been far from smooth. There has been criticism of the fragmented nature of conservation legislation and scepticism regarding the degree to which heritage planning is integrated into the other planning functions (Larkham, 1995a). Consequently, study of urban conservation practice, operating through the development control system, provides an important medium through which to examine the problems surrounding the realisation of townscape conservation objectives. This chapter firstly considers the development of the legislative framework for conservation in England and Wales, and highlights some of the current problems concerning the operation of this legislative framework. Secondly, the chapter considers the deeper roots of these problems within conservation practice by examining the complexities of the ethic underpinning conservation. Finally, the chapter considers the ideas of M.R.G. Conzen concerning urban morphological analysis, and its use as a basis for conservation practice. It is suggested that these ideas offer the basis to overcome some of the difficulties identified currently facing conservation theory and practice, in particular the problem of assessing area character.

### **CONSERVATION AND LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNING PRACTICE**

#### **The development of conservation legislation**

The growth and development of a formal concern with the surviving relics of the past has a relatively short history, with little development before the 19th century, bar the creation of a limited number of learned societies, such as the Society of Antiquarians founded in 1572 (Saunders, 1986). In the mid-to late-19th century, the growth in conservation concern was driven primarily by the enthusiasm of knowledgeable and influential amateurs (Ashworth and Larkham, 1994), and the activities of local history groups (Dellheim, 1982).

This was allied to a more general growth in the appreciation of national heritage linked to national economic depression at the end of the 19th century (Cannadine, 1989). The establishment of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877, and the founding of the National Trust in 1895, provided important stimuli to the cause of architectural conservation, motivating the first moves towards national legislation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Cherry, 1975; Dobby, 1978; Larkham, 1986). Subsequent waves of increasing formal concern and legislative development have also occurred in conjunction with swings towards heritage consciousness, linked to periods of national retrenchment, principally in the inter-war period and in the post-1974 period (Sutcliffe, 1981; Cannadine, 1989).

The first state heritage action appeared in 1882 with the Ancient Monuments Act. Promoted by an individual, it was important in fixing an interest for the State in monument preservation. Prior to this there had been a reluctance to enact legislation, with private landowning interests squashing earlier attempts for similar Acts. Despite legislation, such preservation as was achieved under this Act, and similar Acts passed in the following 30 years, occurred only as a result of the goodwill and cooperation of private owners. In a period of sacrosanct private property rights, control was not strictly enforced and the primary function of the State concerned the cataloguing of ancient and historic monuments built prior to a specified date. This was the task of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, established in 1908, which set out to catalogue monuments constructed prior to 1700. This end date reflected the attitudes to heritage prevailing at the time. Changes to this end date provide an important indicator of the changing attitudes to heritage and conservation during the 20th century. The end date was not moved forward significantly until after World War Two, when it was moved to 1850, before it was abolished in 1963, in order to reflect broadening heritage concerns (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). Further legislation to strengthen the role of the State in the preservation of monuments was slow to arrive. It was not until 1913 that powers were provided for Local Authorities to purchase ancient monuments, or to assume guardianship. Further to this, it was not until the Historic Buildings and Monuments Act of 1953 that grants were made available for the maintenance of monuments, in order to develop positive preservation strategies. Thus, the format of ancient monument

legislation development set the pattern for the development of other heritage legislation within Britain in the post-war period, with nominal protection and inventories eventually developing into greater powers of protection and, belatedly, grants for maintenance.

In the post-war period, conservation of the townscape in urban areas became increasingly formalised within the Town and Country planning development control system, through the development of the listed building and conservation area regulatory systems. However, it was the 1970s that were certainly the heyday of conservation fervour, with the creation of numerous pressure groups, such as SAVE, which popularised the cause of preservation (Lowe, 1977; Larkham, 1985; Beresford, 1991). The number of pressure groups registered with the Civic Trust reached its peak in the 1970s, declining during the 1980s (Larkham, 1993). As a result of this popularisation, attention was no longer confined to elite and special structures, and vernacular and common place buildings attracted increasing interest. In the 1970s conservation was seen as the basis for a new style of planning, more tolerant of local environments and less alienating, which would counter the totalising, 'clean sweep' planning of the 1960s (Dear, 1986; Goodchild, 1990). During this period, conservation legislation development in Britain reflected these trends, and heralded a shift away from preservation towards a more flexible system of conservation. This was principally reflected in the shift of concern towards wider areas of townscape, rather than individual buildings and monuments. This was done through the designation of conservation areas, giving conservation a geographical basis (Larkham, 1986; Tunbridge, 1987).

More recently, the links between conservation and planning have become more complex, with the responsibility for conservation policy moving from the Department of the Environment (DoE) to the newly created Department of National Heritage (DNH) in 1992. In addition, conservation is now not part of the general planning Act, coming under its own separate Act, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, in 1990. Responsibility for the general supervision of the conservation area and listed building systems, and for building listing itself, now rests with the DNH. However, the application of these systems in practice, through the appeals process etc., still resides with the DoE and the Secretary of State for the Environment. This has created

an uneasy division in the management of the built heritage, with the operation of this system in practice yet to be fully tested (Larkham, 1995a).

### Listed buildings

Listed building legislation developed as an extension of that relating to ancient monuments, following a similar path of progression, although separate from it. Listing was formalised by the Town and Country Planning Acts, 1944 and 1947. It formed part of the general movement at the time to exert greater control over townscape change, and was also a response to the slowness of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in assembling its inventory (Dobby, 1978). However, its development can be seen primarily as a response to the disruption of World War Two, and the 'Baedeker' raids in particular, expressing a desire to preserve and promote national identity and re-establish particular values. Building listing then, in contrast to the provisions relating to ancient monuments, operated under planning legislation, with its advancement marking a significant stage in the incorporation of historic preservation into the mainstream development control process (Harvey, 1993). However, in parallel to ancient monument control, it is the central government's department that maintain lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and the Secretary of State who formally lists.

The compilation of the first lists, completed in 1968 and including 170,000 buildings in England, Wales and Scotland, was a mammoth task, lengthened as a result of inadequate funding and a general lack of public interest (Dobby, 1978). Yet listing has remained an ongoing process, due to the need to add new buildings and update information, and due to the requirement to consider buildings for spot listing, where buildings are under threat of demolition or alteration. The revision of the first lists was given a boost in the 1970s by the promotion of Architectural Heritage Year in 1975, and in the 1980s by the controversy surrounding the demolition of the Firestone Factory which prompted the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Heseltine, to accelerate the survey (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). Through these revisions, listing criteria have been constantly adjusted, as particular groups of older buildings have become rarer and

architectural appreciation has widened (Robertson et al., 1993). By 1990, the number of listed buildings had grown to 451,000 in England, Wales and Scotland, with 400,000 of these in England alone (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). Currently, a thematic approach to building listing is in operation considering post-war building types (Robinson et al., 1993). However, the number of post-1939 buildings listed is limited (Larkham, 1995a).

Listed buildings must possess 'special' interest, although this is not legally defined. However, buildings can be considered to have special value for architectural reasons, where they represent technological innovations, illustrate aspects of social and economic history, or have an association with historical characters and events. Buildings can also be considered special for their group value, especially as models of town planning, such as squares, terraces or model settlements. Despite this wide range of criteria, historical interest alone may not be enough to ensure listed status (Larkham, 1995a). This can disadvantage smaller, less architecturally spectacular buildings in the listing process, which may therefore be under-represented. There are currently three grades of listed building (GI, GII\*, and GII). While these grades have little legal standing, they are important for grant purposes, and in the determination of listed building consent applications. However, with the upper grades (GI and GII\*) confined to a small number of the most important buildings, the GII category contains a wide range of structures, from churches to bollards. It has been suggested that increasing the number of grade bands at the lower end of the scale would allow a fairer consideration of the value of these structures (Noakes, 1991). The majority of buildings protected through listing are then classified under the lowest status GII category, and are usually buildings with current commercial or residential functions which provide an economic basis for their preservation. As a result the statutory protection afforded to these buildings has to be interpreted flexibly, drawing a compromise between "the value of the old and the needs of the new" (Ross, 1991, p92).

Change to listed buildings is monitored through the requirement to obtain listed building consent, where demolition or alteration of a listed building would alter its character or appearance. Introduced in the Town and Country Planning Act, 1968, this application has to take into account

representations from national amenity bodies before the LPA can reach a decision. Also, in cases of demolition and alterations to particular grades of buildings, the LPA must refer applications to the DoE for consideration, advised by English Heritage. This, and the ability to impose conditions to the granting of listed building consent, as for planning applications, adds further levels of control to the protection of listed buildings. Yet despite these controls, neglect of listed buildings is common (English Heritage, 1992). In addition, ambiguity exists in defining the terms of what constitutes an alteration in the character or appearance of a building, with many LPAs failing to adequately monitor changes to buildings (Dobby, 1978). While legislation provides a deterrent against the deliberate neglect of historic buildings, with LPAs having the power to acquire neglected buildings, this is not totally successful, as increasingly, LPAs have neither the time or resources to acquire neglected buildings.

### Conservation areas

Many of the ideas contained within listed building control were further extended through the introduction of conservation areas into the legislative framework of heritage planning. The origin of the concept in the U.K. is thought to derive from the debate concerning the 'group value' of buildings as part of a square in the case of *The Earl of Iveagh v. Minister of Housing and Local Government* in 1964 (Larkham, 1995a). In order to provide more general powers in the case of group value, conservation areas were formally introduced by the Civic Amenities Act, 1967, privately sponsored by the MP and Civic Trust President, Duncan Sandys. Conservation areas are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. These terms of definition reveal clearly that conservation areas were conceived as listed buildings or buildings of 'group value' writ large (Dobby, 1978). Yet, initially conservation areas were merely optional lines drawn on maps with no special protective or financial provisions. LPAs were encouraged, but not obliged, to designate areas, and were merely advised to pay special attention to their character when exercising their planning functions.

The Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act, 1972 altered this

situation by giving LPAs a duty to determine areas. The Act provided LPAs with the power to control the demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas, and made grants and loans available for enhancement projects in 'outstanding' conservation areas (Dobby, 1978). These developments led to an increase in the numbers of conservation areas designated, and in a rise in areas seeking 'outstanding' status. However, it was the strengthening of demolition powers in the Town and Country Planning Act 1974, coupled with the promotion of Architectural Heritage Year in 1975, that precipitated the most dramatic increase in the numbers of conservation areas designated, with a peak of designations in 1974-76 (Larkham and Jones, 1993). The general thrust of the conservation area legislation contained within these early Acts, and much of the wording, remains at the heart of current 1990 Town and Country Planning and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Acts, which sought to codify this earlier legislation and subsequent directives.

Conservation areas have developed to become the primary vehicle of locally-based conservation effort. Since the 1970s, significant parts of the centres of even the largest and most functionally-dynamic cities have been designated as areas of historically important townscape. This has pushed the scope of conservation area policies beyond the 'traditionally' recognised historic towns to include the townscape of 19th century industrial cities. Throughout the 1980s, the number of conservation area designations continued to grow as LPAs sought greater control over the form of the townscape, particularly during the peak in building activity in the latter half of the 1980s. It has been suggested that the growth in areas at this time was a direct attempt to gain greater control in the wake of Circular 22/80 (DoE 1980), calling for the limitation of LPA aesthetic control and participation initiatives (Griffiths, 1990; Punter, 1990). By 1991 the number of conservation areas had grown to over 7000 areas in England, 350 in Wales, and 550 in Scotland (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). However, during the early-1990s the number of areas has been increasing at the rate of 200 to 400 per year (Larkham and Jones, 1993). The dramatic growth in the number of areas has led to increasing concern that the mechanism of conservation area control is being used primarily to control development, rather than merely for the protection of 'special areas', consequently devaluing the concept of conservation (Morton, 1991; Stansfield, 1991). Conservation areas now form

an increasingly varied collection in terms of size and type, and it has been suggested that an assessment of their overall impact is long overdue (Hamshere, 1991; Larkham and Jones, 1993).

### **Key concerns for conservation control**

The conservation control system has of late been characterised as a system trying to manage the problems of success, as more buildings have been listed, and especially as more conservation areas have been designated. It has been suggested that "we are running out of things which need to be preserved..the heroic age of conservation has passed" (Aslet quoted in Beresford (1991) p15). Many suggest that conservation is an issue now on the defensive in planning. Ross (1991 p173) asks, "has the pendulum swung too far?", concerned that there is a danger of turning the country into a huge conservation area. Yet, while heritage legislation has grown in influence, it still remains weak in relation to development arguments, particularly in the centres of large cities. Conservation management in city centres remains beset by an inability to quantify conservation aims and objectives in documentation and character assessments, and articulate these during development control negotiation (Morton, 1991). This is not aided by the fact that most conservation control remains non-statutory, and like a lot of informal legislation, responsibility is often fragmented and concepts remain elusive.

In particular the debate over the success or otherwise of the conservation area concept has never been greater (Larkham and Jones, 1993). As heritage concerns have become increasingly translated into planning control, the sheer quantity and seeming dominance of conservation area controls have led some writers to argue that saturation point has been reached (Morton, 1991). Criticism concerning the growth of conservation control has typically come from developers and landowners. They cite the protracted processes of consultation and negotiation associated with development in conservation areas as a key problem, echoing the criticisms of central government throughout the 1980s (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). In the face of this criticism, LPAs have pointed to positive benefits of conservation areas, in demonstrating what can be achieved when local planners are given a



significant role in aesthetic control. However, the majority of the criticism levelled at conservation areas does not question their desirability per se, but is directed principally at the focus and operation of policy. It has been suggested that as a consequence of this criticism, less attention should be paid to designating more conservation areas, and more to understanding and managing those areas already designated (Larkham and Jones, 1993). The problems highlighted in the RTPI survey on conservation areas (Larkham and Jones, 1993) are concerned principally with two main issues, one concerned with the ad hoc and opaque nature of local conservation area designation policies, and the other concerned with the role of conservation control in defining and protecting the character of areas.

#### Criticisms of area designation policies

The statutory provisions relating to the establishment and maintenance of conservation areas are remarkably vague, and have been open to frequent legal challenge (Larkham, 1995a). The variability in procedure related to the designation process has been highlighted by a number of case studies of conservation areas (see for example Gamston, 1975; Larkham, 1986). Early designation criteria based on special artistic or historic interest, contained in the 1967 Act, were exceptionally loose. Variability continues to exist, as there is no formal designation procedure, no requirement for a formal public enquiry (although, since the 1990 Act, proposals must be put before a public meeting), and no specification as to what constitutes conservation area status (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). This has led many to question the basis for various area designations, and the legitimacy of these non-statutory policies. This has weakened the impact of conservation policies during negotiation with developers, and at planning appeals against LPA decisions.

In order to counter this, many LPAs have sought to integrate conservation area plans and enhancement schemes into development plans, to add statutory weight to these policies. The importance of this has increased following recent central government advice on the primacy of development plans, and the increasing importance placed on them by the Planning Inspectorate (Jones and Larkham, 1993). It has been suggested that this could form the basis for a more national, formalised system for conservation area

designation and management (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). Yet one of the primary successes of the conservation area concept has been the development of a localised approach to the preservation of historic and architectural character, broadening this beyond the more constrained, nationally-defined remit of listed building control. While there appears to be a need for some national formalisation, particularly in the process of designation, it is not desirable that this should necessarily lead to the wholesale incorporation of conservation control under national guidance.

### Criticisms of character definition and management

While problems concerning the designation procedure for conservation areas can largely be addressed through alterations to the mechanics of the planning system, the issue of providing more rigorous, and clearly defined, character assessments for conservation areas raises more fundamental questions within conservation practice. While character is of considerable theoretical and legal importance in the designation and management of conservation areas, it is a concept that is rarely explicitly defined by LPAs (Larkham and Jones, 1993). As noted above, one of the key concerns related to the rapid increase in conservation area numbers is the possible debasing of the concept. The development of this view has been fuelled by the continual inability of LPAs to define the essential character of conservation areas to be protected or enhanced. Concerns centre on what is seen as the abuse of this localised system in designating townscapes that appear to have no clearly significant historical or architectural character, unlike the townscapes afforded protection in the early days of the conservation area concept. Yet, while most conservation areas have highly complex and varied townscapes, discussion of area character is frequently reduced to the consideration of art-historic and design worth within planning documentation. Consequently, where conservation area townscapes fall outside nationally recognised notions of architectural historicity, the local significance and historical meaning of these townscapes is rarely articulated.

Failure to define character within these broader terms is manifest in character erosion as a result of ill-considered new development within an area. A number of writers have observed the development of bland, formulaic

architectural styles within conservation areas, as a result of the lack of strongly defined local area character, and an urban development process dominated by distant corporate agents (see for example, Rock, 1974; Larkham, 1988; 1992; Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995). Many of these historicist styles form part of the 'postmodern' movement in architecture (Jencks, 1987), and claim to be sensitive to the local vernacular. However, they are frequently as inappropriate as the modern styles they seek to replace. This overuse of uniform historicist styles and façadist schemes demonstrate a disregard for the local townscape and a lack of understanding of a sense of place.

Weak definitions of character have also created difficulties in controlling the gradual erosion of character through minor change. Increasingly concern has been voiced over the erosion of the character of conservation areas through the gradual accumulation of changes (Larkham, 1987; Robinson, 1991; EHTF, 1992). This erosion occurs primarily as a result of the inadequacy of LPA monitoring of conservation area changes (Larkham, 1990a), and through the use of unsympathetic and formulaic detailing by developers and architects, reducing local character (Coupe, 1991; Davies, 1991; 1993; Suddards and Morton, 1991). These changes within conservation areas frequently go unmonitored by the LPA, as they are either too small to be noted, are classed as permitted development under the General Development Order (GDO), or because the LPA lacks resources to monitor this change in depth. LPAs can also be party to this minor accumulated erosion through the promotion of enhancement schemes using inappropriate paving and street furniture, or standardised heritage products (Booth, 1993; Newby, 1994).

Hence, while the promotion of conservation areas has served to focus attention on the preservation of locally important townscapes, its mechanisms have frequently failed to protect them. Discussion of these problems of character erosion in conservation areas serves to highlight the weakness of many conservation policies in the face of redevelopment pressures. While examination of development trends within conservation areas is important in order to monitor this potential character erosion, the most pressing need is for a deeper understanding of the way in which local historical meaning is embodied in the townscape, and the way this contributes to conservation area character

In addition to academic and professional concern, critical analysis of current methods of assessing and protecting area character has come from planning pressure groups concerned with the promotion of local participation in planning, and the promotion of local distinctiveness. These groups have argued that formal conservation has failed to either represent, or to articulate, place-specific identities, and that the manner in which conservation is carried out at present is actually destroying the individual sense of place (Common Ground, 1990; Matless, 1994). They contend that both conservation practice, and planning practice generally, require a greater commitment to the understanding of local traditions and culture, and the dynamics of change in the environment. This is based on the view that it is the contemporary inhabitants of an area who have the greatest local knowledge, and who possess clear ideas on the needs and development aims for an area, although these may be particularly self-centred (Larkham, 1990b).

The promotion of local distinctiveness, and the celebration of local history and traditions, have been the focus of a number of recent exercises in developing community involvement in the development process (Common Ground, 1990; Matless, 1994). These schemes have concentrated on the development of character assessment techniques that use concepts understandable to the public, developing an understanding of place through the accumulation and exchange of information concerning local heritage. These techniques have been fairly successful in integrating both popular and academic methods of assessing character, and in recognising the malleable nature of character. This flexibility of approach is important as there is considerable danger of adopting a pseudo-scientific method, and producing a theoretical model which is too general and does not allow for the local interpretation of townscapes. These exercises have been important in highlighting the central importance of an understanding of local character to planning, in providing a useful base for the discussion of both conservation and broader planning objectives in the public arena.

## **THE CONSERVATION ETHIC**

In examining conservation and townscape management in the city, it is important to understand the underlying ideologies that motivate the

conservation of the built environment, how these inform the development of policy, and how they form the basic assumptions underlying decisions taken. As has been noted, the development of townscape conservation, and the increasing use of conserved townscapes as an amenity and business resource, have served to expose the contested nature of urban conservation. A confused ethic now underpins the management of the diverse conserved townscapes within Britain's towns and cities. As conservation has become increasingly bound up with the politics of culture, the need to be aware of the impact of the value systems within conservation has increased. Yet, to date, one of the key failings of conservation practitioners and participants has been a lack of recognition that the production and management of the urban landscape is imbued with ideology. While many differing views concerning conservation exist between the public, built environment professionals and central government, it seems that the issues and debates surrounding conservation have frequently been reduced to those surrounding preservation versus redevelopment, or the minutiae of architectural style. The result is a movement short on ideas, and which offers a safe, traditional and unchallenging view of conservation.

The development of conservation thinking has been principally considered as the gradual evolution of an awareness concerning the importance of the preservation of the past. It has been viewed as developing as a reaction to the increasing pace of change brought about by urban development associated with the Second Industrial Revolution in the mid-to-late 19th century in Britain (Cherry, 1975; Dobby, 1978). Yet conservation should not be seen merely as a gradual linear development beginning at this point and continuing throughout the 20th century, as the origins of conservation thinking do not derive from a single source. Many of the dominant assumptions that underpin the modern rationale have their roots in ideas from earlier activities, including Medieval and Gothic studies movements in the 17th century and the development of the Grand Tour in the 18th century. Far from being a simplistic dichotomy between conservation and redevelopment, the background to the issues surrounding conservation of the built environment consists of a complex web of conservation thinking in Britain.

However, until relatively recently, exploration of the conservation

dilemma in the urban conservation literature has been confined to an examination of the conflict that exists between the desire to comprehensively redevelop and the desire to conserve the built fabric of the area for unconsidered, axiomatic reasons. This literature has tended merely to set out the arguments for and against conservation, rather than exploring the justifications for conservation (see for example, Smith, 1975; Dobby 1978; Suddards, 1988; Ross, 1991). The abundance of conservation literature and writing which focused on this debate led Chapman (1975) to state that almost everything to be said about conservation had been said. Yet today, conservation, through its incorporation into the mainstream development process, cannot be considered fundamentally as a counter to redevelopment. The failure to question the justifications for conservation, in the light of these changes, has led to the uncritical, blanket application of policies that have increasingly been exposed as inflexible, uni-dimensional and narrow.

#### **Artistic and national heritage justifications**

The longest standing 'tradition' within the conservation movement is that concerned with the preservation of particular buildings that exemplify the 'best' achievements of architectural practice, or that represent a key component of the nation's history or national identity. Conservation is then defined as a strategy for the preservation of a universally accepted national architectural and/or historic heritage. Nationally, conservation action is still primarily connected to the ideals of preserving cultural artifacts which are 'universally' admired, evident in those monuments afforded most national protection and revenue through building listing and conservation grants. However, the notion of culture is far from being easily definable (Jackson, 1989), and therefore the preservation of particular cultural artifacts reflects the power to define that which is culturally important, a power held by dominant groups in a society. In Britain, this power has strong links to the philosophy of conservatism, associated with the establishment and tradition, articulated through the preservation of high cultural traditions and artifacts (Faulkner, 1978). Conservation is then used to preserve the 'best' buildings, principally the built heritage of the elite.

The preservation of 'high', elite artistic and cultural artifacts, as

indicative of the cultural achievements of the nation, derives from preservation movements of the 18th century. During the 18th century, the 'Grand Tour' became popularised as an essential component in the educational experience of the elite. A central part of this experience was an appreciation of the importance of Greek and Roman culture to the origins of European civilization, one aspect of which was the admiration of surviving architectural remnants from these periods. Gradually, as a result of this experience, reference to these historical artifacts became incorporated into artistic and cultural pursuits in the 18th century, in order to legitimise their cultural lineage, a trend particularly evident in architecture (Riegl, 1982). Subsequently, the practice of legitimising the present with reference to past cultural achievements became transferred into the justification for the preservation of the 'best' cultural and artistic artifacts of British heritage in the 19th century. This translated into moves to preserve particular ancient monuments and large historic houses, which had artistic and cultural value by virtue of their age and monumental role in symbolizing the development of British culture (Wright, 1985; Hewison, 1987; Beresford, 1991).

The use of building preservation to symbolise key aspects of British culture was extended in the late-19th century by the conservation concerns that developed from the traditions of William Morris and the Arts and Craft Movement. The movement developed as a reaction against the increasing pace of industrialisation and mass production, advocating the protection and promotion of vernacular and local craft skills. Yet this conservation movement ultimately did little to counter the earlier preservation movement's concentration on singular monuments of art-historic worth noted earlier, despite increasing the range of buildings considered as unintentional monuments (Riegl, 1982). While it broadened consideration of the type of built heritage of importance to British cultural identity, it also suffered from problems of selectivity. The movement held a romantic and nostalgic rose-tinted view of the national heritage, stemming from its anti-industrial focus, which promoted a static, anti-progressive and overwhelmingly rural view of heritage preservation (Riegl, 1982). As C.R. Ashbee noted, the Arts and Crafts movement became as elitist as the earlier preservation movements, based on the ideas of relative historic values, and eventually becoming formalised into the establishment through the formation of bodies such as the National

Trust:

"We have made of a great social movement a narrow and tiresome little aristocracy, working with great skill for the very rich" (C.R. Ashbee quoted in Worpole, 1991; p141)

The actions of conservation bodies such as the National Trust then eventually also became principally bound up with the preservation of country houses and the landed estates, favouring the preservation of the values of the controlling aristocracy.

Although the criteria used in definition of what national heritage is worthy of protection remain narrowly defined, the assumptions underpinning these have been translated into 'commonly held' values concerning heritage. These elitist notions of a universally recognised national heritage have become inscribed into the operating rationale of many national and local amenity bodies. The dominance of these viewpoints within many amenity bodies has been one of the main reasons for criticism of their role (Dobby, 1978), and for promoting a negative image of conservation action generally (Hewison, 1987). Publications from the conservation movement in the 1970s, concerned with the destruction of historic towns, reflected this narrow viewpoint, identifying key buildings for preservation based on values of heritage that seemed indisputable and fixed, specifically the historic worth of medieval, Tudor and Georgian townscapes (see for example Aldous, 1975; Amery and Cruickshank, 1975; Cormack, 1978).

However, the development of the conservation movement over recent years has served to question these 'traditional' values. Conservation is now not only an important redevelopment issue in the centre of recognised historic towns and cities, those with a significant pre-industrial legacy, but also in those cities whose principal growth period was during the 19th century. The inclusion of more Victorian townscape under conservation control in the 1980s served to question the relative value attached to the buildings as heritage. Conservation values, based on traditional, monolithic ideas concerning historic value have been proved inflexible, and unable to provide a justification for the increasing variety of heritage artifacts covered by conservation (Ross, 1991). While the redevelopment of historic towns generated most controversy in the discussion of conservation issues, it has been the problems of conservation in industrial towns that have provided



conservation philosophy with its greatest challenges (Tarn, 1985).

In addition, the increasingly fragmented and multi-cultural character of British society has also served to question the focus of conservation. The use of conservation as a movement to promote national identity has led to a narrowly defined conservation outlook, which has failed to consider the contribution of other cultures, particularly immigrant cultures (Corner and Harvey, 1991; Edgar, 1991; Tunbridge, 1994; Worpole, 1991). There is a need for careful consideration of heritage interpretation, and a deeper understanding of the images fostered by heritage promotion. As Tunbridge (1994; p123) notes:

"...the political implications of culturally selective identification and interpretation, conservation and marketing of the inherited built environment are profound and potentially deadly".

In many instances, official heritage reflects the culture of dominance, a particular problem in those countries dealing with post-colonial heritage (Haswell, 1990; Graham, 1994; Tunbridge, 1994). Failure to acknowledge the diversity of British cultural heritage, through the imposition of a homogeneous national identity has implications beyond the realms of conservation practice. In practice, this means that greater emphasis needs to be put on the wishes of local communities, conserving their heritage. This is more desirable than having heritage identities imposed upon them. However, this may involve consideration of the tricky issue of the conservation of a 'warts and all' heritage, and the problem of many cultures occupying the same built form (Tunbridge, 1994).

The desire to include a greater diversity of buildings among those considered historically important under local conservation control, has served to raise the question of the relative, rather than the absolute, nature of historic and art value (Riegl, 1982). The issue of townscape having a relative historical value, judged on defined criteria, rather than absolute historical value in its own right, is important to the current management of the historic townscape, particularly in urban centres, where national views of historic worth dominate, and may conflict with local views. The traditional justifications for conservation, based on relative historic worth, appear weak if it is acknowledged that what is considered worthy of promotion is not a given, but is open to interpretation and redefinition and that

increasingly there are fewer fixed cultural reference points in contemporary iconography.

These temporal and cultural biases in conservation worthiness thus have significant implications for policy development. In terms of perceived value, a disparity continues to exist between the so-called 'classical', elite heritage afforded national protection, and the increasing amount of so-called popular heritage protected only at the local level. The expression of relative value on the part of the state inevitably helps to form public attitudes about which townscapes are worthwhile and which are unimportant, and also informs the policy and expenditure process. It is therefore important to consider the degree to which set notions of historic worth operate at the local level, whether local identities are being ignored, and whether the type of historic townscape conserved at the local level has an influence on the development and operation of conservation policy.

### **Psychological and social justifications**

Another primary justification for conservation of the built environment, although with more recent origins, derives from the recognition that historic buildings play an important role in the everyday lives of ordinary people. The conservation of parts of the townscape is seen to fulfil psychological needs in society by providing orientation, placing the individual in both time and space. It was the work of Lynch (1960) that emphasised the significance of landmark buildings to peoples' understanding of, and orientation within, the urban environment, providing legibility and imagability. Prominent buildings, in particular well established ones, serve as markers in the landscape, relating the spatial and temporal aspects of the city (Lynch, 1972; Lozano, 1974; Conzen, 1975; Smith, 1975a). The importance of particular façades and individual buildings to people moving through urban environments was also highlighted by the work of Cullen (1961), many of whose ideas were later taken up by urban designers. Significantly, Lynch (1972) highlighted the complexity of the public's image of the historicity of place, questioning official motives for preservation. Lynch's work was also influential in generating increased geographical interest in the visual form of cities, and in stimulating developments in environmental psychology concerning building

perception.

At a deeper level, it is argued that the preservation of particular cultural landmarks provides an important foundation in a society's ability to identify with a particular place. In this sense it plays a role in the development of a 'sense of place' (Smith, 1974; Conzen, 1975; Relph, 1976; Lowenthal, 1985). This gives the built environment a particular educational role. The definition of this sense of place is complex, although it usually involves an historical component, drawing on the achievements of forebears in order to provide cultural security and reference points. It has been suggested that the quality and quantity of the tangible cultural heritage, expressed through the accumulated historical form of towns and cities, is one of the main determinants of the character of particular places, the 'spirit of place' or *genius loci* (Conzen, 1975). The spirit of place then forms an important component in the development of a sense of place. Townscapes that frequently change may remove the past too quickly, consequently "losing touch with heritage and becoming chaotic, ambiguous and placeless" (Ford, 1978, p253). It is evident that the recent upsurge in local conservation action has, in part, been a reaction to the perceived loss of local character resulting from the widespread introduction of Modern architectural styles into urban development in Britain in the post-war period.

The debate surrounding the extent to which the conservation of the townscape is important in the development of a sense of place has prompted increasing academic interest in issues surrounding the character of places, and the attitudes of people to these places (Hubbard, 1993). While this research has come from a diverse range of sources, Hubbard identifies two main bodies of work, one humanistic and the other behavioural. While both bodies of work seek to reveal the meanings and values which people attach to places, their methodologies and philosophies are altogether different. Humanistic approaches have a largely individual and phenomenological approach to the evaluation of qualities of place, using qualitative research methods, drawing on literature, art and other indirect sources (see for example Lowenthal, 1968; 1979; 1991). Little of this work has been directed towards a consideration of the meaning of the conserved environment in specific localities (Hubbard, 1993). Research into people's responses to environmental

settings, has been principally carried out within the behavioural strand of research. Through the use of quantitative techniques, such as questionnaires and experimental response formats drawn principally from sociology and psychology, behavioural researchers have sought to objectively measure subjective environmental values (Hubbard, 1993). However, this research into the value and need for conserved environments has been far from conclusive, and even contradictory (Hubbard, 1993). It should also be noted that this research has been based largely on small sample sizes, drawn from a limited socio-economic range.

Research into whether a desire for familiar elements within the townscape exists has pointed both to a high preference for familiar objects (Williams, 1985), and a preference for both familiar and new, unfamiliar buildings (Newby, 1992). Therefore, familiarity is viewed as neither positive nor negative, and no more than a part of a more complex notion of preference, which is also related to the visual complexity of the townscape and the amount of perceptual information it conveys (Hubbard, 1993). Significantly, behavioural research has questioned the role that historical architecture plays in peoples' appreciation of the townscape. In many studies, respondents displayed ambivalence towards to the historical authenticity of the townscape, and preservation for these reasons alone, placing importance on those parts of the townscape significant within their own personal history (Hubbard, 1993). What this research seems to suggest is that building preservation using historical criteria alone may not include those buildings valued by local inhabitants, a finding with clear implications for conservation policy. Also, this indifference to historical integrity could seem to suggest that concentration on the 'street scene' alone may then satisfy public attitudes, for example through the use of façadism and pastiche (Smith, 1975).

Ultimately, what this behavioural research demonstrates is that explanation of the psychological and social significance of historical townscapes cannot be reduced to the value of sensory inputs alone. It highlights the importance of the symbolism and meaning ascribed to particular buildings by our individual history and experience. This seems to suggest that the significance of historic townscapes operates purely on an individual, subjective level. However, it has been pointed out that meaning is not

totally unique, as it is transmitted socially, through structures of perception, cognition and action based on education and culture (Whitehand, 1991; Hubbard, 1993). Reaction to the past operates both at an individual level, through individual images and histories, and at a collective level, through shared values and experiences (Lowenthal, 1979). Therefore, the townscape must be considered important in shaping both individual and group identities, and conservation should be viewed as a means by which this socio-cultural identity is maintained. Yet, it is clear that the British system of conservation is directed primarily towards aesthetic and historical considerations, rather than psychological and social factors, resulting in a lack of protection for 'ordinary' buildings which nevertheless have a high significance in defining the sense of place.

The perceived psychological and social need for historical townscapes has been pursued in practice principally through a focus on the preservation of the image of the past, as exemplified in the façade of buildings. This approach draws together the concept of 'townscape', popularised by Cullen (1961), with the desire to preserve the spirit of place. However, the idea that the majority of the local townscape is merely to be conserved for its front image alone has been criticised for reducing the historic built environment to a stage set, where inevitable social and cultural change is covered over with a superficial image of stability (Worskett, 1982). The increasing dominance of revivalist, pastiche and façadist redevelopment styles in city centres, to achieve these aims, has called into question the desirability of conservation practices which merely seek to retain the image of the townscape rather than its broader, cultural and functional context (Larkham, 1986). This concentration on the external manifestations of the spirit of place in the façades of buildings alone tends to produce a static notion of townscape character, which ignores the fact that character is also derived from the dynamic nature of the 'living' townscape, its' uses and users.

Overall, it is evident that at present conservation practice is based on an incomplete understanding of the psychological and social significance of historical townscapes. Conservation practice is biased heavily towards the view that the social significance of the townscape is embodied merely in the

architectural façades of particular buildings, and in preserved key landmark buildings. However, research indicates that the public have a clear ambivalence towards the importance of buildings for wider art-historic reasons, and fail to see the arguments for conservation purely on these grounds. Clearly a gap exists between those buildings that planners regard as providing collective meaning, and those which the public may regard as forming a collective memory. There has been a failure on the part of conservation practitioners to democratise the conservation process, rarely soliciting the opinions of the public, which has led to a lack of understanding of the local collective meaning embodied in the townscape. Frequently this lack of local understanding has led to a failure to protect buildings considered of critical importance to the local sense of place, which has then precipitated protest action against the removal of these buildings.

### **Economic justifications**

Economic justifications for the conservation of the built environment are also relatively recent in origin. Economic arguments exist both as a justification for conservation, and also against the pursuit of conservation objectives (Falk, 1975; Dobby, 1978; Lichfield, 1988). As Dobby (1978) notes, it was the eco-crisis, highlighted by European Conservation Year in 1970 that provided part of the stimulus for the current upsurge in conservation activity generally. As the management of finite resources became an important political issue, through the rise of the environmental conservation and green movements, so the conservation of built environment resources also became increasingly politicised. Radical conservation groups emerged who contended that the property speculation boom of the 1960s had led to the demolition of many buildings that could have been economically re-used (Wright, 1975; Dobby, 1978). It was argued that many of the buildings demolished had incorporated building skills and detail that it was impossible to replicate under current economic conditions. However, it was the more mainstream economic arguments concerned with functional efficiency that dominated the conservation debate during the 1970s, being used against conservation objectives and in favour of comprehensive redevelopment schemes. These arguments stressed that conserved buildings were expensive to restore and maintain, and that they did not provide accommodation standards that met contemporary demands (Dobby, 1978).

Ultimately, the 'green' justification for conservation became less important within conservation thinking, marginalised as a result of its radical anti-development philosophy, and the rise of older conservation traditions stimulated by European Architectural Heritage Year in 1975. However, since the 1980s the focus of debate had shifted again, with conserved buildings now seen to provide economic benefits beyond merely resource reuse, as investments and as business opportunities generating funds that offset the costs of restoration and maintenance (RICS and English Heritage, 1994). This has served to blur the old lines of demarcation between development and preservation.

Increasingly, heritage and business enterprise have ceased to be in opposition, and have become linked together through the growth of what has been termed the 'heritage industry' (Hewison, 1987; Corner and Harvey, 1991; Ashworth, 1994). In recent years, many cities have sought to develop their cultural heritage following the collapse of local economies dominated by manufacturing industry. As a result, the exploitation of historical resources, and their marketing to attract new service industries and promote cultural tourism, has become a major economic activity in many cities (Harvey, 1989; Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990; Knox, 1991; Kearns and Philo, 1993). The re-evaluation of their historical legacies, both artifact and non-artifact, as important economic and cultural resources for city prosperity, has involved the conversion of these legacies into heritage commodities (Corner and Harvey, 1991; Ashworth, 1994). The conservation of the built environment has become a key element in the use and promotion of cultural heritage, with buildings used to provide an expression of the social and economic history of a city, and a framework around which to organise interpretations of this heritage (Newby, 1994).

The reformulation of conservation justifications, from purely artistic, social and educational values to commercial values, has important implications for the operation of conservation policies. The incorporation of conservation concerns with those of business has resulted in increased tension in the management of conserved environments (Worskett, 1982). Within new development, the tensions between conservation and commercial reuse have become manifest in the increasing use of façadism in commercial cores (Barrett

and Larkham, 1994). The advancement of the economic arguments of tourism or business promotion to the fore also has important implications for the selectivity of heritage used and the meeting of other conservation justifications (Hewison, 1987; Newby, 1994). These tensions between the desire for locally responsive conservation and for heritage commodities that satisfy the narrowly focused knowledge and needs of business and tourist consumers are most acutely expressed in the centre of cities, although conflict is not absent from small towns (Larkham, 1992).

The rise of commercial values within conservation can be seen to enhance the distortion of local culture, through the external orientation of the selection and interpretation of urban heritage for marketing (Newby, 1994). Conservation concerns have become increasingly split between local conservation priorities and nationally orientated political and economic interests. The identification, interpretation, and use of heritage within urban renewal policies has increasingly become a highly contested part of urban development (Tunbridge, 1987; Boyle and Hughes, 1991; Wishart, 1991). This often results in the denial of the worth of much local built heritage within redevelopment and city promotion schemes, as the definitions of historical significance lie beyond control of the local area. Therefore, whilst increasing economic opportunities for heritage reuse have served to increase the range of buildings for which conservation can be justified, control over the selection and interpretation of these buildings still resides beyond the local area.

These deficiencies are again evident in the operation of conservation policies and development control at the local level. In many instances, conservation and enhancement schemes linked to enterprise initiatives have precipitated the erosion of local identity, and have increased placelessness of the built environment. The pursuit of economically orientated conservation policies has frequently altered the character of an area, through residential and commercial gentrification (Burtenshaw et al., 1991; Jacobs, 1992; Newby, 1994). Despite this, conservation practitioners have done little to alleviate these tensions, and their primary concern for sustaining building quality and maintaining the visual environment has often led to a disregard for the cultural integrity of a building in order to preserve its external form. It



has been suggested that conservation policies should be reorientated, to put a higher value on cultural identity as an end in itself, rather than being a means to an end of economic well being (Newby, 1994). A reaffirmation of the importance of the local can be used to counter 'heritage imperialism', in which national ideas are imposed upon local heritage values. However, this involves a fundamental reorientation of planning's approach to conservation, the instruments of policy operation and the objectives and composition of decision makers (Ashworth, 1994).

## **AN URBAN MORPHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT**

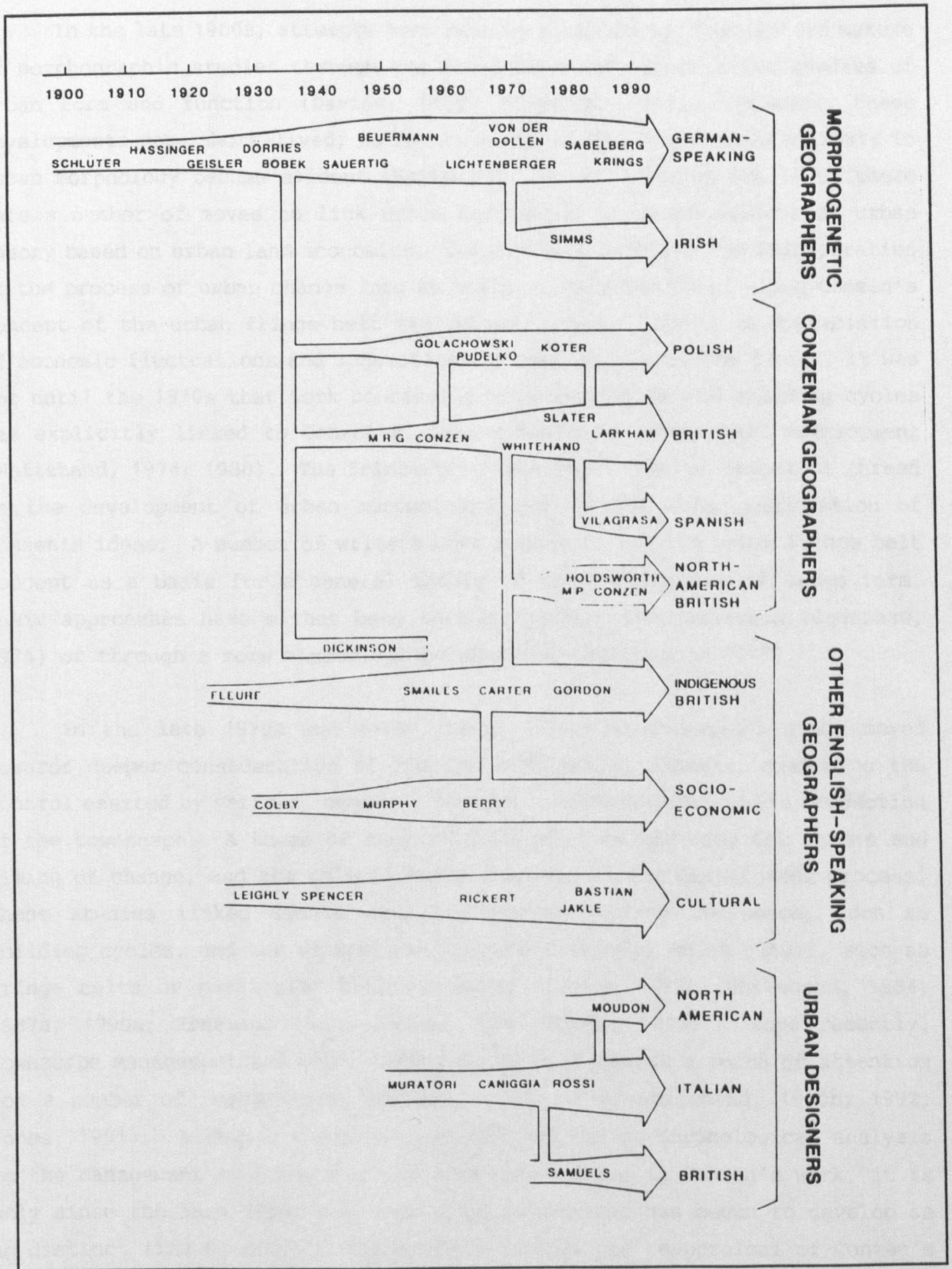
In working towards the development of a more positive and locally responsive conservation planning system, it has been suggested that detailed morphological analysis of townscape development can be utilised to provide a basis, as it "looks to the past for its guiding principle and finds it in the historic unfolding of the townscape" (Whitehand, 1983, p56). These academic proposals for the enhancement of conservation practice have a resonance with the use of detailed local survey as a basis for character appraisal and participatory plan development, advocated by groups such as Common Ground (1990). The use of detailed urban morphological study as a base for the development of townscape management and conservation was first proposed by the geographer MRG Conzen (1966; 1975). Conzen's ideas are significant as not only do his analytical techniques encompass the description of townscape form, but also they seek to articulate the dynamics of urban change that find expression in this form, and to attach meanings to those forms, both of which are critical to an assessment of character (Larkham, 1990b). However, the application of Conzen's analytical techniques to the development of planning practice, and to the development of a broader conservation philosophy, have been limited (Larkham, 1990b; 1991; 1993).

### **The development of urban morphology in Britain**

The sub-discipline of urban morphology has a long history within urban geographical inquiry, and over time has developed a number of key traditions and distinct lines of study in a number of countries (Whitehand, 1987a; Whitehand and Larkham, 1992) (figure 2.1). Urban morphology within geography

is essentially the study of urban form: an analysis of the physical and spatial characteristics of urban structure. However, a more comprehensive definition of urban morphology, one which reflects the breadth of current research, is as "the study of the physical [or built] fabric of urban form, and the processes and people shaping it" (Jones and Larkham, 1991, p55). This definition reflects the tradition of study in Britain, identified by Whitehand (1981a) as the Conzenian School, which draws heavily on the German morphogenetic tradition stemming from the late-19th century. Introduction and development of the German morphogenetic approach in Britain, considering urban forms in relation to developmental processes which created them, was undertaken by M R G Conzen who moved from Germany to Britain in 1933 (Whitehand, 1987b).

Despite this long academic lineage, urban morphology in the U.K., and Conzen's ideas in particular, have remained largely undiscussed outside the confines of historical or urban geography. The development of Conzen's key ideas in the 1960s and 1970s coincided with a declining interest in maps and landscape within an urban geography increasingly dominated by work derived from the American land-use tradition, which viewed built forms purely as containers of uses. During this period urban morphology had little impact on the development of urban geography, becoming marginalised within the sub-discipline (Carter, 1981; Whitehand, 1981a; Herbert and Thomas, 1982). Openshaw (1974, pp1-2) suggested that urban morphology was "often dismissed as self-evident and of little consequence". In Britain, urban morphology was seen as purely descriptive, and therefore lacking in both wider theoretical concepts and a critical stance. This view was based primarily on appraisal of the work of the indigenous British morphological tradition, based on the morphographic study of individual towns using broad reconnaissance surveys (see for example Smailes, 1955; Stedman, 1956). In the 1960s, Carter was almost alone among British-born urban geographers in giving prominence to the historical development of urban form (Whitehand, 1987a). Therefore, not only was Conzen's work alienated from urban geography generally by the marginalisation of morphological study, but also from the British morphographic tradition.



**Figure 2.1** Research traditions within urban morphology: a schematic genealogy, showing a sample of authors (from Whitehand and Larkham, 1992, p.3)

In the late 1960s, attempts were made to surmount the descriptive nature of morphographic studies through the development of quantitative studies of urban form and function (Davies, 1968; Johnston, 1969). However, these developments were short-lived, as the limitations of quantitative analysis in urban morphology became evident (Whitehand, 1981a). During the 1970s there were a number of moves to link urban morphology to other aspects of urban theory based on urban land economics. One of these involved the incorporation of the process of urban change into an analysis of urban form, using Conzen's concept of the urban fringe belt (Whitehand, 1981a). While an appreciation of economic fluctuations and innovation was implicit in Conzen's work, it was not until the 1970s that work concerning urban economics and building cycles was explicitly linked to Conzen's ideas concerning fringe-belt development (Whitehand, 1974; 1988). The fringe-belt idea has formed an important thread in the development of urban morphology, and in the wider recognition of Conzen's ideas. A number of writers have sought to use the urban fringe belt concept as a basis for a general theory of the development of urban form. Their approaches have either been through quantitative analysis (Openshaw, 1974) or through a more historical perspective (Whitehand, 1977).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, urban morphological study moved towards deeper consideration of the decision making process, examining the control exerted by various 'agents', 'actors', or 'managers' in the production of the townscape. A theme of many of these studies has been the nature and timing of change, and the role of various agents in the development process. These studies linked agents with the processes they influence, such as building cycles, and the elements within the townscape which result, such as fringe belts or particular building forms (Slater, 1978; Whitehand, 1984; 1987a; 1990a; Freeman, 1986; Pompa, 1988; Booth, 1989). More recently, townscape management and urban conservation have become a focus of attention for a number of researchers (Larkham, 1986; 1988; Whitehand, 1990b; 1992; Jones, 1991). Although the practical application of morphological analysis to the management of towns has for long had a place in Conzen's work, it is only since the late 1980s that townscape management has begun to develop as an distinct line of study. These moves towards the reappraisal of Conzen's townscape analysis ideas have been aided by current debates within conservation planning noted previously, calling for a more the development

structured approach to the analysis and understanding of the townscape.

Reappraisal has also been aided by the re-emergence of the urban landscape as an important subject of urban geographical enquiry. Currently, theoretical challenges and developments within urban geography have provided new opportunities to undertake different types of analysis of specific urban areas, and have allowed greater flexibility in the interpretation of processes of urbanisation (Dear, 1988; Cooke, 1990). Research has developed into the ways in which urban landscapes reflect socio-cultural and economic changes and ideologies, embodying symbolic messages and meanings, based on the examination of these landscapes as 'texts' (Harvey, 1979; 1989; Ley, 1987; Cosgrove, 1989; Domosh, 1989; Knox, 1991). Despite its development from within a different theoretical perspective, this work has parallels with Conzen's work concerned with the analysis of the townscape which he viewed as the objectivation of the 'spirit' of an urban society (Conzen, 1975). Further to this, within geography generally there has been a reconsideration of perspectives that underpinned work, such as Conzen's, in the 1960s regarding the importance of acknowledging and analysing the individual specificity of places (Dear, 1988; Massey, 1991). Research considering localities sought to question the notion that place specific analysis is by definition descriptive and internalised (Massey, 1991). Massey argues that a theoretical perspective, and an appreciation of wider processes, are not opposed to uniqueness, and that a place specific focus can move beyond description. In this respect Massey's view supports the perspective adopted by Conzen in his analyses, acknowledging that the character of an area is not part of an internalised history, but is the localised expression of both wider processes and local concerns. As Dear (1988; pp269-270) notes,

"Any narrative about landscape is necessarily an account of the reciprocal relationship between relatively long-term structural forces and the shorter-term routine practices of individual agents. Economic, political and social history is therefore time-specific in the sense that these relationships evolve at different temporal rates; it is also place-specific in that these relationships unfold in recognisable 'locales'...Any single locale is, therefore, at once a complex synthesis of objects, patterns and process..And over time, the various horizons of each locale accumulate like sediments over the patterns of the past. The locale is, therefore, a complex amalgam of past present and newly-forming patterns which coexist in the landscape"

He argues that the task for geographical enquiry is to unravel this complex locale into its constituent elements, which again reflects the underlying

axiom of much of Conzen's work considering the urban landscape, and subsequent work within this tradition.

### **The contribution of MRG Conzen to townscape study**

Through the detailed analysis of particular towns and cities, Conzen's work has provided techniques for assessing how the townscape develops, and how the processes of urban change, and their local meanings and associations, become embodied in urban form. Conzen's primary achievements have been summarised under five headings (Whitehand, 1981). These are the establishment of a framework of principles in urban morphology, the adoption for the first time in Britain of a detailed evolutionary approach to plan analysis, the identification of the individual plot as the fundamental unit on which to base plan analysis, the combination of field survey and documentary sources in analysis and their large scale cartographic expression, and lastly the conceptualization of townscape development. The empirical basis of Conzen's work is a series of minutely detailed studies of a number of small towns in Britain in the 1940s and 1950s (Whitehand, 1981; 1987b). These formed the basis of Conzen's key publications of the 1950s and 1960s, establishing his ideas concerning, and certain techniques for, the analysis and management of townscape (Conzen, 1958; 1960; 1962; 1966). Conzen's study of Whitby (1958) provided the basis for a number of his key achievements including detailed building and land-use surveys and their cartographic expression, and the use of morphological periods for classification. Following this, Conzen developed his town-plan analysis principles in his work on Alnwick (1960), a monograph that has proved to be the major contribution to urban morphology in the English language (Whitehand, 1987a). While, as a consequence of the pace of post-war urban change, his concepts are not always directly valid (Larkham, 1995b), they continue to provide a basis for conceptualising the processes of urban change.

#### Town-plan analysis techniques

The Alnwick study developed many of the key conceptual tools of town-plan analysis, principally the evolutionary approach and the use of the plot as the fundamental unit of analysis. The study also conceptualised the

development and transformation of the town plan, through the development of the concepts of the fringe belt and the burgage cycle. Further to this, the study recognised a tripartite division of the townscape into town plan, building forms and land use, a division that has since become widely accepted (Whitehand, 1981). Also, in the analysis of Alnwick's town plan, Conzen introduced the idea that the town plan could be subdivided into streets, and their arrangement in a system, plots, and their combination into blocks, and buildings, or block plans. This has become a further standard way of reducing the complexity of the plan for analytical purposes (Whitehand, 1981).

The concepts and techniques of town-plan analysis contained within the Alnwick study have been the most extended and developed aspect of Conzen's work. Nevertheless, their adoption has been slow considering the conceptual richness and analytical depth of Conzen's work (Whitehand, 1987a). Most of the development of town plan analysis in Britain within the Conzenian tradition has been dependent on a small number of historians and historical geographers considering medieval town-plan development, particularly the work of Slater (1981; 1982; 1985; 1986; 1990). Recent research has sought to develop the methods and concepts of town-plan analysis further, combining the ideas of Conzenian analysis with information and concepts from archaeology and historical analysis (Baker et al, 1992; Baker and Slater, 1992). However, the techniques of plan analysis and burgage cycle concept have seldom been extended beyond the reconstruction of medieval town plans to a consideration of wider plot cycles. An exception to this is work carried out in Łódź, Poland, a planned 19th century residential-industrial area (Koter and Wiktorowska, 1976; Koter, 1990).

The application of plan-analysis ideas to large cities has therefore been limited. No major study has been carried out building on Conzen's work in Newcastle (1962), where he extended his Alnwick research, demonstrating the application of plan analysis to a complex urban area. The Newcastle study expanded the terminology of plan-analysis for a city centre containing a greater degree of plan transformation. In the analysis of the development and transformation of the street system, the Newcastle study identifies four key street types, medieval streets, streets straightened or widened, new streets (not breakthrough) and breakthrough streets (Conzen, 1978). Medieval streets

were those streets forming old routeways through the settlement and those associated with medieval town expansion and burgage plots. The other three street types are linked to processes of urban expansion and redevelopment, occurring from the 18th century onwards. New streets are those associated with urban expansion, usually residential, on the edge of the built-up area. Straightened or widened streets and breakthrough streets, found primarily within the core, were linked to improvement of the medieval street legacy, associated with increasing municipal control and the upgrading of commercial centres (Conzen, 1978). While widening and straightening of streets occurred in many urban areas, the development of breakthrough streets is less common, given the need for large capital funds and strong government commitment. This alteration of the street system has continued in the post-war period, with the development of local authority planning and compulsory purchase powers (Cherry, 1988).

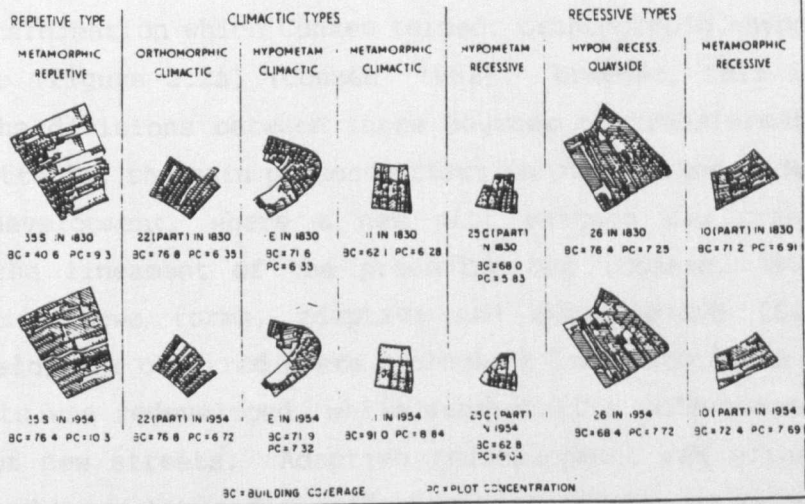
Conzen also explored the key processes of plot transformation in Newcastle's city centre area, identified by him as building repletion, plot metamorphosis and commercial redevelopment. He suggested that for large cities, such as Newcastle, development was often slow and additive until the 18th century, becoming accelerated and transformative with the onset of the industrial revolution (Conzen, 1962). Conzen viewed this additive process of building repletion as cyclical, showing in succession repletive, climax and recessive phases (figure 2.2a), terminating in the demolition of buildings and the onset of a temporary phase of urban fallow (Conzen, 1962). Building repletion was measured in terms of building coverage; within most regional capitals, the building coverage of plots in the centre has reached its climax phase with 70-100% coverage. However, Conzen points out that in large centres, as the climax phase was reached, building repletion occurred both horizontally and vertically, with the development of a taller building on the plot. This type of change was particularly evident in the immediate post-war period.

Conzen observed that, in Newcastle, development of the process of horizontal and vertical repletion led to the increasing transformation of the plot pattern. This occurred through the truncation or absorption of plot tails or the amalgamation of plots, where a number of smaller plots are



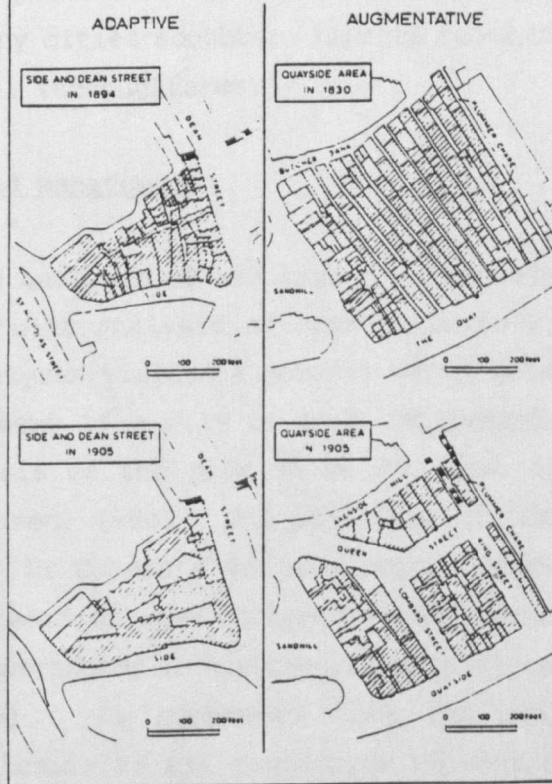
A

## TYPES OF RESIDUAL BURGAGE COMPLEXES IN NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE



B

## COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL NEWCASTLE



**Figure 2.2** Processes of plot transformation in central Newcastle (Conzen, 1962; reprinted in Whitehand, 1981, p.47 and p.48)

combined for redevelopment at an increased scale. Plot metamorphosis, in its more advanced stages, was primarily associated with development in larger cities such as Newcastle, as it required stronger economic impulses. It increasingly obliterates the original plot pattern through stages of increasing transformation which Conzen termed, orthomorphic, hypometamorphic and metamorphic (figure 2.2a) (Conzen, 1962). However, this is a complex concept, and the divisions between these degrees of transformation are far from clear. Latterly, the main process affecting plot change in Newcastle was commercial redevelopment, where a new plot pattern was created without reference to the lineament of the preceding one (Conzen, 1962). Conzen divided this into two forms, adaptive and augmentative (figure 2.2b). Adaptive redevelopment occurred where a block of land within the framework of existing streets was redeveloped, while augmentative redevelopment involved the creation of new streets. Adaptive redevelopment was either a radical change or was achieved by gradual and piecemeal change, an extension of the metamorphic phase of plot transformation (Conzen, 1962). Conzen acknowledged that the division between these two processes was somewhat artificial. Augmentative redevelopment was often associated with 19th century road improvements, when many cities sought to improve connections across cities or develop new commercial thoroughfares.

### Townscape analysis and management

For Conzen, the analysis of the town plan formed one part of a trilogy of analyses together with analysis of both building form and land use. In combination these analyses yielded a general morphogenetic interpretation of the form and development of a city or town (Whitehand, 1981). However, he considered the analysis of the plan to be the most important part of this overall analysis (Conzen, 1960). The appraisal of the townscape, using the terminology outlined in Conzen's various papers, constitutes the starting point for the development of what Conzen termed 'townscape management'. The term management was introduced in his general morphogenetic studies of smaller towns (Conzen, 1966). He suggested that the principles of townscape management were applicable to all townscapes whether ancient or modern, but were particularly appropriate to those townscapes for which conservation was a priority (Conzen, 1975). As has been noted, the analytical depth needed to

underpin townscape management, proposed by Conzen, is often lacking in current British conservation activities.

Management of the townscape, for Conzen, involved the maintenance of historicity, and concern for the quality of new development and its relation with the existing and traditional morphology. A key basis for townscape management is an understanding of the historicity of the townscape. Historicity, as described by Conzen, is the tangible form of the accumulated experiences of a society represented in the quality and complexity of a townscape (Conzen, 1975). Historicity, embodied in the townscape, derives from a combination of the town plan, building fabric and land utilisation. These elements are affected by differing rates of change over time, with land utilisation the least resistant and the town plan the most resistant, forming the 'morphological frame' (Conzen, 1960, p16). The extent to which the morphological frame has resisted removal or extensive modification contributes to the area's historicity. Representation in the plan and built fabric of features from several morphological periods, as well as the mixture and concentration of particular forms, and the harmonization of these elements in the modern townscape, also contributes to historicity (Conzen, 1988). Using these measures, city centres then become sites of great historical and morphological significance (Whitehand, 1983). Through mapping of town plan, building fabric and land utilisation, Conzen (1975; 1988) developed the concept of identifying a hierarchy of 'morphological regions' through which to interpret historicity, by differentiating between areas of particular morphological character. By superimposing these maps of the elements of historicity it is possible to construct morphological regions of distinct plan type, building type and land utilisation, identifying areas of particular historicity or character (Conzen, 1975; 1988).

By mapping the urban landscape, and identifying elements that characterise the built form and the cultural form, Conzen has devised a basis for townscape management, and in practical terms, a method for conservation area delimitation. This system of townscape management provides potential ideas for the development of conservation planning, as it suggests how regions can be developed that respect the *genius loci* of an area. The use of morphological regions has the potential to provide the basis for specific

conservation policies and areas of operation, respecting more accurately the historicity of the urban area. Recent planning appeal cases have highlighted the fact that the majority of urban conservation areas comprise several sub-areas, where the historic development of a town has produced a series of buildings and streets which reflect different historical and architectural eras (Millichap, 1993). Millichap goes on to suggest that the adoption of a conservation-area-unit to identify areas of different character within heterogeneous conservation areas would be the most appropriate focus for policy. This concept has clear parallels with Conzen's concept of a hierarchy of morphological regions as a basis for conservation.

However, Conzen's ideas concerning the methods of townscape analysis and the delimitation of regions remain elusive, and confined to his work concerning Ludlow. Also, the practical application of this work to conservation planning has yet to be demonstrated, with few of the concepts communicated to planning practice (Larkham, 1991). The absence of methodological clarity, and lack of published guidelines, have been a critical barrier to widespread adoption of Conzen's ideas in planning practice, as has the time-consuming nature of townscape analysis (Samuels, 1985; Larkham, 1990b; Jones, 1991). Conzen's study of Ludlow (1966, 1988) was the result of extensive fieldwork, which undoubtedly exceeds the available resources of most planning authorities. The adoption of Conzen's ideas by planners and acceptance by the public will depend on clarifying the methods of field research and townscape analysis used, and its application to other townscapes beyond Ludlow.

## **CONCLUSION**

Over the past 30 years conservation of the built environment has become an important consideration in urban development. It has developed as a result of a growing popular engagement with heritage by the public, and also as a result of developments within the built environment professions. However, this increase in the scope of conservation has not been accompanied by a deeper consideration of the content of, and motivations behind, conservation policies. Increasingly, the dominant conservation ethic has been challenged by the changing nature of conservation in Britain. Principally, this has

occurred due to the widening definition of buildings considered of architectural or historic importance, which has questioned the relative values of art-historic and national cultural worth that have underpinned protection of the built environment. This has prompted the criticism that conservation has failed to protect townscapes of local importance, defined as important in psychological and social terms. Also, the increasing reuse of historic artifacts within new developments, as a marketing tool and economic generator, has served to question old assumptions concerning the division between redevelopment and conservation. Awareness and consideration of these wider issues has been particularly slow to filter into the formal conservation process, represented by local and national planning bodies. As Worskett (1982) suggests, conservation needs to develop a wider ethic, aware of the constraints and opportunities posed by conservation, and of issues surrounding the interpretation and future use of conserved townscape. In the long term, the challenges to the justifications for conservation brought about by the widening appreciation and use of heritage must be addressed. However, in the short term, the main priority is the appraisal of the operation of conservation practice.

Within the planning system, as conservation has become increasingly formalised within the development control process, the increasing tensions between conservation justifications and practice have become evident. Despite the development of conservation powers nationally, and the good intentions of the LPAs, conservation strategies remain relatively unsubstantial, based on vague generalisations or highly specific case studies. In particular, there has been an absence of moves towards the development of a general theory of townscape management, or philosophy of conservation planning. Consideration of the problems of conservation practice has focused principally on the operation of the conservation area control system, as this has become the primary vehicle for local conservation activity, covering a wide variety of urban areas and buildings. Criticism has focused both on the increasing proliferation of areas, based on concern that this debases the concept, and on the effectiveness of area designation in protecting and enhancing local character.

There are two issues of primary importance in determining the

effectiveness of conservation area control. Firstly, an important issue is the degree of character erosion occurring within an area as a result of development, including minor changes, commercial gentrification, and the use of façadism and pastiche in new buildings. Character erosion is frequently either evidence of a failure by the LPA to adequately monitor change within a conservation area and to understand the character of an area, or evidence of deficiencies in character assessments, or both. The second key issue is the degree to which national conservation values dominate over local concerns in conservation area decisions. This is evident in local protest concerning redevelopment decisions and the loss of 'ordinary' buildings in conservation areas, where national definitions of historic worth over-ride local justifications based on social and psychological importance in the development of a sense of place. Both of these issues are most acutely expressed within conservation areas that cover the centres of large, functionally dynamic cities, where outside interests most frequently come into conflict with local concerns. However, the exact nature and extent of these problems both within and between particular city centre conservation areas is far from clear.

These issues cannot be assessed without an understanding of the character of the conservation areas in question. The primary reason for inadequacies in the effectiveness of conservation area control, has been the failure of the LPA to adequately define local character, despite its centrality to the conservation area concept. It has been noted that within conservation, consideration of character often only involves the assessment of art-historic value, which fails to articulate the deeper, local historical meaning of the townscape. It has been argued that for local conservation aims to be applied with greater rigour, the definition of character needs to be based more clearly on a deeper local historical knowledge. It has been suggested that the techniques of morphological study developed by MRG Conzen are useful in developing a deeper analysis of area character, as they not only seek to analyze urban form, but also consider the expression of urban change related to history, social, and cultural developments represented in this form. Morphological study before area designation took place would produce conservation areas which more clearly reflect the historicity of the townscape, and the sense of place nurtured by the inhabitants.

It has been suggested that conservation can be used to provide the policy nucleus for the development of this reformulated planning, through the advancement of a more informed heritage knowledge and a more participatory system (Goodchild, 1990). Education and participation form cornerstones of the development of new approaches in planning and conservation, which could make better use of the genuine enthusiasm for local historical knowledge that exists (Faulkner, 1978). The development of true participation structures is critical to this reformulation of planning, acknowledging that local people have the capacity to choose, criticise and reject development proposals (Goodchild, 1990). It should be remembered that while techniques can be developed to enhance the operation of conservation at the local level, the promotion of local participation and sensitivity requires a more fundamental restructuring of the power relationships between national and local within the planning process. Only then can a more democratised and flexible conservation process develop, which can play a key role within a locally responsive planning system that encourages debate, and that seeks to sustain and enhance the environment and the particularity of places (Healey, 1989; Hague, 1991).

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<sup>1</sup> (note from p.18) Permitted development within conservation areas of special merit can be controlled by the issuing of an Article 4 direction. This enables a specified area to be excluded from enjoying certain permitted development rights so that activities can be controlled that normally fall outside development control powers, such as the colour of external paintwork. The number of Article 4 conservation areas designated is small as their designation is seen, particularly by central government, to impose an unacceptable extra legislative burden on both commercial applicants and homeowners (Coupe, 1991).

## **CHAPTER THREE: STUDY AREAS AND SOURCES**

In the preceding chapter one of the points argued was that detailed study of the development control system formed the basis of consideration of conservation issues operating in the central areas of cities, as it is through this system that changes to the built environment are negotiated and increasingly through which conservation policies are applied. This chapter firstly considers the selection of the study areas, and the period chosen for study, in order to address conservation issues. Secondly, it considers the use of development control data in the investigation of development pressure on these selected townscapes, and in the study of the operation of the local conservation planning process.

### **CHOICE OF STUDY AREAS**

Conservation now influences landscapes ranging from central city areas to residential suburbs and industrial areas. The choice of the type of conserved townscape to study is therefore an important aspect of research into the operation of conservation policy. Larkham (1986) identifies five main types of urban conservation area. These are the urban centre, the old village nucleus, suburban and planned housing, conservation areas based around a specific feature and industrial conservation areas. While, as Larkham notes, the majority of academic attention has been directed towards conservation in urban centres, it is clear from the discussion in the preceding chapter that study of conservation and development control in such areas continues to offer considerable scope for the examination of conservation issues and townscape management policies.

In deciding to focus on urban centres, the second issue to be addressed in the selection of study areas is the type of urban area to be studied. Conservation has been traditionally associated in the minds of many people with 'historic towns', and the amount of literature concerning conservation in the 'recognised' historic towns in Britain, such as York, Chester and Bath is extensive (Whitehand and Larkham, 1989; Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995). There is also a significant body of research relating to conservation in small towns, as frequently within these settlements a considerable amount of the



pre-industrial townscape survives (Larkham, 1991). However, while the 'recognised' historic towns have been the focus of conservation research, by virtue of the controversy generated by proposed changes to their townscapes, it is the growth towns of the industrial era that now face considerable conservation challenges (Tarn, 1985). Many of the central conservation areas of these industrial cities cover areas which retain a broader economic base than the tourist-based economies characterising the centres of so-called 'historic gem' towns (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990). Here, fabric is not the prime generator of wealth and these areas thus experience great pressures for change. Therefore, it is in these areas that the operation of conservation policies faces its stiffest challenge, as these cities attempt to practice conservation under very different conditions to those of the historic towns.

It was therefore decided to focus on conservation in the centre of large cities, including those that were not solely identified as historic gems, yet which had had conservation areas covering major parts of the city centre since the beginning of legislative development. It was also decided not to focus on 'recognised' historic towns, as the research aims to widen the applicability of the use of Conzenian townscape management ideas from their use in small historic towns (Conzen, 1966; 1988) to other urban areas.

The number of cities that could be chosen for comparative study was limited by the size of the conservation areas within large urban centres, which often contain several streets and a large number of buildings, and therefore exhibit considerable pressure for redevelopment and change. Two cities were therefore selected for study. There is a long history of dual city centre studies within urban morphology (Whitehand 1984; Freeman, 1986), as this provides both the basis for comparison, yet also the opportunity for in depth analysis of issues. Where urban morphological research into residential areas using development control records has been carried out, more study areas have been used, owing to the lower number of applications in these areas (Larkham, 1986; Jones, 1991). The two study cities were carefully selected to be fairly comparable in size and function, and to both have a well established conservation area covering the central core of the city. It was felt that both cities should both contain a mix of office and retail functions, and be cities with a significant regional economic role, not reliant on townscape-based tourism as a primary component of the economy.

While the cities were matched to be similar for certain characteristics, it was decided to compare conservation in a city with townscape dating predominantly from the 19th century, with one with a wider historical range of buildings. It is an established research option to test the application of one policy (e.g. conservation) to two different areas:

"..which may at least throw useful light on **characteristics** of the two areas, and possibly how these interact with policy."  
(Preece 1990; p63)

A different fabric should generate different strategies for conservation management. It was felt that research would benefit from drawing general conclusions on conservation from comparative study, highlighting a number of issues, and stressing the importance of townscape to the operation of conservation policy.

Within the recognised large 19th century English industrial cities, the most well known are, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Birmingham. The city of Birmingham (figure 3.1) was chosen, as it satisfied the requirement of having an early designated conservation area covering a large part of the office and retail core. The other cities did not have such well defined single conservation areas over their cores. While Birmingham has been the subject of previous detailed urban morphological studies, this has been in the context of residential areas rather than the city centre (Pompa, 1988; Jones, 1991). The choice of another city to study to compare with Birmingham was wider. Within urban morphology, comparative work has often sought to examine cities and towns in different regional areas. This research has revealed important differences in development pressures and policy operation in both city centre environments (Whitehand, 1984; Freeman, 1986) and residential areas (Jones, 1991). To this end, Bristol a city of medieval origin in the south-west of England, was chosen as the city for study (figure 3.1). In the context of the current research, Bristol satisfied the criterion of having a central conservation area designated from the early stages of conservation area control in Britain. Also, study of Bristol links with a number of recent studies using development control data. Within urban morphology, Horn (1992) has studied residential development in Bristol Docks in comparison to other dockland developments in London and Cardiff. Within planning research, Punter (1990) has studied office redevelopment and aesthetic control in post-war Bristol.

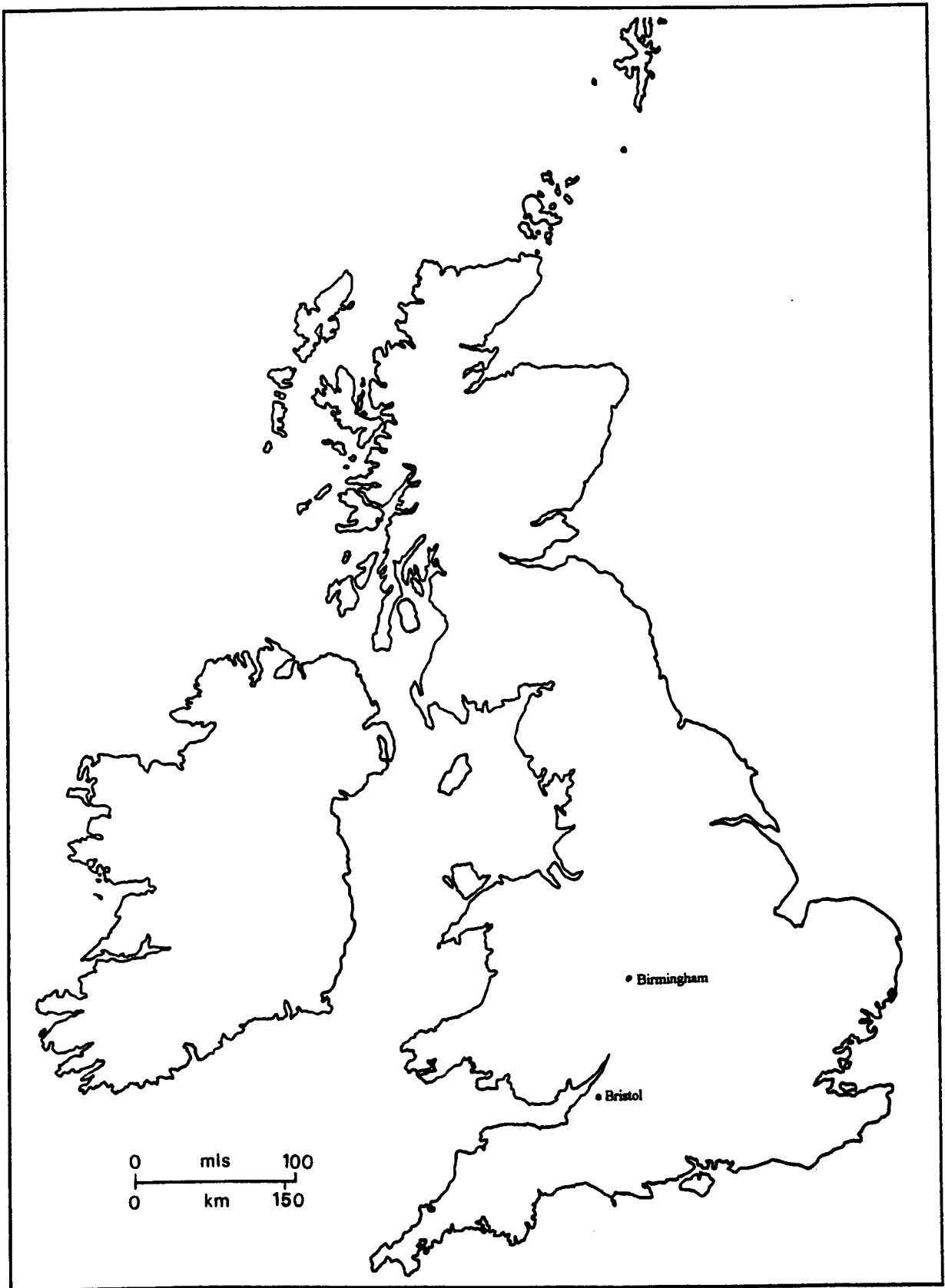


Figure 3.1 : Location of Birmingham and Bristol

While in terms of total population the study cities are not of the same size, with Birmingham having a population of 935,000 and Bristol a population of 370,000 (OPCS, 1992), the centres of the two cities are of fairly similar extent. The difference between the historical background of the two cities is illustrated by the contrast in the number of listed buildings in each city, with around 1800 in Birmingham (Birmingham CC, 1992) and around 3600 in Bristol (Bristol CC, 1989), reflecting the larger legacy of pre-industrial buildings in Bristol. It is not suggested that the two cities chosen, and the management occurring within them, are representative of all comparable city centres. However, the two cities selected were carefully chosen to be sufficiently representative in order to illustrate some of the significant issues occurring within city core conservation areas. As Preece (1990; p63) states:

"In fact, one or two locations picked at random are likely to be less representative than one or two which have been carefully matched to be average for certain known characteristics."

Having decided on the cities to be studied, the areas within which to examine conservation problems were finalized. It was felt that the LPA designated conservation areas, covering the cores of the two cities should be the areal focus of study. In using an area defined by the planning authority for study, the problem of defining an area for study in the city centre has been overcome. In the past this has been achieved in a number of ways, such as percentage of commercial floorspace, building height, and land use. Whitehand (1984) uses an area defined by main area of commercial land use, excluding outlying office and ribbon shopping developments to define the central area. Freeman (1986) also uses this approach to define the centre, and notes the problem of arbitrary definition of an area for study in the city core. Concentration on a LPA designated area also helps to facilitate the retrieval of planning records for study, as it is easy to relate designated conservation areas boundaries to application numbers marked on LPA application plotting sheets (Larkham, 1986).

The merits and problems of selecting designated conservation areas or regions defined by other criteria, to study and compare management policies, have been discussed by Larkham (1986). He notes that ideally, analysis should be based on the examination of particular townscape regions, delimited using Conzenian techniques of townscape analysis. However, in the context of the present study, townscape regions are being defined to assess the character of areas already designated, rather than to define an area for study. The operation of stated conservation policies and the weaknesses of conservation



area designation are key objects of scrutiny. Given the arbitrary nature of conservation area designation (Gamston, 1975; Larkham, 1986), the selection of a designated area, followed by the delimitation of townscape regions, should illuminate the issue of designation, leading to further discussion of policy operation in areas of differing control.

Both cities have designated conservation areas covering the city core. These are the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area in Birmingham (figure 3.2), and the City and Queen Square Conservation Area in Bristol (figure 3.3). The actual areas being studied are those areas inside the boundaries of each of the conservation areas defined by their respective LPAs at the end of the study period. In the case of the Colmore Row Area, this was different from that at the start of the study (figure 3.2). Changes in this conservation boundary over time may serve to illustrate variation in policy between designated and non-designated areas. The main central conservation areas being studied are of similar size, Bristol's being slightly larger as it includes more open space. In their functional character, both areas cover principal office areas and civic areas, although the Bristol area differs notably from that of Birmingham in that it has no major shopping component. The areas also share a similar time of designation, with the Colmore Row Area being designated in 1971, and the City and Queen Square Area in 1972. In summary, while both areas share some characteristics, the historical development, built fabric and functional composition of the two areas are different, which provides important comparative insights when considering conservation issues.

#### **PERIOD OF STUDY**

The time period chosen for this study was 20 years, from 1970 to 1989. As the focus of study is the operation of conservation policy, the time period did not need to go back beyond the designation of the conservation areas. A time span of around twenty years has been used before in urban morphological studies of conservation areas (Larkham, 1986). Previous urban morphological and planning studies have used longer time spans, where less information has been collected from building plans or development control records (Whitehand, 1984; Freeman, 1986), where the areas under consideration were residential (Pompa, 1988; Jones, 1991), or where only one area was considered (Punter, 1990). In the present study, the time period needed to be the same in the two cities for comparative purposes. It was therefore necessary to cover the year of 1971, the year of earliest area designation (the Colmore Row Conservation Area).



Figure 3.2 : Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area, Birmingham: area boundary. (redrawn from O.S. 1:1250)

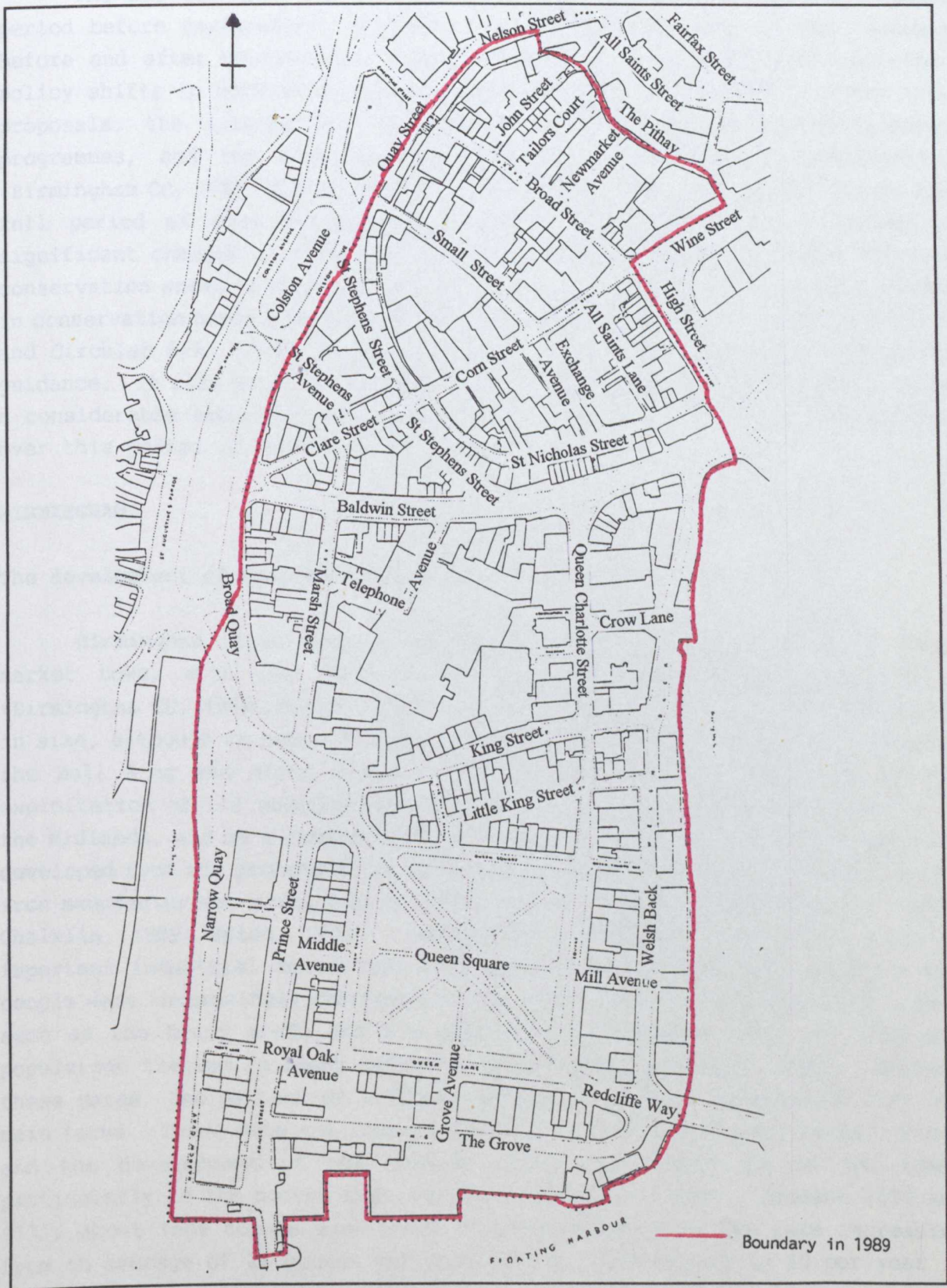


Figure 3.3 : City and Queen Square Conservation Area, Bristol: area boundary. (redrawn from O.S. 1:1250)

The cut off date was finally chosen to be 1970, to include a short period before designation, although the intention was not to show changes before and after designation. This date marks the beginning of important policy shifts in both study cities, including the abandonment of major road proposals, the scaling down of comprehensive central area redevelopment programmes, and the move towards a greater commitment to conservation (Birmingham CC, 1989; Punter, 1990). The period chosen, therefore, covers the full period of area designation to 1989, and incorporates a number of significant changes in planning legislation and guidance that have affected conservation areas, including the 1972 Act granting demolition control powers in conservation areas, Circular 22/80 (DoE, 1980) concerning aesthetic control and Circular 8/87 (DoE, 1987a) containing listed building and conservation guidance. It also provides a short enough time period to allow collection of a considerable amount of planning file data from the planning applications over this period in these central areas.

## **BIRMINGHAM**

### **The development of central Birmingham**

Birmingham first came to prominence in the 12th century as a small market town, with its first market charter being granted around 1166 (Birmingham CC, 1989; Upton, 1993). By the 15th century, the town had grown in size, although it remained fairly concentrated around its early nucleus in the Bull Ring and along Digbeth and Deritend. Growth was based on the exploitation of its geographical position as an important trading centre in the Midlands, and as a commercial centre for south Staffordshire. Industries developed from the processing of the products traded, most notably tanning and iron manufacturers, particularly smiths and nail makers (Birmingham CC, 1989; Chalklin, 1989; Upton, 1993). Birmingham's prosperity and position as an important industrial centre was well established by the 18th century, and people were increasingly attracted to the town to work in the expanding trades such as the brass trade and gun manufacture. Between 1671 and 1720 the population trebled to reach approximately 11 500 (Chalklin, 1989). Between these dates, the pattern of building expansion to meet these needs took two main forms. These were the intensification of plot use around the Bull Ring, and the development of new housing along main roads out of the town, particularly to the north, west and east (Chalklin, 1989). Between 1670 and 1731, about 1500 houses were built in Birmingham, with the rate increasing from an average of 24 houses per year in the 17th century to 50 per year in the 18th century (Chalklin, 1989).



The growth of the middle and artisan classes in the 18th century, and pressures from the expanding town, prompted many of the large landowners holding property on the edge of the town to begin selling off land for building. The building of the fashionable wealthier class developments of Priory Square and Temple Street, near to the new church of St Philips, at the beginning of the 18th century symbolised the first great burst of house building on the edge of the town (Chalklin, 1989; Upton, 1993). The increasing prosperity of Birmingham, and the emergence of a new middle class, was also reflected in the growth of new functions, including theatres, printers and some specialist shops (Chalklin, 1974), and in infrastructure improvements initiated by street commissioners (Large, 1984).

Between 1700 and 1750 the population of Birmingham at least trebled, if not quadrupled, to almost 24,000 in 1750, and the town established itself as the principal trading centre of the region, and as a centre for specialist metal manufacture (Chalklin, 1974). In the latter half of the 18th century, the town expanded northwards and westwards, where there was better drained land, and the large estates in these areas began to be divided into building plots and leased. Between 1740 and 1780, 5000 houses were built, with half of this development being on two estates (Chalklin, 1974). The most prominent of these was the Colmore Estate, to the north of St Philips church and close to the new canal basin, developed from the 1750s onwards (Chalklin, 1974). The other was the Gooch Estate, to the south and west of the town, formerly the demesnes of the manor of Birmingham (Chalklin, 1974). The first phase of development consisted of town houses, with the grandest being along Colmore Row. However, on both estates the majority of the housing was in the form of small town houses, with tenements and workshops, particularly at the rear of plots. Both areas became developed with densely populated streets of houses and workshops, criss-crossed with passages and alleys (Birmingham CC, 1989). By 1801, the population of Birmingham had grown to 69,400 (Chalklin, 1974).

Birmingham's prosperity increased rapidly during the manufacturing boom of the mid-19th century, providing the economic basis for major redevelopment in the central area. In particular, the development of the railways and the building of two major stations provided a stimulus to redevelopment. Also, the decentralisation of wealthy residents to new suburbs on the edge of the town in the 19th century, and changes to Birmingham's industrial structure, with the move from small workshops in the centre of town to large factories on the outskirts, provided the opportunity for the commercial expansion of the core. From the 1850s onwards, with the falling in of the 100 year leases on the Colmore and Gooch Estates, redevelopment took place, with the demolition of the Georgian residential townscape and its replacement with Victorian

commercial buildings. The redevelopment of this area continued throughout the latter half of the 19th century, resulting in a wide range of Victorian architectural styles in the core. Gradually, residential use of the core declined, and the area became solely devoted to commercial functions.

The other impetus to this redevelopment was the rise of municipal local government in the 19th century, specifically associated with the 'civic gospel' of J. Chamberlain, mayor from 1873-1876 (Cherry, 1988; Birmingham CC, 1989; Upton, 1993). The Borough Council began improving the centre from 1838 onwards, following the municipal charter of that year. The Council's role was extended following the passing of the Birmingham Improvement Act in 1851, which led to the setting up of the Public works committee in 1852 to oversee improvements. A key priority in the late-19th century was the removal of slum housing from the core, which was principally achieved through major commercial and civic improvement schemes, such as New Street Station, the cutting of Corporation Street and John Bright Street and the development of new civic buildings such as the Council House (Birmingham CC, 1989; Upton, 1993). By the time Birmingham became a city in 1889, the majority of the pre-19th century buildings had been demolished, and many of the present characteristics of the core had been established, principally its street pattern and distinctive areas of activity. These are shopping around New Street, Corporation Street and High Street, business and professional commercial functions around Colmore Row, Waterloo Street, Temple Row and Newhall Street, and the civic area around Victoria Square and Chamberlain Square.

In the post-war period, the city centre of Birmingham underwent another period of intensive redevelopment and radical transformation. In the immediate post-war period, the planning philosophy was one of complete reconstruction of the infrastructure of the core, based on traffic priority, short building life and comprehensive redevelopment, under the direction of H. Manzoni (Chief Planner, 1935-1963) (Birmingham CC, 1989). One of the first objectives was to encourage the redevelopment of war damaged city centre sites and increase the prosperity of the shopping and commercial areas. This stance permitted a significant amount of office and retail development by property companies and pension funds in the core, significantly transforming the townscape. In addition to the rebuilding of bomb damaged properties, the other main priority in the post-war replanning of Birmingham was the alleviation of traffic problems. The idea of building an 'inner loop' around the city centre had been first suggested in 1917. The scheme put forward in 1943, which became the Inner Ring Road, was based on this earlier scheme (Birmingham CC, 1989). A number of streets were to be widened, and properties demolished, to create a road based on a compromise between traffic needs and

amenity.

The construction of the Inner Ring Road had a profound effect on the city centre. Its construction provided benefits in the form of reduced traffic congestion in relation to other major cities and the chance to clear and replace old and dilapidated parts of the outer city centre. However, its many critics argued that this had only been achieved at great environmental cost. By the time it was completed in 1971, the Inner Ring Road scheme had become part of a wider debate concerning the lack of attention being paid to history, aesthetics and people in the redevelopment of Birmingham that had begun with criticisms of the redevelopment of the Bull Ring in the late 1960s (Birmingham CC, 1989). The end product of replanning and commercial redevelopment in the late 1960s was for many people: "an efficiently functional city centre in which design and environmental aspects took a low priority" (Birmingham CC, 1989 p96). These criticisms, allied to concern about the economic well being and attractiveness of the main shopping and business areas in the late 1960s served to precipitate a re-examination of planning objectives in the core.

#### **Conservation in central Birmingham; the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area**

"Birmingham has not been known for its historic and environmental qualities, either by outsiders or local people. Most often it is noted for its industry, vigour and change." (Birmingham CC, 1986)

Throughout the 1960s, increasing concern had been voiced about the number of Victorian buildings of historical or architectural interest that were being demolished by the city for comprehensive redevelopment schemes. However, as the result of many significant losses in the mid-1960s, the pendulum of public opinion began to swing towards conservation and against large scale demolition at the end of the 1960s. In 1969, following the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, Birmingham designated its first conservation areas and set up a Conservation Areas Advisory Committee (CAAC). Initially, conservation effort was directed towards outlying village centres that had been swallowed up in the expansion of Birmingham, rather than the city centre where redevelopment was still championed by the LPA. However, in 1971 two areas in the core were designated; the St Paul's Square Conservation Area and the larger Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area. The Colmore Row Conservation Area was designated to protect the Victorian commercial legacy which was growing in architectural importance, and control the future scale

of development in the area (Birmingham CC, 1970).

The designation of the Colmore Row conservation area was in part a response to increasing public and voluntary society agitation for the conservation of more of Birmingham's Victorian built heritage in the early 1970s. This was evident in a number of high profile battles to save prominent buildings in the core such as Galloways Corner, the Library, the Midland Institute, Queens College Chambers, and the Post Office (Birmingham CC, 1989). The designation of the Colmore Row area indicated an important break with past policy for the area, and was firmly linked to the abandoning of the Colmore Row widening proposals, in 1970, and the statutory listing of many more of the centre's buildings in 1970 and 1974 (Birmingham CC, 1989; Hargreaves, pers. comm.). The listing of many more buildings in the centre, indicated the first real 'official' appreciation of the Victorian architecture in the Colmore Row area; previously the only structures that had been listed were St. Philips Cathedral, the Council House, Midland Bank - Waterloo Street, and the Town Hall.

These changes to planning philosophy in Birmingham led to a review of the 1960s Development Plan, stressing greater concern for the built environment in the centre (Birmingham CC, 1989). The new emphasis on rehabilitation of buildings in the conservation area was indicated by the council's promotion of the refurbishment of buildings it owned in Waterloo Street, retaining a large proportion of the 1830s structures, and the start of a pedestrianisation plan in Union Street, Cherry Street, and Temple Row in 1972. However the development of a more comprehensive conservation control policy in the core was resisted in the 1970s, with the planning department wary of pushing development away from any part of the economically depressed Birmingham region by the imposition of a rigid control framework. This led to a planned submission for Article 4 designation of the Colmore Row conservation area being dropped in 1974.

While a change in the planning climate could be perceived in the core in the early 1970s, these ideas had yet to be expressed in formal policy documentation. By the mid-1970s this situation prompted one councillor to call for a halt to redevelopment until a centre plan had been developed

(Birmingham CC, 1989). The stagnation in the commercial property market in the late-1970s provided the planning department, which replaced the Department of Public Works in 1974, with the opportunity to reassess planning priorities for the centre of Birmingham. The draft Central Area District Plan: Environment Strategy (Birmingham CC, 1980) was the first substantial document to note the increasing importance of conservation of the built environment, stressing the importance of promoting areas of character within the core. This document formed the basis of the environment policies contained in the Central Area Local Plan (CALP) which was approved in 1984. The CALP provided the first small scale plan for the centre, identifying important areas within it and providing more indication of the style of development preferred in these areas, although this remained mainly as outline suggestions and general conservation aims (Birmingham CC, 1984). The ideas concerning the enhancement of the distinctive character of parts of the core eventually became the Quarters Strategy which appeared in the City Centre Strategy (Birmingham CC, 1987a).

Significantly, the Central Area Local Plan proposed the extension of the Colmore Row Conservation Area to include more of the Victorian fabric in the core. Principally this was the result of the increasing appreciation of Victorian fabric both locally and nationally. In the early 1980s, buildings in Corporation Street had been listed, increasing the total number of listed buildings in the centre to around 76, including 4 GI, and 15 GII\*. Three extensions had been proposed in the original document in 1980, although in the final CALP in 1984, and after an extensive enquiry, this had been reduced to two. Of the three extensions proposed, the ones covering Chamberlain Square and the Corporation Street/New Street shopping area were approved, while the other to the north east of the original designated area, encompassing part of the old printing quarter bounded by Bull Street and Great Charles Street, was not. This area was deemed to have too many post-war buildings within it to warrant inclusion. This decision highlighted one of the key problems of the Colmore Row conservation area, namely the lack of a well defined boundary and an image as an area viewed principally as a collection of listed buildings, rather than as an area with a distinct character. However, in 1987 a small part of this excluded area was included in the conservation area, when development threatened the buildings fronting Edmund Street. While this

deleted one odd boundary running down the middle of the street, the boundary line in this part of the conservation area remains complicated.

The upturn in the Birmingham economy in the mid-1980s, reflected in both increasing office and retail development in the centre, provided the first major opportunity for the assertion of tougher conservation policies in the core. However, even at this time the mood of the Council was still one of wariness in the development of conservation policies (Hargreaves, pers. comm.). Noting the conflict between conservation and development in the centre, the CAAC urged caution in case development was deflected by too stringent policies (Birmingham CAAC, 1984). Principally, conservation officers had limited success with detailed enhancement policies in the face of this increasing development pressure, although a notable success was achieved with the development of a brief for the refurbishment of the Great Western Arcade in 1984, specifying general design guidelines (Hargreaves, pers. comm.). This has not been aided by problems at the wider level of conservation in the core. During the late 1980s, the development of conservation policy was set back by the loss at appeal of a number of significant conservation battles with developers. Therefore, in the mid-1980s, Birmingham still had a poor image as a conservation orientated city (Larkham, 1986), although significant policy moves had been made.

By 1987, Birmingham's built heritage was being used as an integral part of a strategy to alter and enhance the city's image and to develop the business and leisure tourist industries, providing a new spur to conservation effort in the city. More positive enhancement measures were introduced in the Physical Enhancement Strategy (Birmingham CC, 1987b), which included an environmental enhancement strategy involving improved paving, increased pedestrianisation, including Cannon Street and Fore Street, and better street furniture for the core. This also involved money for the enhancement of council owned 19th century commercial buildings in New Street and Corporation Street, acting as a pump-primer to encourage private sector refurbishment in the area. However, the most significant development was the production of the first council conservation statement and the introduction of a local list of important buildings in 1986 (Birmingham CC, 1986). Nevertheless, while the conservation document updated and codified the ideas contained within the

CALP, it did nothing to address change and character enhancement at the scale of individual conservation areas, particularly in the Colmore Row Conservation Area. No comprehensive conservation policy has yet been produced for the Colmore Row area itself, and detailed policy guidance comes principally from individual design briefs produced after a developer has approached the Development Department.

The late 1980s and early 1990s represented a new era of statutory planning within Birmingham, linked to the influence of city centre policy reviews such as the Highbury Initiative in 1988, and increasingly vociferous public criticism of aspects of city centre redevelopment such as Birmingham for People's opposition to the proposed redevelopment of the Bull Ring in 1988/89. Change was further aided by the appointment of the pro-conservation Les Sparks as the Director of Planning and Architecture in 1990. In combination with the continued promotion of Birmingham as an international business and tourist centre, through specific redevelopments in the city centre, such as the International Convention Centre, a number of new planning strategies were developed which highlighted the increasing importance of environmental enhancement policies. Most significant was the development of the draft Unitary Development Plan (UDP) in 1990, which, when adopted following public consultation and revision, will succeed all existing statutory plans. The statutory policy for the central area in the UDP built on the ideas contained within the 1987 City Centre Strategy, specifically in terms of enhancing the role of the centre and building up the distinctive character of the city centre "Quarters". Also, significantly the revised UDP contained a number of clear conservation objectives, enhanced from those included in the first draft document following objections from English Heritage (Larkham and Jones, 1993). This coupled with the publication of a revised, although not substantially different, Conservation Strategy in 1992 served to significantly strengthen conservation policies in Birmingham generally.

However, it is at the level of detailed guidance in the city centre that work still remains to be done, in order to work towards policy objectives of achieving an improved and coherent city centre environment (Birmingham CC, 1991). The one significant development in this direction was the

commissioning of the consultants Tibbalds/Coulbourne/Karski/Williams to produce a design strategy for the centre of Birmingham. The resulting Birmingham Urban Design Study (BUDS) broadly suggested that the image of Birmingham city centre could be enhanced by new building that enhanced the natural topography of the city, the use of building heights and materials sympathetic to the locality, the promotion of development that reinforced street frontages providing legibility, and the further enhancement of the pedestrian environment (Tibbalds et al, 1990). While the study does further differentiate distinct areas within the core principally covered by the Colmore Row Conservation Area, namely the CBD, the civic area, the 19th century retail area and the post-war retail area, this is achieved through the identification of functional areas and analysis of scale and building materials, rather than detailed analysis of townscape development. The study misses detailed consideration of the Colmore Row Conservation Area in its prescriptions for area enhancement, concentrating on the Markets Area and the Jewellery Quarter (Tibbalds et al., 1990). Therefore, while conservation and enhancement policies for the city centre have undoubtedly improved in recent years, no work has yet been done to try to assess the character of the Colmore Row Conservation Area that is to be protected and enhanced, in order to formulate a structured policy for the area, which would aid conservation management.

## **BRISTOL**

### **The development of central Bristol**

Bristol's origins go back to the Saxon period, as a small town beside a crossing of the river Avon, although there is no clear evidence of settlement before the 11th century (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975; Douglas, 1976; Wright, 1983). Following the building of the castle by the Normans around 1120, in order to protect the harbour, Bristol began to prosper as a commercial centre and port trading with nearby coastal towns, Ireland, France, the Low Countries and Scandinavia, principally in wine and wool. It was also an important crossing point of the Avon for east-west and north-south overland trade routes, and a key *entrepôt*, developing inland river trade with Wales, the Marches, and the Midlands. Bristol's growth during the early medieval



period was also fuelled by its role as the principal residence of the powerful Robert, Earl of Gloucester, which led to the development of important markets and fairs, and the foundation of a number of religious houses.

By the 13th century, the town had established itself as the most important commercial, marketing and financial centre in the region, and was one of the wealthiest settlements in England (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). With this commercial success came administrative privileges, in the form of self government as a county in its own right in 1373 (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). Bristol's wealth at this time was reflected in the physical development of the town. The core of the medieval town was centred on the original Saxon settlement, and surrounded by a wall; this area remains, today, the core of the city. By the 13th century, the street pattern within the walled settlement was virtually fixed, based on the four cross streets. The wealth of Bristol was particularly evident in the improvement of the harbour and walls at this time, and in the building of a large number of churches and other religious institutions (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975).

The 14th and 15th centuries were a period of economic stagnation and limited population growth in Bristol. This was the result of changing textile trading patterns, with the increasing dominance of east and south coast ports, the decline in the wine trade following the loss of British control over Bordeaux, and recurrent outbreaks of the plague within the town (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). However, Bristol regained its prosperity in the 16th century, obtaining the status of a City and Bishopric in 1542 (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). Growth was based principally on the development of the Atlantic trade pioneered by John Cabot (Bristol CC, 1979). The port's trade in wool cloth and wine expanded to include new dealings in colonial products such as tobacco, rum, sugar and molasses, and it became the leading port after London during this period (Chalklin, 1989). The wealth created by this trade was reflected in continued suburban development around the core of the city, such as in the established suburb of Redcliffe, and in improvements within the core, including the rebuilding of housing by merchants and civic improvements by the increasingly powerful Corporation. During the 17th century the development of this new trade stimulated the growth of important manufacturing concerns, notably sugar refining, tobacco processing and chocolate

manufacture. There was also early development of metal industries, notably cannon founding and brass making, based on local coal deposits, which encouraged other minor trades. These economic developments precipitated the growth of Bristol's population from 12 000 to 20 000 during the 17th century, and a substantial increase in the early 18th century (Chalklin, 1989), although estimates are unreliable in a crowded seaport with a mobile population (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975).

Despite a growth in population during the 17th century, physical expansion of the town beyond the city walls was slow, and the city remained compact (Lloyd, 1976). Most new housing and other buildings were accommodated by rebuilding and infilling in the core, leading to high population densities (Bristol CC, 1979). On Millard's survey of 1673, only spasmodic suburban expansion is evident. Overall only about 1500 new dwellings were built during the 17th century, at an average of 25 to 27 per year, although the rate increased after 1650 (Chalklin, 1989). However, continued expansion towards the end of the 17th century prompted the Corporation, as the largest landowner in the city since the dissolution of the monasteries, to begin leasing land for building on the edge of the walled city (Chalklin, 1989). Two major Corporation developments were initiated in the 1650s, one on the site of the old castle and one, King Street, on marsh land to the south of the city wall. Both were developed as residential suburbs for the growing merchant class, consisting of substantial timber dwellings (Chalklin, 1989). These developments were followed in 1699 by a larger prestige residential development, Queen Square, developed on the remaining marsh land to the south of King Street. This development marked the first wave of suburban expansion further away from the core. The development also marked the first wave of residential building in brick in the city, introducing the style of high class residential development that was to dominate suburban expansion in the 18th century (Chalklin, 1989).

Of the expanding ports in the 18th and early-19th centuries, Bristol's economic and physical growth was the slowest, overtaken by its rivals Liverpool and Glasgow during this period (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975; Alford, 1976). The development of the canal system taking goods from the West Midlands to Liverpool, the growth of the South Wales ports, and rivalry for

Atlantic trade all served to check Bristol's growth. However, Bristol's commercial decline was in relative rather than absolute terms, and the city's continued prosperity was evident in the development of high class suburbs, such as Clifton, to accommodate those moving out from the core (Chalklin, 1974; Tunbridge, 1977). Throughout the 18th century, as many wealthy groups continued to suburbanise to new developments on the edge of the city, the core of the city continued its transformation into a predominantly commercial district. The development of both retail and office functions in the core precipitated this transformation, as did the civic improvement schemes initiated by the Corporation in the 18th and 19th century. These included the development of off-street market facilities, road widening in the core, the development of civic buildings, and, in the second half of the 19th century, slum clearance (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975; Skilleter, 1991). The land-use pattern that emerged in the 19th century is essentially that which has survived to the present, with a mixed commercial and civic area within the core, principally associated with legal and financial functions, an office area to the south, centred on Queen Square, with mixed professional functions, and the Docks and warehousing around the edge of the Floating Harbour.

Bristol was slow to recognise the problems associated with the Avon as a tidal river, and its lack of wet dock facilities. However, at the beginning of the 19th century dock facilities were improved with the construction of the New Cut and the Floating Harbour in 1809. This provided a key impetus to the commercialisation of the core, evident in the growth of warehousing in the area around the Docks (Buchanan, 1976). Despite this, and the purchase of the Docks by the Corporation in 1848 in an attempt to liberate trade, the revival in Bristol's position was short-lived (Alford, 1976). Rapid technical advances in ship design and the handling of cargo quickly cancelled out improvements, and in 1884 the city was forced to acquire new docks further down the river at Avonmouth and Portishead in order to remain competitive (Bristol CC, 1979). During the 20th century, the City Docks became suitable for fewer ships, and gradually Avonmouth took over the bulk of the trade. By the 1960s, commercial shipping had all but disappeared from the centre of the city, and the Docks were closed (Lloyd, 1976; Bristol CC, 1979).

In the post-war period, the readjustment to the loss of the port

function, and the need to redevelop war-damaged areas of the core, provided the stimuli for significant replanning of the city centre. In common with other cities in the post-war period, Bristol's replanning was driven by the desire to create an efficient transportation infrastructure and to modernise the commercial centre of the city (Punter, 1990). The Comprehensive Reconstruction Plan of 1944 and the Development Plan of 1952 sought to introduce open planning principles and the segregation of land uses in the centre, evident in the plans for the new Broadmead Shopping Centre and proposed civic centre (Punter, 1990). These plans also included the concept of an inner ring road, similar in style to that of Birmingham, which was intended to cut through many historic areas. However, the ambitious plans faltered on the lack of central government funds in the immediate post-war period (Punter, 1990). In the post-war era in Bristol both political parties were keen to promote rapid commercial redevelopment, and from the early 1950s onwards a number of major new office developments emerged which began to transform the city centre townscape (Punter, 1990). The scale, blandness, and uniformity of the new office buildings immediately prompted many negative reactions from amenity groups and the public, which became intensified as new office development replaced many of Bristol's best known, but unlisted, Victorian commercial landmarks.

Opposition to Bristol's post-war redevelopment deepened after the 1966 Development Plan review and the commercial office boom of the late-1960s. While the revised plan acknowledged areas of historic and architectural interest, these were limited to the pre-industrial legacy in the core, and overall the plan offered an overtly modernist vision for Bristol. As Punter (1991; p342) notes, the plan was:

"..a highway engineering-led plan with a free-flow traffic system oversailed by pedestrian decks and commercial office towers."

The property boom of 1968-73 helped to realise some of these ideas, transforming the topography of central Bristol with a number of grey, concrete slab blocks which swept away many historic buildings. However, by the 1970s, the city's planning policies were being pilloried by the architectural press, and were the focus of vociferous citizen protest (Punter, 1990). Changes in political control, a slump in the office boom, increasingly public conservation battles in the early 1970s, and the controversy generated by outline plans to infill and redevelop the City Docks, all contributed to

reshaping attitudes to planning in the centre (Lloyd, 1976; Priest and Cobb, 1980).

### **Conservation in central Bristol; the City and Queen Square Conservation Area**

It was during the 1960s that planning in Bristol began to exhibit inconsistencies within its policies. This developing tension was the result of the formation of policies linked to a heightened concern for the city's built heritage, which was eventually to alter the direction of overall planning policy in the centre in the 1970s. In the 1960s, planning in central Bristol was principally associated with the modernist, grand planning aims embodied in the 1966 Development Plan Review, and the central area pedestrian deck scheme in particular (City and County of Bristol, 1966a). Despite the realisation of parts of these proposals, the plan eventually foundered as a result of both a lack of funding and, more importantly, as a result of increasing professional criticism and public protest against its insensitivity to Bristol's heritage (Floyd, 1990; Punter, 1991). However, in addition to the external opposition to this style of grand planning, contrasts existed within the policies of the LPA itself. As early as 1964, the LPA had begun to develop limited policies concerned with conservation in the centre, designating two areas, 'City' and 'Queen Square/ Queen Charlotte Street/Welsh Back/King Street', as 'Areas of Special Control' well in advance of national legislation creating conservation areas. In designating these areas, the LPA sought to maintain their historic character, and to control design by abandoning the floor space indices and car parking standards used for developments in other parts of the city centre as guides to development (City and County of Bristol, 1966b).

While comprehensive redevelopment was not completely absent from these areas following designation, it did serve to deflect most of the large scale development to the edges of these areas, to sites along Broad Quay, Baldwin Street, Marsh Street and Prince Street. Yet while the LPA was able to designate these areas, note the condition of buildings, and identify key historical features within them, there were no financial or legal incentives, beyond that for listed buildings, to encourage the development of specific policies. However, these two areas, and the other 'Areas of Special

Architectural or Historic Interest' identified in the 1966 City Centre Policy were an important development, as they went on to form the basis of conservation areas designated under the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Initially, following this Act, designation of conservation areas was slow, with Henbury, a village nucleus on the edge of the city, being the only designation prior to 1972, echoing a pattern of early 'village' designations similar to that observed in other areas (Larkham, 1986). As a result of Council opposition to the designation of areas in the core, the main round of designations did not take place until 1972, following concerted amenity group pressure locally, which had led to significant extensions to the list of historic buildings, and the strengthening of the legislation relating to conservation areas nationally. In 1972, the outlying areas of Stapleton and Westbury were designated, along with Clifton and the City and Queen Square area in the centre.

The City and Queen Square area was designated to cover the area containing the largest concentrations of listed buildings in the city, and linked together the two areas of special control providing a more coherent boundary to the area. Although the LPA had originally viewed the City and Queen Square as two separated areas surrounded by redevelopment, successful lobbying by conservation groups in preventing Baldwin Street road widening proposals led to the incorporation of this area into the conservation area (Brook, pers. comm.). This lobbying was also important in allowing the inclusion of the area surrounding the fruit and vegetable market, which had been closed in the early 1970s, ensuring the survival and reuse of the historic market buildings. The extension of the boundary to the edge of the Floating Harbour was also significant in affording protection to the historic townscape around the Quayside, an area in need of refurbishment following the closure of the City Docks. The City and Queen Square area was given outstanding status in 1973, in order to enhance the profile of conservation in the area, and to attract grants to the area for building refurbishment. This status was later withdrawn in the 1980s. Also, in 1975, Corn Street within the 'City' part of the conservation area was the target of one of the first Council sponsored environmental enhancement schemes, with the pedestrianisation and repaving of this street as part of European Architectural Heritage Year (Bristol CC, 1981).

A further nine conservation areas were designated between 1974 and 1976, by which time all the areas identified as areas of special architectural or historic interest in 1966 had been designated. Increasing local amenity society pressure resulted in a further significant extension to the list of historic buildings in 1976. Yet, despite these moves, conservation remained subordinate to other planning objectives in the centre. There was a general political reluctance at this time to adopt a conservation programme, which delayed the emergence of coherent policies (Punter, 1991). However, by 1977 the continued stagnation of the commercial property market in the centre of Bristol, following the crash of 1974, persuaded the Council to back LPA plans for the refurbishment of blighted inner areas. In the absence of Inner Urban Area funding from central government, it was left to a long term conservation programme using funds from the Historic Buildings Council (HBC) to provide grant aid to stimulate private investment in the inner city conservation areas (Punter, 1991). The possibility of using a conservation programme had been recognised following the 1977 survey of inner area dereliction, when it was noted that two-thirds of the buildings identified as derelict were listed buildings, with particular concentrations in certain conservation areas. Grants were to be used to encourage private developers to take an interest in restoration schemes, rather than leave buildings derelict or clear them for development sites. The aims of the programme developed were threefold (Punter, 1991). First, to alleviate dereliction and change the climate of investment in target areas. Secondly, to conserve listed buildings and restore historical continuity to the city centre. Thirdly, to provide low cost housing in conjunction with housing associations, to meet social needs and as an alternative to office investment in a stagnant market.

In 1977, after strong lobbying, the HBC declared Bristol a 'priority town' in terms of obtaining grant aid, and, in line with its policy of redirecting funds from the recognised historic towns to those with a more 'industrial' heritage, promised a major funding commitment for a long term conservation programme (Punter, 1991). In order to qualify for these grants four further conservation areas were designated as outstanding, adding to the City and Queen Square area and Clifton area that already enjoyed that status. Also, to ensure that the maximum possible area was eligible for grant funding, further conservation areas were designated in the centre in the late 1970s,

and many of the earlier areas extended to provide an interlocking 'jigsaw' of areas covering the whole of the central and western parts of the city (Bristol CC, 1980). In achieving this comprehensive coverage of the central area, the LPA had clear aims to obtain as much control over demolition and design in the centre as possible in order to promote refurbishment and conservation. In achieving this early level of comprehensive coverage, central Bristol avoided the diminution of design control evident in other cities in the 1980s (Punter, 1990).

The first five-year programme began in 1977, and was concentrated into four areas, one of which was the Dockside around Queen Square. The focus of the conservation programme in this area was linked to proposals contained within the City Docks Local Plan (1976) for the revitalisation of the Docks as a leisure resource. The plan was important as, by abandoning the St Augustines Reach road proposal, it removed the cause of much of the building blight in the area. This paved the way for the refurbishment of the transit sheds around the quay as part of the arts/leisure development of the area pioneered by the Bush warehouse refurbishment as the Arnolfini Gallery. However, few funds were spent on building refurbishment in the City and Queen Square area generally, most grant aid being directed towards environmental improvements around the Dockside. As had been noted in the City and Queen Square designation document:

"Generally speaking the whole area is in good structural condition and very well maintained, although there are one or two small areas in poor repair." (City and County of Bristol, 1972; p3)

Refurbishment in this area had begun in advance of the conservation programme as a result of its longstanding status as an area of special control. As a prime commercial district, the City and Queen Square area was largely revived through private funds, with tighter conservation controls ensuring a high quality of refurbishment and infill design. While only two buildings received grant money in the first round of funding, 66 Prince Street (for refurbishment) and 29 Queen Square (for a feasibility study), they were significant in setting standards for refurbishment in the area. However, outside of the main areas identified by the programme, grants were still given to individual buildings within the City and Queen Square area in 1978, for example in King Street, Small Street, and The Grove.



While building refurbishment was carried out largely with private money, the City sponsored quayside landscaping schemes were critical in aiding this recovery, literally paving the way for commercial revival of the area (Bristol CC, 1981). Between 1977 and 1981, the rolling programme of pedestrianisation and paving improvements along the Welsh Back, Narrow Quay, King Street and The Grove produced significant environment improvements to the quayside, providing a setting for buildings and encouraging the public back to the waterside. In 1980, after the initial injection of funds from the conservation programme, the LPA considered there to be few further schemes requiring an input of funds, and regarded its role in the area as complete, bar the completion of quayside landscaping schemes (Bristol CC, 1980). In the 1981 resurvey of blighted buildings undertaken towards the end of the first five year programme, the City and Queen Square conservation area was acknowledged to be the most improved.

The 10 year conservation programme, begun in 1977, became a well known and successful policy. In the late-1970s, projects funded under the 1977 conservation programme were the only developments in the city centre (Floyd, 1990; Punter, 1991). Punter (1991) goes on to argue that this development was vital in leading the recovery in the commercial and residential property markets evident in the mid-1980s business, leisure and housing boom in the centre. The visual and economic success of the programme in the central area guaranteed a high profile for conservation in planning in the 1980s. However, this success was critically linked to the availability of central government funding in the form of HBC grants. It is estimated that by 1982 Bristol was the recipient of the fourth largest share of funding after Bath, York and Liverpool (Punter, 1991). This funding was crucial in shoring up the second half of the ten year programme, as funding crises reduced the amount of City money assigned to the project. Both declining funds from the City, and changing funding priorities by English Heritage (former HBC) threatened the continued development of the conservation programme in the late 1980s, and its extension away from the core to target the 'twilight zone' around the centre.

The long term programme dominated the development of conservation in Bristol, and ultimately had a significant effect of the overall planning of the central area. In physical terms, the programme was an unqualified

success, with 88% of the central area's derelict historic buildings being restored in 11 years (Punter, 1991). But beyond this physical success, one of the key consequences of the programme was the stimulus given to conservation expertise in the city, and the prominence and strength it gave LPA conservation objectives. One of the most important aspects of the programme was the use of money from the HBC to fund a conservation officer in the Design Section of the LPA from the outset. This was critical in bringing both skills and resources into conservation in Bristol, and ensuring the extension of the programme (Brook, pers. comm.). Also of significance was the money spent on consultants studies on various schemes, from individual buildings to large sites, establishing building condition, the feasibility of refurbishment, and the urban design possibilities. This was critical in compensating for limited resources within the Design Section itself, for providing precedents in the detail and level of design expected for sites in the city centre, and for building up detailed design guides for areas in the absence of specific area policies. The availability of grants gave the conservation officers great strength in negotiating developments, allowing them to ask for higher conservation standards, and freeing them to a certain extent from the need to resort to less satisfactory compromise solutions (Brook, pers. comm.).

While the development of the conservation programme allowed for the acquisition of expertise in the production of design guides, little of this was translated into statutory conservation policies. Officers relied principally on the strength of the grant system, and the good relations with architects, amenity societies, etc built up during the programme to implement their ideas. However, this concentration on the design of historic buildings limited action on wider planning policies for the centre. The development of the City Centre Local Plan was delayed, and the lack of broad statutory policies became increasingly problematic as the pace of development picked up in the 1980s. This resulted in more applications going to appeal during this period (Floyd, 1990). The formalisation of general conservation strategies began in 1984 with the publication of a conservation strategy (Bristol CC, 1984). This was revised, following consultation, in 1986/87 (Brook, pers. comm.), and was finally published in 1989 (Bristol CC, 1989). However, in addition to this document, conservation objectives and urban design principles

formed a central component of the City Centre Local Plan (Bristol CC, 1990). As a statutory document, the Local Plan is significant in being in part driven by conservation aims (Larkham and Jones, 1993), and in incorporating urban design principles, broadening these beyond particular building groups to cover substantial parts of the core (Bristol CC, 1990).

Concerned with three main areas, the Historic Harbour, Broadmead, and Temple Meads, the Plan clearly identifies areas of conservation and reconstruction, giving statutory meaning to key conservation objectives. The document identifies a number of improvement schemes to enhance urban spaces in the city centre, including the remodelling of Queen Square first proposed at the beginning of the long term conservation programme, and incorporating ideas from the Queen Square parking enhancement strategy of the 1980s. The City Centre Local Plan can clearly be seen as the child of the long term conservation programme, and the ideas and expertise it embodied. It seems set to perpetuate the high standards and pioneering ideas that have characterised conservation in Bristol over the last 10 years, and continue the rehabilitation of the centre.

#### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL DATA SOURCES**

In Britain, urban planners primarily act as indirect agents within a development process that is driven by the private sector. Yet they play a critical role in shaping the urban environment. Principally, planners seek to influence the activities of direct agents such as landowners, developers and architects through their controlling, negotiating and mediating role in the development process (Adams, 1994). Consequently, study of the negotiation process within the planning system provides important insights into the compromises, conflicts and contentions that arise in townscape development. Local planning in Britain has developed into a complex system over the last forty-five years, involving the production of strategic plans, the regulation of building and the operation of special planning controls, all of which produces a vast amount of information concerning built environment change:

"..the comprehensive nature of the data [development control], as a register of land and property development, make it a uniquely valuable source of information." (McNamara and Healey, 1984; p95)

Increasingly, studies concerning change and planning in urban and rural areas

have had recourse to the data produced by the development control system. These data are stored as aggregate statistics, within planning registers, and as actual application files. Increasingly, these large amounts of data are being stored on computer, which has made access to this information easier, and widened its scope of application (Hebbert, 1989).

Development control data have a number of advantages over other sources of data, specifically their wide coverage of types of townscape change (listing all changes except those minor changes exempt under the GDO), their taxonomic structure and their geographical character (Hebbert, 1989). Development control data are most frequently used at the aggregate level to indicate the degree of change over wide areas, and for general analysis of the operation of the development control system (Sellgren, 1989). These studies make use of development control data as general statistics, rather than referring to actual planning applications. Early studies using this form of planning data include Mandelker (1962) and Jackson (1963). However, only miscellaneous Ministry of Housing and Local Government statistics are available for the period 1962 - 1973, and aggregate statistics of development control data have only been regularly available since 1974. Since 1979, these statistics have become more detailed in their coverage (Rydin, 1989). Aggregate statistics are now produced quarterly. Data are divided into those for major developments and those for minor developments. Different types of development (residential, offices, manufacturing, etc) are distinguished, and more recently information about change of use, householder, advertisement and listed building applications has been provided (Rydin, 1989).

Aggregate development control data have been used for a number of purposes, predominantly to investigate the role of local government, strategic planning issues and the operation of the development control system. Many of these general level studies have been linked to research concerning the efficiency of the development control system, and have been concerned with development control policy and practice, relaxation of development control, aesthetics, finance and industrial and commercial development issues. Efficiency studies became increasingly common during the 1980s, associated with central government analysis of the efficiency of LPAs in processing applications (Underwood, 1981; Thomas, 1988). DoE initiated efficiency

studies (Association of County Councils, 1982; DoE, 1983) heralded the start of the wider publication of development control statistics, in order to monitor planning departments. However, given the complexity of the development control system and the many pressures imposed on local planners in negotiating applications, it has been argued that this style of monitoring is a poor way of ensuring efficiency in the system (Underwood, 1981).

In geography, aggregate data have been used principally to research the pressure to develop land in Green Belts (Gregory, 1970), AONBs (Blacksell and Gilg, 1977; Anderson, 1981; Preece, 1981) and National Parks (Brotherton, 1982). However, the use of these data at an aggregate level has been called into question, especially when used as a measure of development pressure (McNamara and Healey, 1984). In the opinion of McNamara and Healey, the use of different types of planning application aggregated per 1000 of population as an indicator of development pressure gives a false indication of pressure. As they note:

"..development control records are not simple 'units' to be added or subtracted, but are the 'end-state' of negotiative processes which are often complex." (McNamara and Healey, 1984; p96)

Provision of indicators of pressure using development control data continues to be a problem (Larkham, 1990a). While aggregate data can be usefully employed in development control studies, they are best employed as a base from which detailed studies can be carried out at the larger scale. An Economic and Social Research Council initiated discussion on the use of development control data in research warns against the ecological fallacy of applying development control data over wide areas, and stresses the need for case study and small-area, in-depth analysis of process (Hebbert, 1989). Such studies consider the process of development control, rather than merely identifying general geographical differences (see for example Short, Witt and Fleming, 1984).

Problems of representation can then be averted if general measures of development pressure are avoided, and in-depth studies using actual application files employed. The link between more general aggregate development control studies and the study of development control policy and conservation issues can be provided by the use of case studies (Hebbert, 1989; Punter, 1989). However, there are problems of representativeness since the

case studies are often not the result of objective selection. Subjectivity is particularly a problem when using a single illustrative case study, although such a study can be usefully employed to test a well established theory or idea, or look at a rare event. It is best to use multiple case studies to illuminate a single issue.

Another major problem is the issue of confidentiality when developing a case study, as for a single site the development and the actors involved in negotiation are easily identifiable. This has become less of a problem following the 1986 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, making many documents from the planning process generally available to the public, rather than just accessible for selective researchers. Yet, care still needs to be taken in the reporting of development negotiations. Nevertheless, generally the use of case studies has been accepted for a wide range of topics, as they have a number of advantages over other data presentation methods. Case studies retain a holistic view of events from which the data result. They also offer the opportunity for in-depth policy analysis, revealing causal links between policy and change, vital for research into the how and why of the operation of the planning system.

There are, therefore, an increasing number of detailed studies of changing urban form that use planning file data held by LPAs. These studies deal with the nature and volume of townscape change and design control at the micro level, making use of the data held by local authorities relating to both the building control and development control processes. The main sources of data used in these studies are building applications and planning applications. Building application submission begins in the mid-19th century, associated with the expansion of urban areas in the middle part of the century, and the development of public health legislation in the 1840s and 1850s. A large number of urban areas have building applications dating from the mid 19th century, forming an important source for the study of urban development from this period. They have been used extensively for historical studies of the building industry, and city development (see for example Aspinall, 1977). They have been used primarily by geographers for studies of city centre redevelopment before the Second World War, providing a chronology of development of the built form and insight into the spatial distribution of

developer networks (Whitehand, 1984; Freeman, 1986).

However, urban morphological studies of townscape change and urban planning, focusing on the post-war period, have made use of data from the development control system, namely planning applications (see for example Larkham, 1986; Pompa, 1988; Jones, 1991). They have been concerned with change and management of the townscape, linking study of planning applications with study of policy documentation and other supplementary sources. From outside urban morphology, detailed study of design control in Bristol has been carried out by Punter (1990) using in-depth examination of development control records. The present study builds on this type of work, applying it to city centre conservation areas.

#### **Development control data; planning applications**

In the context of the current research, the data used were the planning application files held by LPAs, as a record of their statutory function in administering the development control system. Analysis of actual applications overcomes many of the critiques of development control studies based on aggregate data. These applications are a better source for study of the planning process than building applications, as they contain more information about the negotiation process. Recourse to actual application files is also useful in distinguishing different types of application, identifying duplicate applications, series of applications, deferred applications, and providing better access to planning appeals data (Rydin, 1989). Applications cover most types of development of land and property, except the most minor changes. Since 1967, they have included applications for consent to alter listed buildings, and since 1972 for demolition in conservation areas. Larkham (1986) discusses the particular usefulness of application files for studies of conservation management, containing as they do a wealth of aesthetic, design and architectural information. The plans, block diagrams and architectural drawings accompanying a planning application are particularly useful in determining the nature and extent of building work proposed, as they contain both existing and proposed elevations.

A key problem associated with the use of planning application data for

investigating townscape change is that not all change in the townscape is recorded. Many minor changes are not notifiable under the GDO. These include minor changes such as certain sign changes, internal changes, painting, repair, and use changes within use classes. In many areas these minor changes are not important. However, in sensitive areas such as conservation areas, when compounded these changes often produce a significant effect. Where the building is listed, some of these minor alterations will be documented through an application for listed building consent. However, generally in a conservation area they will not be recorded, as authorities and the DoE are reluctant to designate Article 4 conservation areas, where more stringent controls apply and even minor alterations require planning permission. Also, developments carried out 'illegally' will not be recorded by the system.

In this study all types of application to the LPA will be considered; full planning applications for development coming within the requirements of the GDO, outline applications, applications for change of use (between use classes), advertisement consent, and listed building consent. Also in this study both those applications approved and those refused will be examined, as refused applications are important indicators of policy testing and barriers to development (McNamara and Healey, 1984; Larkham, 1986; Jones, 1991).

Once an application has been submitted and registered, and it enters the formal planning system, an officer responsible for the area to which the application relates oversees its consideration. In 1980, an eight week target, or limit, was introduced by central government, in an attempt to speed up the seemingly slow process of development control. Within this time period, various bodies may have to be consulted, depending on the nature of the application, including other council departments and the district or county authority. Also, since the Town and Country Planning Act of 1974 public consultation has been a formal requirement, following on from its introduction in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Consultation involves the occupiers around the site of the development, and may include local amenity bodies or residents' groups where active. Groups such as the police and fire authorities are also consulted for certain applications. Within conservation areas national amenity bodies are consulted, such as English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the local branches



of national groups such as the Victorian or Georgian Societies, depending on the type of building being developed and the nature of the area. Also, in conservation areas, discussion of applications, from large redevelopment proposals to signs, takes place within a conservation area advisory committee, which usually consist of councillors, planners and members of historical societies and amenity bodies. These consultations produce some of the most important information contained within the planning files, including the officer's notes on meetings held with representative bodies, and annotated letters and sketch plans. It is this information that highlights the causal mechanisms of the development control process (Preece, 1990).

Following these consultations, discussion concerning the application takes place, and amendments are discussed. The planning files are the best source of information for detailed notes on amendments to applications. Information on amendments to an application is vital for study of development control and aesthetic policy, as these indicate the attitudes behind the negotiated changes (Punter, 1989). Most planning application files contain the results of the formal written consultation and discussion with initiators and architects, and in some cases telephone informal consultation may be recorded. The case officer for the application will then compile a report, and make a recommendation to the elected members of the authority, the planning committee. These reports are now available as public information, following the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1986. This Act is important as it now requires public access to background planning documents, such as development briefs, and informal planning policies used in the preparation of reports. These are especially useful in research into the operation of planning policy. The case officer's report will include a planning history of the site, other applications and decisions relating to the site, a description of the site and its surrounds, an outline of the proposals, a summary of the outcome of consultation, and a note of any powers of restraint concerning the area. Few committee decisions go against the recommendation of the planning officer, often fewer than 2% (Fleming and Short, 1984).

Following consideration by the planning committee, a decision letter is sent out, indicating approval, with the conditions of this approval and the

reasons for these conditions attached, or the reasons for a refusal. The conditions attached to planning applications were considered by the DoE in their Circular 1/85 (DoE, 1985), which set out good and bad practice in the use of conditions. This has resulted in some similarity in the conditions used by LPAs, with the development of many 'standard' conditions. A criticism of this practice is the lack of sensitivity that these conditions promote, when applied to protected townscapes such as conservation areas. Reasons for refusal have been the subject of little policy guidance. Few authorities produce a range of standard refusal reasons, as reasons for refusal are often very specific to the site or the proposal, and need to be more rigorously applied in case of applicant appeal to the DoE (Scrase, 1981; Larkham, 1988).

While there are relatively few appeals to the DoE in relation to the number of planning applications submitted, they form an important part of the development control process. The decisions reached often have important repercussions for policy and the management of the development control process in an area (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). The DoE provides overall administration of the planning system, providing circulars and Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) outlining good practice, and providing the definitive position in disputes involving appellants and a LPA. An aggrieved applicant who thinks that the LPA's determination of a submitted planning application is illegal or ill-considered can appeal to the DoE for a unbiased determination of the case. An appeal is determined either by written representations or by a public enquiry. Most appeals are by written representation, involving the filling out of a questionnaire by the appellant and the production of a written statement of the authorities case within four weeks. Interested parties, such as adjacent occupiers and amenity bodies are again notified for observations, which will be taken into consideration by the inspector. The appointed inspector will then make a visit to the site, following which a decision is issued in the form of a letter. The other appeal method is by public enquiry, a longer process, involving the submission of evidence for and against development by the appellant (or agent) and the council; this evidence is considered by the inspector as 'judge'. Many LPAs keep separate appeal files. These files usually contain the date of the appeal, a summary of the outcome, proofs of all appeal documents, and correspondence relating to the appeal (Punter, 1989). In the case of a

complex public enquiry this can be a large file, containing significant amounts of supplementary case evidence.

Yet, it is difficult to obtain a comprehensive 'behind the scenes' picture, as there are often many unrecorded contacts between developers and planners, committee members (including political considerations), and interested parties. One of the key problems with planning applications is that LPAs rarely record the pre-submission discussions which initiator, architects and planners often participate in, especially for large proposals. However, some indication of pre-application discussion may be referred to in any post-application negotiation, and will therefore be contained within the planning file. Furthermore, applications submitted before consultation, but not registered following consultation with an applicant, may well be included in a file. Pre-submission is being increasingly encouraged by LPAs in order to avoid delays and reduce the frequency of appeals in the planning system. Despite LPA calls for pre-application discussion applications, especially for large developments, applications still arrive without prior discussion. However, since 1981, a fee has been payable for the submission of a planning application to cover administration costs, which tends to ensure that only serious plans to develop are submitted.

In addition, the information in the files that does enter the system is second-hand, dependent on the views of the officer in charge, and their interpretation of the application. There is always the possibility of file information being sifted by a LPA and information removed (Punter, 1989). Information contained may be geared towards the decision that the officer wishes to achieve, therefore caution must be exercised in reading files. Also, planning files only detail one side of the development process. If a balanced view of negotiation concerning a development is sought, then developer or architect files concerning the development should be consulted. This is important if it is felt that planning files do not provide a full view of the issues, particularly in a contentious development. However, gaining access to these files is difficult (Punter, 1989).

## Data storage and recording

### LPA data storage

Planning application data are usually fairly easily retrieved, records being held predominantly by a single authority, using a single storage system. However, problems can occur with changes in administrative boundaries, such as after local government reorganisation in 1974, and changes in methods of storage. Despite operating under the same development control system, with many operational guidelines set down by central government directives, there is a degree of variety between the data collected by authorities and the system of storage. Most authorities run storage systems consisting of plotting sheets, planning registers and application files. Plotting sheets are usually based on the OS 1:1250 map, and record site number or application number, depending on the numbering system used. These sheets often also note special features such as the boundary of a conservation area or listed buildings, often as a transparency overlay. Advert applications may also be recorded in this way. The planning register records basic information concerning the application, and is available to the public as a statutory requirement. Data registered ranges from merely recording date of submission, type of application and initiator and agent, to inclusion of the decision of the meeting of the planning committee and the attached conditions and reasons. The planning files contain all information pertaining to the application, including the application, drawings, consultation correspondence, the decision and details of any appeals. Variation occurs in the numbering systems used for the planning files and the storage of these files. This includes the separate storage of planning applications and consultation data, and the separate storage of advert applications, often filed using different systems. Application numbers may also have a suffix stating the type of application and the LPA area in which the application falls.

The variation in numbering of the planning files, and their recording on plotting sheets and in planning registers, has been identified from a number of studies by urban morphologists using development control data from a number of planning authorities (Larkham, 1986; Pompa, 1988; Jones, 1991):

- Chronological numbering;*            -chronological by year from first year; Bromsgrove DC (Jones, 1991).  
    -application type followed by chronological numbering by year; Bristol CC (Barrett, current study).  
    -area zone followed by chronological numbering by year; Wolverhampton MBC (Larkham, 1986).
- Site numbering;*                    -area code, site number and alphabetical suffix; Coventry CC (Larkham, 1986).  
    -area or constituency code, site number, numerical suffix; Birmingham CC (Barrett, current study; Pompa, 1988; Jones, 1991).
- Tandem system;*                    -site number, (suffix, year, application number) by year; Hillingdon DC (Jones, 1991).

Identification of applications for study is easiest using a storage system based on site numbers, as plotting sheets are often clearer, although applications do have to be sorted for the years required, as in the Birmingham LPA. With a chronological numbering system, greater crosschecking of application numbers is required. Retrieval of applications stored chronologically requires more sorting of applications, as site applications cannot be easily retrieved in blocks. In Bristol, retrieval was complicated by the use of a folio system for cataloguing earlier applications, numbering a group of applications +/- 10 of the number given on the plotting sheet. Also, few early listed building applications were recorded on the plotting sheets, necessitating extensive crosschecking in order to retrieve these applications. In addition to recording problems, the physical storage of the applications can cause problems for data retrieval; advertisement applications are frequently stored under a separate system and in a separate location, evident in both authorities in the current study. In certain LPAs planning applications and architectural drawings are stored separately from correspondence and consultation material. This was the case in the Bristol LPA where correspondence was stored separately chronologically by street. A storage system of this type requires more cross referencing if plans are referred to. However, separate storage of consultation data, often filed by street name, produces street files which contain more supplementary data filed with applications, including information concerning pre-application discussion, informal enquiries and newspaper clippings.

There are a number of problems in using each of these parts of the

development control data storage system when attempting to retrieve files for analysis. While plotting sheets provide a good visual representation of the distribution of application or site numbers, a number of problems are associated with these sheets. As the first source in locating an application they are heavily used, often old and in a poor physical condition. Also, they are often illegible as sites are small even on these large scale maps, and large numbers of application numbers or site numbers are contained on one map, especially where applications are recorded chronologically by year. The primary problem associated with the use of planning registers is one of inaccuracy and illegibility of handwritten records. However, with the increased use of computers in planning departments this problem is becoming less significant, although typing errors can occur. Yet, computerization of records is fairly recent, and only a limited number of years will be contained within the system. Recourse to paper registers is still necessary for studies of even limited historical scope. For example in the Bristol LPA a computer system for basic application details has only been in use since 1984, while in the Birmingham LPA no such system for recording applications existed.

The actual planning applications are usually stored in paper wallets or on microfilm in the case of older applications. The files contain the application form, the architectural plans and elevations, the officers' comments and report, comments of the other council departments, outside agency comments, correspondence, the decision with conditions and reasons, and any documents relating to a DoE appeal. The information contained in the application form and within the files varies over time in a single LPA, with more information being demanded from applicants, and more rigorous consultation on applications, especially in conservation areas, in the 1980s compared to the 1970s (Larkham, 1986). Problems with files are mainly those of lost or misfiled files, which can be time consuming to chase up. This may involve recourse to other sources for the information, including information from case officers, site visits and directories of developments. In using planning records, from the 1970s onwards, there is increased reliability of the data obtained, fewer missing records and increased detail in information recorded, including more details on development and increased planning department consultation (Freeman, 1986; Larkham, 1986). Many LPAs microfilm older planning applications. With files that have been microfilmed, a number

of problems exist, including the difficulty of reading faint, copied files using a microfilm reader. However, Freeman (1986) notes in relation to building applications that microfilmed plans are easier to read, as they remove the problem of reading large, unwieldy plans, which is a similar problem to that encountered with plans in planning application files. In microfilming, it is possible that vital correspondence may have been discarded to save time and space, particularly if microfilming of applications is contracted to an outside agency. In the Birmingham LPA, the microfilming of applications was carried out 'in house' so that control over the information included could be exercised, and all file information (including notes of phone conversations) had been microfilmed. In the Bristol LPA, the microfilming of actual application forms and architectural drawings had only begun in 1989.

#### Recording of information from planning files

The system used for the identification of planning files in this study involved the adoption of a bottom-up approach (Larkham, 1986; Jones, 1991). This involved first looking at the plotting sheets showing the basic distribution of applications or site numbers to determine the applications within the area of study. Secondly, the planning registers were consulted to select the applications for the time period required, or to crosscheck the numbers of the applications obtained from the plotting sheet. Finally, application files were consulted. For this study, both basic information pertaining to the nature of the development and the correspondence pertaining to the processing of the application within the planning system was recorded. Structure for the recording of the information was provided by the production of a two page pro-forma (figure 3.4), based on examination of the data collected on the planning application forms produced by both authorities. This pro-forma provided a basis for coding of the data at a later stage in research. The standard form used is based on the data recording card developed by Larkham (1986), and adapted and extended by Jones (1991) for computer coding. The direct input of information onto computer was rejected for the same reasons as those given by Larkham and Jones, namely the difficulty of employing a computer system in a planning office. Furthermore, there are certain details that cannot easily be transcribed onto computer,

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL DATA  
COLMORE ROW AND ENVIRONS CONSERVATION AREA, BIRMINGHAM

<b>BASIC DETAILS</b>	NO. _____	DATE RECEIVED _____
SITE LOCATION _____		
PRESENT FUNCTION _____		

<b>AGENT DETAILS</b>		
NAME/ADDRESS OF APPLICANT _____	_____	:OCC. _____
NAME/ADDRESS OF AGENT _____	_____	:OCC. _____
LANDOWNER _____		

<b>NATURE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>PROPOSED WORK</b> _____
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WORK _____	
_____	
_____	
TYPE OF PERMISSION SOUGHT _____	

<b>PLANNING CONSULTATION</b>		
CASE OFFICER RECOMMENDATION _____	REASONS GIVEN _____	
OTHER LPA SECTION COMMENT _____	WHO _____	
OUTSIDE AGENCY COMMENT _____	WHO _____	

<b>DECISION</b>	<b>APPROVE:</b> _____	<b>REFUSE:</b> _____	<b>WITHDRAWN:</b> _____
DATE OF DECISION _____	TIME ELAPSED SINCE RECEIVED _____		
ANY CONDITIONS _____	DETAILS _____		
REASONS FOR DECISION _____			
_____			
ANY DoE APPEAL _____	DECISION DATE _____		
OUTCOME OF APPEAL _____			
SCHEME IMPLEMENTED _____			
MISCELLANEOUS DETAILS - SEE OVER _____			

Figure 3.4 : Page one of the pro-forma for the collection of development control data.



such as quotations and tracts from correspondence, photographs and photocopies, and traced plans and elevations.

On the data form, the first page consists of five separate sections containing the basic information; including basic details concerning the applicant, and the nature of development, details of the consultation process and the result of the planning process (the decision including conditions and reasons) (see Appendix 1). The second part of the form contained space for extra information concerning the consultation process, especially for large developments, which could be used for case study production. These basic data were then encoded onto computer, as carried out by Jones (1991). The computer spreadsheet package used in the current study was Quattro Pro. Storage on computer facilitates rapid numerical calculations of numbers of applications, and the automatic numerical or alphabetical sorting of data. It can also be used to compute correlations between variables, provide sub-group selection and most importantly can be used to produce graphical illustration of change through the production of graphs. Ultimately it provides a flexible data base for further study.

#### **Data recording issues - double counting**

Among the caveats to the use of development control data, one of the most significant issues raised has been the problem of double or multiple counting, which inflates the number of applications and influences measures of development pressure (McNamara, McNamara and Mathroni, 1989; Larkham, 1990a). Double counting can be caused in a number of ways. Firstly, inflation of application numbers can be caused by the decision to split up applications involving multiple planned change into their component parts. Each part is treated as a separate application and entered into appropriate categories, therefore recording changes rather than numbers of applications. Secondly, inflation can be caused by the submission of multiple applications for a single site, in the case of 'twin-tracking', outline and full applications, withdrawn applications, or the refusal of an application by the LPA. Lastly, double counting can result from the submission of a duplicate application for listed building consent along with a full application for the same fabric change. Principally, however, the problem of double counting is

only an issue when data are used in their undifferentiated, aggregate form and where statistical analysis of development control data is involved (McNamara 1985). It is less of a problem in more qualitative studies of the planning process, looking at development pressure at the small scale (Hebbert, 1989; Larkham, 1990c). In studies of this nature, at this level, it is possible, and instructive, to disaggregate total numbers of applications submitted. Disaggregation is important at the micro level in order to explore reasons behind variations in the level of development activity, both spatially and temporally.

### Multiple proposed change

Double counting of applications, and the inflation of numbers, can be caused by the decision to split up applications involving multiple planned change into their component parts, treating each part as a separate application and entered into appropriate categories (Larkham 1986). It is important that large applications are disaggregated, as this provides a clearer indication of the pressure on the townscape than merely counting actual applications (Larkham, 1986). It was decided that applications that included more than one element would be broken down into their constituent parts along the broad divisions provided by the categories identified to catalogue change. Therefore, the number of changes, rather than the number of applications, are recorded. By splitting applications which contain two or more distinct elements, for which ordinarily separate applications would be sought, the overall trends in development are not obscured and a more comprehensive view of development in the study areas is obtained. This is of considerable benefit in the study of sensitive areas such as conservation areas. Proposals for multiple changes can be found on applications for both major developments and minor alterations to buildings. For example, a common minor multiple change in city centres is a change of use and façade or other structural alteration associated with retail change.

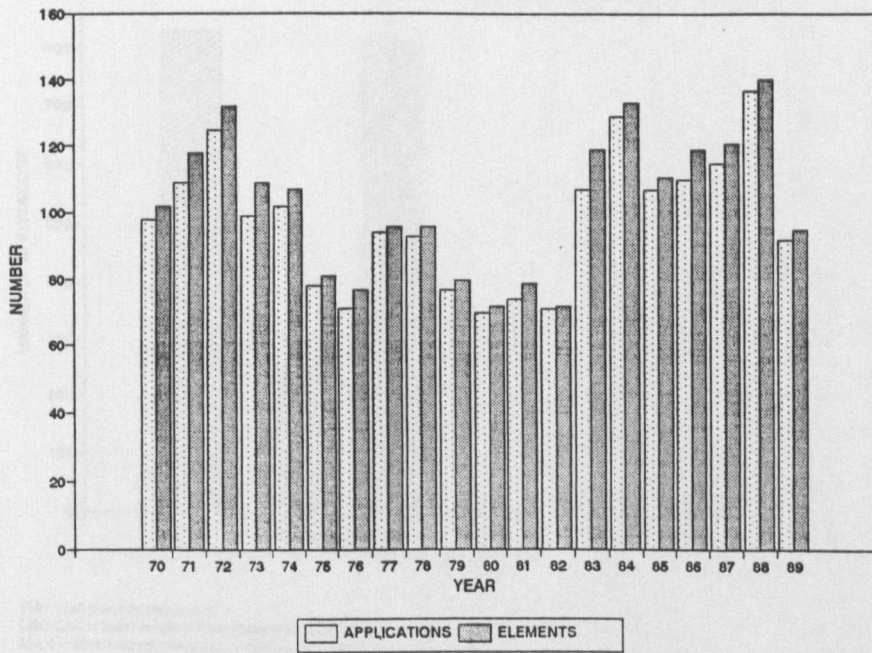
Most of the applications differentiated were only split into two elements, and only in two cases in each area was an application divided into more than two elements. The total number of applications, over the period of study, for the Birmingham area was 1960 applications, while the number of

elements when applications for multiple change were differentiated by type of development was 2059. For the Bristol area, the corresponding figures were 1411 applications and 1511 elements. Therefore, the difference in the amount of development activity caused by splitting up multiple change applications is about 5% for Birmingham and about 7% for Bristol. Figure 3.5 illustrates the overall number of applications to elements in the Birmingham and Bristol study areas, over the 20 year period studied. The proportion of applications to elements remains relatively constant, and the trends in submission over time parallel one another. Therefore, while differentiation of applications for multiple change highlights similar trends in development to those highlighted by considering applications alone, more information concerning development pressure in the two study areas is provided.

#### Multiple applications for a single site

Inflation of the amount of development activity in an area can also be caused by the submission of multiple applications for a single site. Increasingly the practice of 'twin-tracking' of applications has been used by developers. Here developers submit duplicate applications for a site, negotiating on one while the other goes to appeal, in order to test the local planning system and pressurise planners (Punter, 1990). This usually applies to large commercial redevelopments in a city centre. This practice can be highlighted by detailed examination of large developments in both centres. Multiple applications for a single site also can result from the submission of an outline application followed by a full application, withdrawal of an application (either through consultation or changes in a developers' circumstances), or the resubmission of a revised application following refusal by the LPA. However, again in the case of small scale studies, it is important to include all these applications, in order to highlight particular policy issues. For example, it is particularly important to consider refused applications, as this is also a significant indicator of pressure to develop in an area, and the operation of restraint policies (McNamara and Healey, 1984; Short et al, 1984; Larkham, 1990c). The issue can be examined by considering the applications by type of permission sought, and by the breaking down of applications into those granted, refused and withdrawn or superseded. Figure 3.6 details the number of applications submitted by type of permission

COMPARISON: APPLICATIONS WITH ELEMENTS  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-1989



COMPARISON: APPLICATIONS WITH ELEMENTS  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

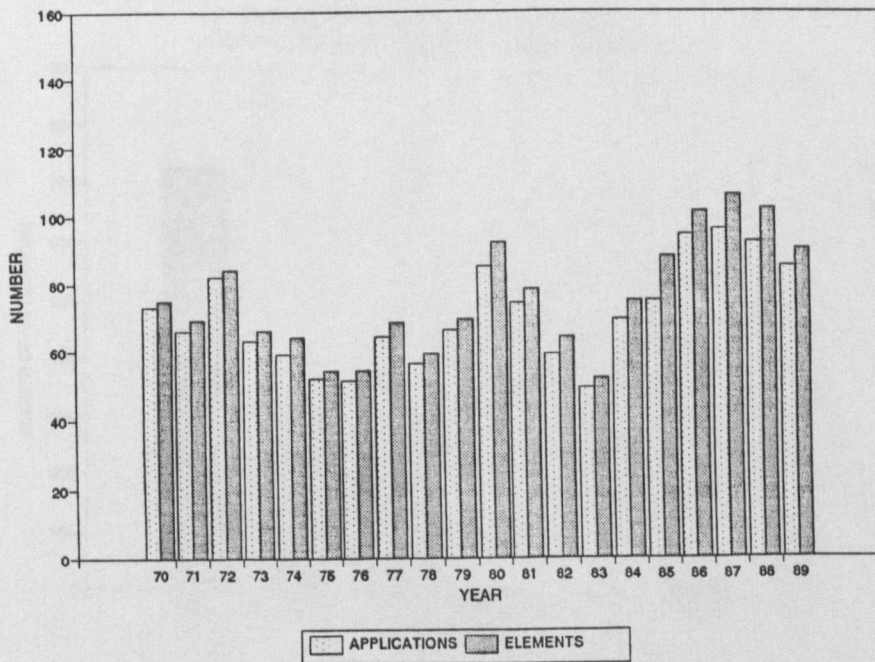
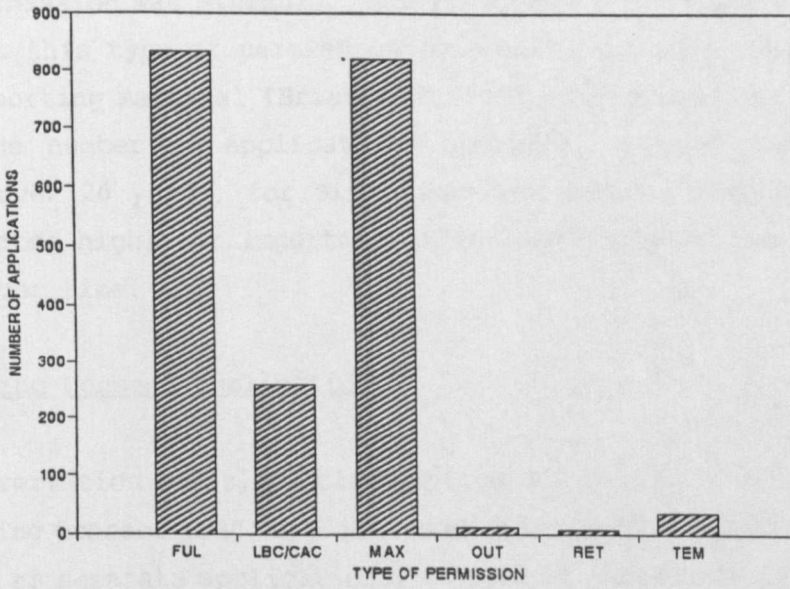


Figure 3.5 : Comparison of applications with elements for the two study areas

**TYPE OF PERMISSION SOUGHT**  
**COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89**



FUL = full planning permission  
 LBC/CAC = listed building consent/conservation area consent  
 MAX = advertisement permission (maximum five years)  
 OUT = outline planning permission  
 RET = application for the retention of an established use  
 TEM = temporary planning permission

**TYPE OF PERMISSION SOUGHT**  
**CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89**

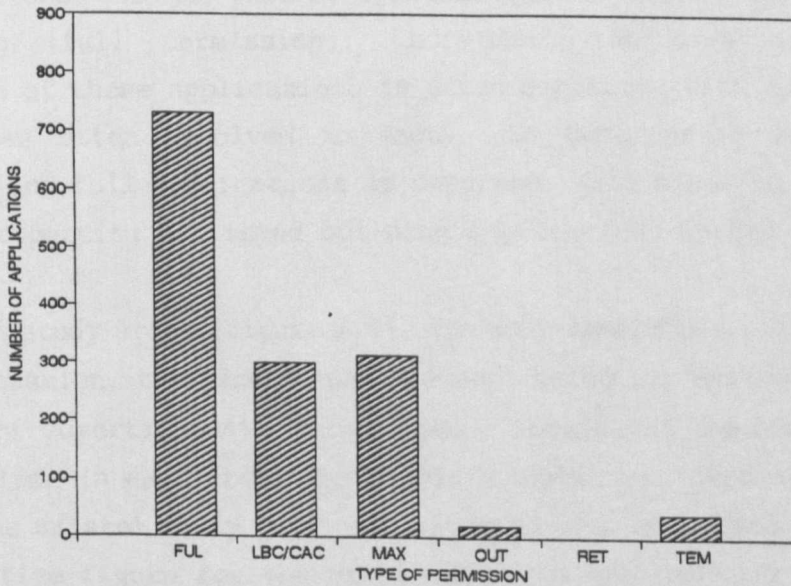


Figure 3.6: Number of applications by type of permission sought in the two study areas.

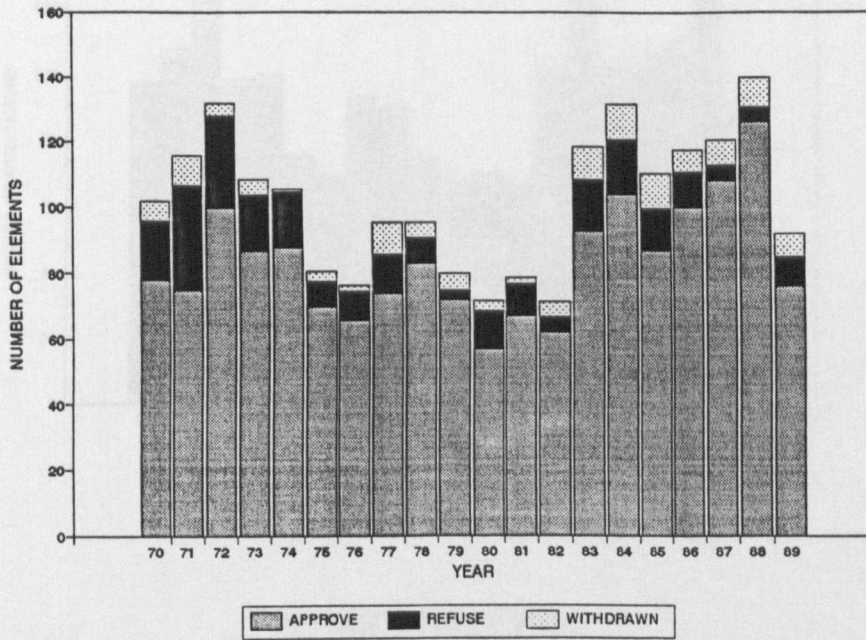
sought in the two study areas. This shows that the number of multiple applications due to resubmission following a submission for either outline or temporary permission was minimal. This reflected a reluctance on the part of LPAs to grant this type of permission in central conservation areas without detailed supporting material (Bristol CC, 1989; Birmingham CC, 1992). Figure 3.7 shows the number of applications approved, refused and withdrawn or superseded, over 20 years, for Birmingham and Bristol respectively. Again these variations highlight important differences between the two areas, and variations over time.

### Listed Building Consent applications

In conservation areas, double counting can result from consideration of listed building consent (LBC) applications and conservation area consent (CAC) applications as separate applications, as many of these applications are often related to a full application for the same fabric change. However, the recording of each application separately is important for studies dealing explicitly with conservation management of the townscape (Larkham, 1986). This is particularly important as not all LBC and CAC applications duplicate full applications. In the case of applications for demolition (LBC/CAC) and new building (full permission), individual recording is crucial as consideration of these applications is often separate, with different actors and consultees often involved in each. In considering listed building applications and full applications as separate, note needs to be made of the number and proportion of listed building applications in the study areas.

In both study areas (figure 3.6), the most numerous application type was for full permission, the second most frequent being for maximum permission of five years for advertisement applications. Looking at the number of LBC and CAC applications in each area, the absolute number of these applications was greater in the Bristol study area, constituting over one-third of applications (the comparative figure for the Birmingham area was one-quarter). This was a reflection of the larger number of listed buildings in Bristol, indicating its more historically diverse fabric. This issue needs to be borne in mind when considering the nature of townscape change in the two study areas. The proportions of types of permission sought in the Birmingham area remained

DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

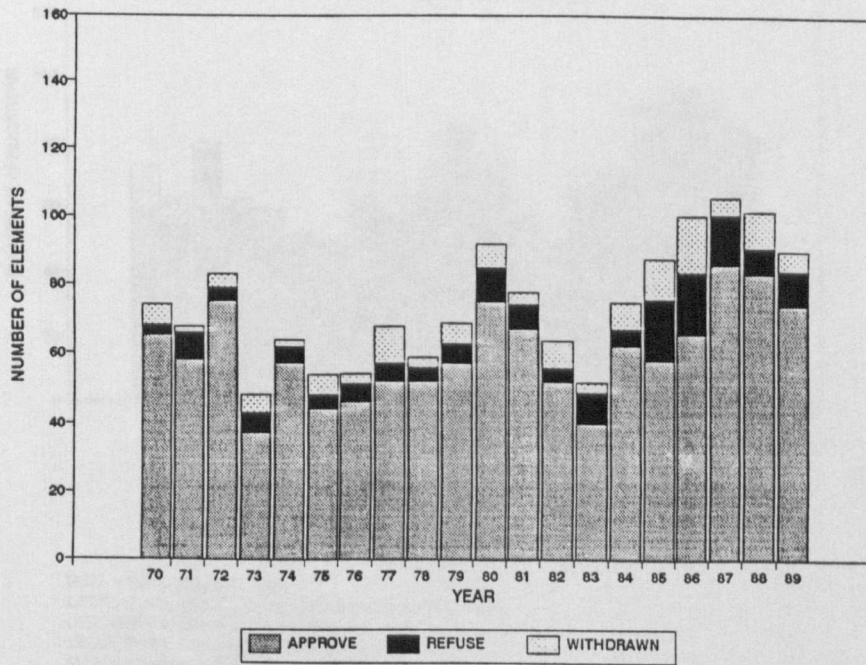
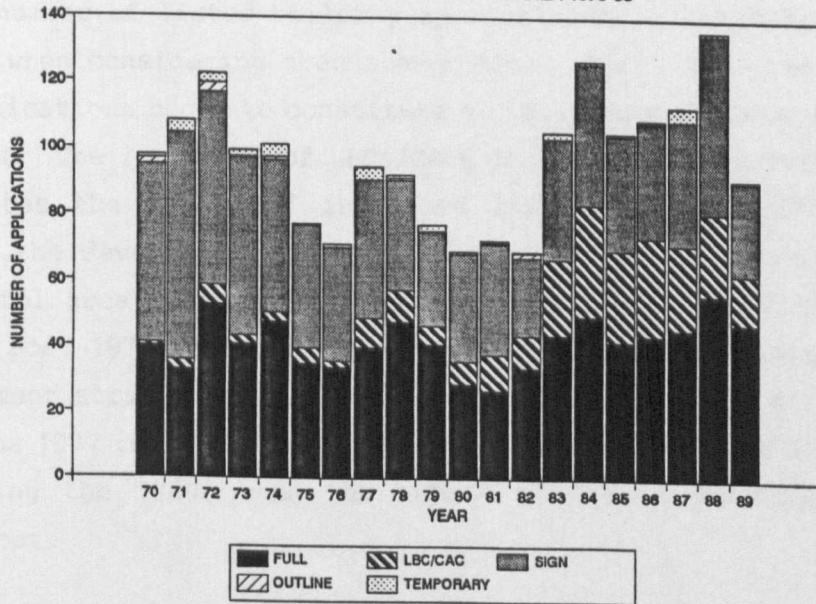
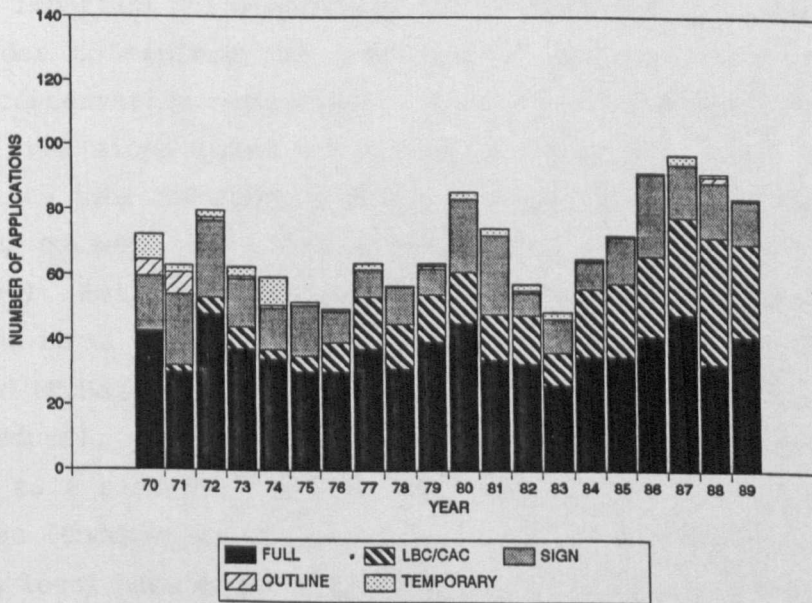


Figure 3.7: Decisions on applications in the two study areas.

**APPLICATIONS BY TYPE**  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



**APPLICATIONS BY TYPE**  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89



FULL = full planning permission  
 LBC/CAC = listed building consent/conservation area consent  
 OUTLINE = outline planning permission  
 TEMPORARY = temporary planning permission  
 SIGN = advertisement permission (maximum five years)

Figure 3.8: Applications by type over time in the two study areas



fairly constant over the time period (figure 3.8). The main variations were the greater numbers of advertisement permissions in the early 1970s, and the increasing number of listed building applications in the 1980s. This needs to be noted when considering trends over time. Post-1983, the proportion of LBC/CAC applications began to constitute a significant proportion of the total applications. The inclusion of LBCs/CACs separately is instructive here, as it illustrates the effect of increased listing of the Birmingham area's fabric, and the development of further conservation policies at this time. In the Bristol area (figure 3.8), LBC and CAC applications began to become significant post-1977, marking the start of the long term conservation policy and enhancement strategies, and the widening of building listing in the area following the 1977 review (Punter, 1991). However, as in the Birmingham area, it was during the 1980s when the number of listed building applications increases most.

#### **Development control data, policy analysis and supplementary data**

It is important to supplement the information obtained from planning files in order to explore the operation of policy, and to examine issues concerning conservation management. Looking at the information contained within the file alone makes it difficult to study policy decisions, and directly relate data obtained to policy (Kingsbury, 1982). There is a danger of inferring causes, and using a fallacious 'post hoc' logical argument (Preece, 1990). Policy is not always explicitly upheld in development control practice, and it is therefore difficult to link policy accurately to practice on the ground (McNamara and Healey, 1984; Larkham, 1986). Development control is not procedural, and it is difficult to relate policy to action. It does not operate as a rational chain of decision making, but rather as a web of consciousness (Underwood, 1981), or web of decision making (Larkham, 1986). In this case local knowledge of the area under study and the operation of its development control process can prove important in the background to analysis of information collected (McNamara, McNamara and Mathroni, 1989). Furthermore, supplementary data are important in developing methodological plurality in the study of development control records and in the production of case studies, in order to investigate development issues. Their use helps to overcome problems of using a single method of analysis or single source of

data (Punter, 1989).

Supplementary data consist primarily of policy documentation, design guides, committee minutes, interviews with development control officers and information from planning authority files. Supplementary information can also be obtained from local authority surveys, council minutes and press cuttings. Since the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1986, access to council information has been standardized, providing increased access to unpublished LPA documentation and council documentation relating to planning, specifically planning committee agendas and minutes. However, Punter (1989) has argued that planning committee minutes are of minimal use for development control research in relation to other sources that could be used, as there is often little discussion of issues and delegation of powers to the planning case officer to make decisions on particular applications.

#### Supplementary files

Most authorities hold separate files or indexing systems relating to certain aspects of an application or planning policy, or relating to certain topics such as conservation (Punter, 1989). These take a number of forms, such as files for certain localities or streets which include correspondence and pre-application discussion in relation to particular sites. These often contain a wealth of supplementary information relation to the site, in the form of press cuttings or information from other written publications. This information may alternatively be filed under certain subject headings or planning topics. Another useful supplementary source of information are the personal files of planning officers, including the officers own notes and assorted documents. These provide a deeper insight into the operation of development control in an area. These files are particularly useful if the officer has been with the LPA for a considerable length of time. However, access to these files is restricted, with the researcher needing to gain the trust of an officer for access to them.

#### Development control officer interviews

Information from the interview of officers involved forms a crucial

supplement to detailed data from the planning files. As one of the objectives of the study is to look at the operation of policy, it was felt important to obtain the views of certain 'key' development control officers, to provide background to the operation of conservation and the development control system in the study area. Therefore, the chief conservation officer (Chris Hargreaves, Birmingham; Alistar Brook, Bristol) and the chief development control officer for the central area (Mike Murry, Birmingham; Ruth Miles, Bristol) were interviewed in 1990. While the interviews undertaken were fairly loose in their format, some structure in the form of pre-formulated questions was required, as the time for discussion with the officers was limited. Interviews were not taped in order to encourage freer answering by the officers questioned. Extensive notes were made and transcribed after the interview. The interviews, each lasting at least an hour, considered attitudes to general and conservation policies in their respective cities, also ideas on funding (for conservation only), the planning process, and ideas on townscape character. These interviews form an important background to conservation issues in the two centres, offering insight to the ideas and attitudes behind the official policy.

## **CONCLUSION**

The current study seeks to examine change to conserved townscapes and local conservation management in central commercial areas through the analysis of the development pressures affecting the central conservation areas of two cities, Birmingham and Bristol. While both are major cities, the historical development and built fabric of the two cities are quite different, which provides important comparative insights when considering conservation issues. The core of Birmingham contains a significant legacy of Victorian buildings, reflecting the expansion and developing prestige of the city during this period. The core of Bristol contains a much more historically diverse legacy of buildings, reflecting periods of prosperity and expansion from the 12th century onwards. The particular study areas within these two cities are conservation areas covering the cores, namely the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area in Birmingham, designated in 1971, and the City and Queen Square Conservation Area in Bristol, designated in 1972. The time period of study is a twenty year period, from 1970 to 1989.

Analysis of the development pressures affecting the two areas during this twenty year period draws on data from planning files. The extensive data contained in application files are useful for detailed studies of townscape change and the operation of policy over small areas. They are particularly useful for studies of conservation management, containing as they do a wealth of aesthetic, design and architectural information. Combined with the analysis of policy documents, supplementary planning authority documents and information from LPA officer interviews, planning files provide an important data source for the study of the application of policy through practice. Use of development control data at this scale of analysis overcomes many of the problems associated with the use of aggregate statistics at the large scale (Hebbert, 1989). The use of disaggregated data, by type of change, type of permission etc, concerning proposed development at the micro-scale, rather than simple tables of application numbers, provides greater insights in to development 'pressure' at this level. They can also be used to highlight variability in the susceptibility of site to particular developments, influenced by factors such as conservation area character, the development of local policies and attitudes to conservation. However, while the number of academic studies using development control data at this level have increased recently (Hebbert, 1989; Larkham, 1990a), monitoring of change at this level by LPAs remains minimal. It is suggested that the more widespread micro-scale examination of development control data holdings could materially help LPAs in the formation and monitoring of planning policy in sensitive areas, such as conservation areas.

## CHAPTER FOUR : THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER

### INTRODUCTION

While character is one of the central pillars of urban conservation legislation and practice it is a concept that remains unexplored and little understood (Larkham, 1993). The definition of townscape character is a difficult task, as there exists no consensus on either what constitutes the character of an area or how this can be 'measured' and communicated to others. Even if the townscape is viewed purely as a matrix of objects, little consensus exists on how to evaluate these elements and to assess their contribution to the production of character. The task of defining character is complicated by the recognition that the townscape is not merely a collection of buildings, but reflects particular ideologies and intentions underlying its production that impart particular meanings to its users (Knox, 1987; Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988; Domosh, 1989). The physical form of the city cannot be divorced from the social context of its production and use, and consequently the character of an area is a product of both its physical and social characteristics.

While this broader view of the townscape is not well developed within the planning profession, which tends to have a superficial view (Slater and Shaw, 1988), it is a part of the analytical tradition of Conzenian urban morphology. Conzen's research views townscape as a historical phenomenon, expressing the accumulated experience of successive urban societies (Conzen, 1966; 1975). He argues that knowledge of this historic expressiveness provides the basis for the development of townscape management strategies and for determining conservation priorities (Conzen, 1975). However, as noted in Chapter Two, Conzen's ideas concerning townscape conservation have remained relatively undeveloped (Whitehand, 1981b; 1987a). This chapter therefore aims to re-examine and extend Conzen's ideas concerning townscape units and their use in townscape management (Conzen, 1975; 1988), applying them to the assessment of the character of the two conservation areas under investigation at the beginning of the study period in 1970. The analysis of the townscape of the two areas requires the adaptation and use of Conzen's ideas concerning

town-plan analysis and the analysis of building form and land utilisation. This character appraisal will act as a basis for considering the designation of the two areas and the conservation area boundaries defined by the LPA, in order to examine the degree of conformability between these and the townscape units delimited using Conzenian techniques. It has been noted that LPA designated boundaries rarely neatly correspond to discrete townscape units delimited using Conzenian criteria, as a result of poor designation practices (Larkham, 1986; 1988a). This character appraisal will act as the basis from which to retrospectively assess the effectiveness of conservation policies operating in these areas.

## **PROBLEMS IN THE ANALYSIS OF TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER**

### **Roots of the problem**

While the problem of defining the character of designated areas is currently a pressing one for conservation practice, the debate concerning definition of character has been present since the designation of the first areas in the late 1960s. In the absence of any defining terms in the 1971 Planning Act, planners adopted the ideas and terminology contained in the report produced following the study of four 'historic towns' in the late-1960s (Dobby, 1978). However, the historical expressiveness and importance of these cities was assumed, and little was done to explore the criteria forming the basis of this historical importance. Within these cities, and therefore subsequently in the newly designated conservation areas, character was taken as being defined by those individual buildings and building groups recognised by planners as being of special interest, using narrowly defined national criteria of architectural and historical worth. The use of limited architectural criteria has imposed a static and inflexible conservation area character on many designated areas, which has failed to acknowledge the dynamic elements, such as function and style, which comprise area character and which need to change over time (Graves and Ross, 1991). The limitations of this type of assessment have been compounded by a townscape approach to conservation in the U.K., based only on assessment of the façade (Slater and Shaw, 1988). As a consequence of this approach, within city centres many conservation area boundaries were drawn merely to encompass areas of listed

buildings rather than areas with a coherent townscape character, leaving most central areas with weak definitions of their essential character (Gamston, 1975; Larkham, 1986).

As the number of conservation areas has grown, the criteria by which these areas are defined as 'special' has been increasingly debated, calling into question the nature of character assessments upon which LPAs base their policies (Morton, 1991). While lack of assessment is a particular problem for those areas designated in the early 1970s, the information contained in many later designation reports is far from comprehensive. Despite the tightening of the criteria and procedure for designation, many recently designated conservation areas do not have their essential character clearly defined, and some have no reports at all (Suddards and Morton, 1991; Larkham and Jones, 1993). Comprehensive character assessments do exist, but they are generally confined to 'recognised' historic towns and small settlements, which due to their size are relatively easy to survey in detail (see for example the assessment for Newport, Shropshire (Wrekin D.C., 1981)). However, the production of these is patchy and their creation and comprehensiveness is frequently dependent on the enthusiasm and knowledge of specific local planning officers or amenity societies.

While it seems essential that an evaluation of the character or appearance of an area should be made before designation, the current process is far from comprehensive and is rarely reviewed following designation (Graves and Ross, 1991; Morton, 1991). Recent research has identified the current extent of this deficiency and the paucity of the character appraisals produced by LPAs, recognising this as a fundamental weakness in the operation of many LPA conservation policies (English Heritage, 1993; Larkham and Jones, 1993). Often the little historical information that does exist is poorly organised and is rarely communicated to developers or the public (Larkham and Jones, 1993). It is difficult to see how, when pressed by developers, LPAs can substantiate designations, defend character-based decisions at appeal, or formulate positive enhancement strategies. This is recognised as a significant concern by LPA conservation officers (Hargreaves, pers. comm.; Vallis, 1994).

There are essentially two problems concerning character assessment. First, there is a need to tighten up the procedure of character appraisal, ensuring that the designation of areas follows a clear procedure, and that this is subject to frequent review. Given support from national and local planning bodies this is easy to achieve legislatively, providing money is made available for the process. However, the problem is not merely one of tightening up procedure, and it is the second issue of how to actually define character that poses the most fundamental concern. An implication of defining character as something to be preserved and enhanced is that character can be identified, measured and quantified and that its key features can be agreed upon by different groups within society (Larkham and Jones, 1993). These concerns are not merely of academic interest, but are critical in forming the basis for the type of conservation policies developed and their effectiveness, particularly at appeal (Vallis, 1994).

#### **The limitations of current approaches**

Within planning, numerous attempts have been made to improve character appraisal by seeking to set out objective criteria for analysis, largely based on the analysis of building elements. The elements used in analysis are primarily those detailed in central government guidance, for example in Circular 8/87 (DoE, 1987a). The advice contained within this circular, while falling short of prescribing a rigid method for character analysis, attempts to develop limited objectivity by identifying elements for consideration. These include natural features, historic and current building pattern, analysis of townscape and buildings (style and materials) historical evolution and current land utilization. These guidelines are then used by planners to produce 'check lists' of elements that are surveyed in order to define area character, an approach which forms the base of the majority of character appraisals (see for example, Wrekin D.C., 1981; Vallis, 1994). However, despite this guidance, little instruction is offered in identifying these elements and the level of detail required in analysis is not specified. Such matters are left to the discretion of local planners, a fundamental principle of the British planning system (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). This leaves character analysis open to criticisms of subjectivity and lack of rigour at the local level. Although, as Larkham (1993) points out, the process of



defining character is inherently subjective and not open to quantification, conservation planners remain uneasy about the issue of seeming subjectivity.

As a result of this unease, local planners have sought greater objectivity through the increasing use of urban design criteria to analyze the townscape. Urban design criteria have become widely used in planning, as the basis for area design briefs and even city plans (Bentley et al, 1985; Punter, 1990; Tibbalds et al, 1990; Chapman and Larkham, 1992). Although there has been a recent upsurge in interest, the terminology and methods of urban design have been in use within British planning since the early 1970s, particularly following the publication of the Essex Design Guide (Essex C.C., 1973). Much of this early urban design work carried out within planning was influenced by the 'townscape' approach of Cullen (1961). This approach seeks to reinforce recognised qualities which make up the 'visual image' of urban environments, tending to view character in two dimensions only and ignoring the full grain of the townscape (Lane, 1991).

Recently, though, a 'contextual approach' has been favoured, which seeks to blend together old and new, retaining or reinstating the continuity of urban fabric (Tibbalds, 1988). Urban design based on these principles seeks to discover those elements that make up a 'successful' townscape, in order to reproduce them in new developments. However, this approach has also been criticised for promoting purely superficial visual relationships and ignoring the wider townscape (Lane, 1991). Therefore, despite this more systematic approach, character analysis using urban design remains largely dependent on architectural detail and how this contributes to permeability, variety, legibility etc.. In the Birmingham Urban Design Study (Tibbalds et al, 1990), one of the most recent in-depth townscape studies of a large city, elements such as style, height, bulk, colour of materials, topography and landmarks were still the primary basis for the definition of character, adding little to the appraisal of an area's essential character. Urban design still relies primarily on buildings, rather than the wider townscape, for analysis, and also fails to explore the links between these forms and historical background. This form of analysis merely provides a description of the static composition of the townscape, but not the dynamic of its production, which is also critical (Conzen, 1966; 1975). While many urban design appraisals carry

historical background information, this is often limited to architectural history and is not integrated into an assessment of the evolution of the townscape. Recently, however, a number of practitioners have called for the development of more rigorous historical analysis within urban design. For example, Hall (1990) has attempted to link design with an appraisal of character based on urban morphological and historical analysis, to provide a flexible basis for design and a more rigorous level of control below local plan level.

This historical-evolutionary approach to urban design is best developed within continental Europe, and it has been suggested that British urban designers could usefully learn from these approaches to design and conservation (Slater, 1984; Samuels, 1990). Some of the most detailed work, linking design to historical analysis, has been undertaken by Italian urban designers, most notably Caniggia (Samuels, 1990; Lane, 1991; Kropf, 1993). This Italian tradition is based on an appreciation of the values and connections of the past, and of gradual evolutionary change, through the identification of basic building types, based on detailed morphological and typological analysis of the development of the urban tissue (Kropf, 1993). However, despite this evolutionary dimension, this design-based approach remains primarily based on the identification of individual building types, rather than the analysis of the wider urban landscape. Recently, there have been attempts to link these analytical traditions with those of urban morphology, incorporating a wider urban view, moving towards the development of townscape management and design theories (Kropf, 1993). However, the practical development of these ideas is as yet limited to a number of small studies in the U.K. and France (Kropf, 1993).

#### Problems of area heterogeneity

Since the vast majority of character assessments carried out by planners rely primarily on the built fabric to convey character, they mainly consist of descriptions and, less frequently, measurements of the urban landscape. This approach can be successful when carried out for conservation areas that cover readily identifiable homogeneous areas of townscape, for example industrial settlements, or planned town extensions, built in a specific

period. However, identification of character by architecture alone becomes increasingly problematic when surveys of conservation areas containing more heterogeneous areas of townscape are attempted. This is a key concern in the majority of the U.K.'s designated conservation areas, as they contain a diversity of townscape. It is particularly problematic for those covering the centres of towns and cities. While many large cities have designated a number of conservation areas to cover their city centres, even these more discrete areas can encompass diverse areas of townscape. Even relatively small areas may contain a great diversity of identifiable distinct townscape parts, particularly in those city centres where the process of urban change is more dynamic (Conzen, 1988). Character assessments have frequently failed to go to the level of detail required for a comprehensive appraisal of character in these heterogeneous areas, creating a number of problems in the development, application and enforcement of policy (Millichap, 1993). Millichap suggests that the solution for LPAs to the problems created by area heterogeneity seems to lie in the identification of distinct areas of townscape within conservation areas, to be used as a basis for policy and negotiation.

#### Architectural character and local meaning

Since analysis of character has tended to concentrate on the minutiae of architectural detail, it has frequently ignored the deeper character the townscape embodies, as an expression of the socio-economic processes of its formation. In relying on architectural criteria alone to define character, interpretation is dependent on a knowledge of architectural history, and assumes that those elements that make up important townscape are recognisable to all. Furthermore, it is not considered whether the local context, identified by built environment professionals, corresponds to the character valued by the local population. In fact, research suggests that significant differences in architectural perception and value exist between those in the built environment professions and the public (Knox, 1982; Hubbard, 1993). As noted, environmental psychology research suggests that even within particular groups, individuals have very different sensory inputs which contribute to the visual stimulation gained from the townscape (Hubbard, 1993). This highlights the difficulty of attempting to define essential character through identification of individual buildings or building elements, and the futility

of striving for absolute objectivity.

Critics of this environmental psychological work have stressed that environmental perception cannot be isolated from the social context and symbolic meaning of the urban landscape (Hubbard, 1993). What seems important is an acknowledgement of the socio-economic and cultural context of those buildings and spaces within the townscape. This notion is evident in other areas of urban analysis concerned with uncovering the meaning behind urban landscapes, namely urban semiotics using a socio-semiotic framework (Gottdiener and Lagopoulos, 1986; Duncan, 1987), and studies of the urban landscape as 'text' within a cultural geographic tradition (Cosgrove, 1989; Domosh, 1989).

Area character is then more than the sum of its buildings. It is their local associations and the role buildings play in expressing urban history that needs to form a basis of area character assessments. Assessments based on objective measurement of architectural features can do more to hinder the protection of local character than enhance it, as they ignore the conservation of socio-economic character, or non-artifact heritages, at the expense of retaining architectural purity. The problems of a restricted approach to character preservation and enhancement are clearly evident in conservation schemes criticised for promoting residential and commercial gentrification, such as the Marais district in Paris (Burtenshaw et. al., 1991), or the Spitalfields area in London (Jacobs, 1992). In Spitalfields, as conservation has become increasingly interlinked with lifestyle and economic concerns, the Georgian terraces have become revalorised by an élite group of conservationists purely for their architectural quality (Jacobs, 1992). This gentrification has led to the marginalisation of part of the area's socio-economic context, namely the market area culture, in an attempt to obtain architectural purity. The emphasis on the Georgian character has also given priority to the conservation of these buildings over others that are non-Georgian, particularly later infill buildings, although they are part of the area's development. It is therefore important that policies and rationale take into account socio-cultural processes of townscape formation, and acknowledge their role in forming townscape character. It seems that an approach that incorporates an analysis of the processes behind the evolution

of the townscape as a basis for appraisal, such as Conzen's, could be of significant benefit to the analysis of conservation area character.

#### **CONZENIAN PERSPECTIVES ON TOWNSCAPE CONSERVATION**

It is clear from the preceding discussion that knowledge about townscape evolution and change, and its contribution to area character, is still limited within conservation practice. As townscape conservation grows in importance, it is apparent that a clearer conceptual basis is required, and particularly an understanding of how parts of the townscape develop a distinct character related to their history and that of the community that created them (Whitehand, 1987a; Millichap, 1993). The need for a clearer basis was expressed by Conzen in his papers concerning the management of the townscape, in which he asserts that the detailed morphogenetic analysis of urban areas is capable of providing a conceptual basis for planning practice (Conzen, 1975). Conzen's study of Whitby (1958) was an early demonstration of the possibilities of using detailed elucidation of a town's physical development as a basis for townscape conservation. Conzen, in all his urban research, recognised the importance of the townscape to local populations. It provided orientation in time and space at the everyday level, and aesthetic and intellectual values at a deeper socio-cultural level. Given the importance of the local townscape, Conzen believed that it required careful management, and suggested that a historico-geographical perspective could form a basis to link historical analysis to the future management of the urban landscape, particularly where the conservation of the built environment was a priority (Conzen, 1975).

Using Conzen's ideas as a basis, the key to a more informed approach is the conception of the townscape not as the representation of a moment in time but as a historical phenomenon, where the urban landscape encapsulates the history of a society in a particular locale. Critically, for Conzen, this historical expressiveness varies in its nature and intensity between townscapes, providing the basis for the identification of townscape units and hence a framework within which conservation priorities could be determined (Conzen, 1975). However, in the light of subsequent work, issues of power and the expression of socio-economic and cultural values in the urban landscape,

related to notions of historical expressiveness and prioritisation, require careful consideration. Conzen proposes a morphogenetic approach to townscape management, which forms a natural extension of his work on town-plan analysis and the cyclical nature of urban development, demonstrating the practical applicability of these ideas to town planning practice, and particularly conservation. However, Conzen's ideas concerning townscape management and conservation remain largely unexplored (Whitehand, 1981b; 1987a). This is primarily the result of two factors. Firstly, there is the limited nature of the published work by Conzen concerned with the theory underpinning, and the practicalities of, linking townscape analysis and future urban management. His key work concerning these issues is contained within only three papers, dealing specifically with small- and medium-sized towns (Conzen, 1966; 1975; 1988). Secondly, the bulk of this work appeared in a period prior to the rapid development of conservation in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Consequently, Conzen's theoretical concepts have lacked practical development and incorporation into townscape management and conservation practice, despite repeated calls for this (Larkham, 1986; 1992; Whitehand, 1987a). The primary reason behind this lack of practical development is the limited development of the townscape unit idea, specifically concerning the practicalities of unit delimitation. Conzen's development of the townscape unit idea has been limited to his work concerning Ludlow (Conzen, 1975; 1988). The key to integrating Conzen's ideas concerning townscape management into conservation practice seems to lie in the reappraisal and development of the townscape unit idea, particularly in relation to complex city centre townscapes. The conceptual tools offered by urban morphology provide an under-utilised body of research which could aid the assessment of conservation area character and help develop more comprehensive character appraisals upon which to base policy.

#### **Historicity : townscape as the 'objectivation of the spirit of society'**

At the core of the geographical townscape work pioneered by Conzen is the assumption that the character of an area of townscape is not merely a product of the architectural character of its buildings, but is formed principally by the local historical associations of those buildings.

Morphological analysis, by identifying forms and relating them to the intentions of their formation, uncovers both the functional and symbolic role of the urban landscape. The Conzenian approach provides a broader perspective to townscape analysis, as it goes beyond the abstraction of typology and recognises form in its context, seeking an understanding of the layering of form and function that has developed through time. This work can be linked to more recent work in the interpretation of landscapes, namely iconographic analysis (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988) or 'thick description' (Domosh, 1989), which attempt to determine the links between landscape artifacts, their socio-economic and aesthetic context, and the actors directly creating these artifacts. Conzen's analytical framework then recognises both the static and dynamic elements of the townscape, incorporating a conception of both space and time. Also, through this wider perspective on the townscape, urban morphology moves beyond a focus on individual buildings or landscape artifacts, providing a framework for the analysis of all townscape elements, and the relationships between them. Using an evolutionary analysis of the urban fabric, it attempts to interpret the sequence of developments of different cultures and ages. The visual complexity of the townscape is usually the product of several morphological periods, each with its own distinctive set of forms, that correspond to periods of socio-economic, political and cultural history, at both local and national levels (Conzen, 1975). The combination of these forces produces particular phases of development and redevelopment activity in the city (Harvey, 1989b), often introducing new building forms into the urban landscape (Domosh, 1989). As subsequent urban societies add or replace forms;

"the whole townscape becomes the "objectivation of the spirit" of that society in its broader cultural context and in the context of its own historical development on a particular town site." (Conzen 1975, p82 in 1981 reprint).

The objectivation of the spirit becomes the spirit of place, or *genius loci* (Conzen, 1975 p.82), providing an important environmental experience for the individual at a practical, aesthetic and intellectual level. This *genius loci* is particularly strong in those townscapes that demonstrate historical longevity and continuity, or historicity (Conzen, 1975 p.82). The historical symbolism of the townscape links with formal characteristics, including familiarity and visual complexity, to provide a complex compound visual experience and appreciation of the townscape. Due to the complexity of these relationships, this experience is primarily locally specific. Therefore,

those townscapes considered historic and thus important in terms of delivering local compound experience may not be those deemed as 'historic' by national criteria. Conzen argues that strong historicity in a townscape depends not merely on time depth but on the diversity and dynamism of local urban history, including the action of urban institutions and the strength of cultural traditions. It therefore has both a morphological and social component (Conzen, 1975). Historicity is not merely architectural but is primarily a narrative of past urban social life, bound up with the production and use of the urban landscape. For Conzen this gives historical townscapes an important social purpose, beyond any economic tourist value that they may have. Therefore, the task for townscape management is the illumination and maintenance of local historicity (Conzen, 1975).

### **Morphological periods**

The Conzenian approach, by adopting a historico-geographical perspective, recognises the specificity of urban environments resulting from particular combinations of wider forces of urban change and local development factors which vary spatially and temporally. Consideration of the expression of wider forces for change in the urban landscape has been subsequently developed in other kinds of urban analysis, in particular in urban geography in a structuralist tradition (Harvey, 1989a and b) and in structural Marxist branches of urban semiotics (Gottdiener and Lagopoulos, 1986). For Conzen, the design of elements within the townscape results from the combination of two criteria, original function and period of origin, allied to local social and cultural factors which vary according to the economic and social impulses or fashions of different periods. In order to analyze the form of the city at present, it is necessary to identify these various impulses for change, reflected in very different areas of townscape within the city. According to Conzen (1975), historicity is a product of the historical time range, or incidence of morphological periods of urban development, represented within each of the three systematic form complexes: town plan, building form, and land utilization, not merely the individual buildings. For Conzen, the problem of lapsing into purely descriptive characteristics to define these townscape elements, for town plan and building form, is overcome by classification using morphological periods. The use of original functional



purpose and period of origin determines the categorization of the plan element or individual building, relating it to specific socio-economic periods in British urban history, although the timing and impact of these impulses have distinct local variations.

Conzen's use of morphological periods in the analysis of townscape has been criticised. Openshaw (1974) claimed that areas based on morphological period classification lacked homogeneity and a clear character, as similar forms existed in different periods. He attempted the definition of townscape areas for South Shields, a Tyneside town, using a multivariate analysis of 169 building attributes (Openshaw, 1974). He considered this a more rigorous basis for definition, and questioned whether similar meaningful groupings would have resulted from map analysis using morphological periods. However, Carter (1972) argued that regions derived from computer analysis would produce similar regional groupings to those of more traditional map analysis. The benefits of using morphological periods in analysis are that they provide historical context and give symbolic meaning for the townscape, which is lacking in analysis based on building attributes alone. In combination with urban morphological work in the Conzenian tradition concerning the influence of actors, both individual and corporate, in the production of the townscape, this perspective could go towards developing a 'thick descriptive' approach, considering both macro and micro factors in the development of townscape areas.

Morphological periods form the basis for the classification of the three systematic form complexes, and locate the phases of growth and the townscape within a meaningful historical context. Key periods of urban development and building replacement, identified by Conzen (1960; 1966; 1978), are the Late Medieval period (1270-1500), important in the development of many town plans and buildings of social and political importance such as churches and castles, the Tudor/Elizabethan/Jacobean period (approx. 1500-1690), based on the development of mercantile capitalism, the Queen Anne-Georgian period (1690-1840), based on the first phase of industrialisation, the Victorian and Edwardian periods (1840-1914) associated with the second phase of industrial development, and the Inter-war and Post-war periods, together forming the Modern period. To this classification could be added the post-Modern period

(1974-), which has been used to identify the recent socio-economic and cultural changes associated with the transition towards a post-industrial phase within older industrial economies, particularly within Europe and North America (Harvey, 1989b). However, the precise date for this transition, and the degree to which it represents a clear break with the modern period is open to debate (Harvey, 1989a).

While it is therefore possible to differentiate elements within the townscape using morphological periods for plan development and building form, in practice it is difficult to tie the transition between these phases to a specific date. The divisions between these periods are not always obvious in the townscape, and this is particularly true of plan and building changes that occur either at the end or at the beginning of a morphological period. This is an important issue in the Victorian period, which is divided into two key periods; the early-to mid-Victorian (1840-1885) and the late-Victorian and Edwardian (1886-1914). There is no specific differentiation over time in plot shape within this period and there is significant overlap in building type and style between the early, mid- and late-Victorian periods. Therefore, the use of a particular date to denote the transformation between morphological periods may create divisions that are far from clear in the townscape. However, they do reflect different periods in the city's growth. They are the product of different impulses for change, and provide more meaning than style alone in the analysis of character.

### **Defining townscape units**

Conzen's morphogenetic approach then provides a conception of how some parts of the urban landscape have a character distinct from that of others, related to the nature and intensity of their historical expressiveness. The character of the townscape derives from the unique combination of the three townscape form complexes (town plan, building form and land utilization) which represent particular socio-economic and cultural impulses of specific morphological periods. Changes to these form complexes over time produce a distinct historical stratification in the townscape, which can be seen to have a particular spatial representation (Conzen, 1975). The concept of delimiting distinct regions within the townscape derives from Conzen's analysis of the

town plan in Alnwick, in which he identified the key phases of town development, and the types of change within these phases determined by street systems and plot layout (figure 4.1). However, these plan units should not be confused with townscape units, which are formed by the combination of units for all three form complexes, in a particular hierarchical structure (Conzen, 1960). Nevertheless, as Conzen notes, the identification of plan units forms an important basis for the identification of townscape units, although the relationship is complex in the centres of large towns:

"In passing it may be noted, however, that actually the divisions of Alnwick's town plan do often coincide with urban regions of general significance. In small towns the topographical discrepancy between established plan and fabric on the one hand and new uses invading and adapting it on the other does not occur on nearly the same scale as in the inner integuments of larger towns." (Conzen, 1969 p116)

The Alnwick study provides the conceptual basis for the identification of distinct units within the townscape. Specifically, it sets out provisional methods for the analysis of the plan, and the techniques for mapping and labelling the hierarchical order of plan units (figure 4.2). However, while it highlights the potentiality of applying these ideas to the delimitation of units for the other form complexes (built form and land utilisation), the techniques for this and their combination into townscape units are not developed. While Conzen has offered the terminology for interpreting townscape, the process of defining townscape units is far from clearly set out. The methods of analysis for the three form complexes are contained within his key papers, but there is no 'neat package' of techniques that can be applied to the delimitation of townscape units (Whitehand, 1981a). While townscape units for central Ludlow are delimited in Conzen's paper concerning urban conservation (figure 4.3), discussion is focused on the use of these for conservation practice, rather than the method of their delimitation (Conzen, 1975). However, in his 1988 paper, reconsidering the Ludlow case study, Conzen has provided further illumination of the methods of unit delimitation, in particular the key issue of the hierarchical nesting of the three form complexes, which to an extent codifies his earlier thoughts on the issue (figure 4.4). However, while this paper provides an important step in the development of delimitation methods, Conzen's overall ideas on this remain illusive. To date, the studies attempting the definition of townscape units have been limited to the consideration of a number of small settlements, the



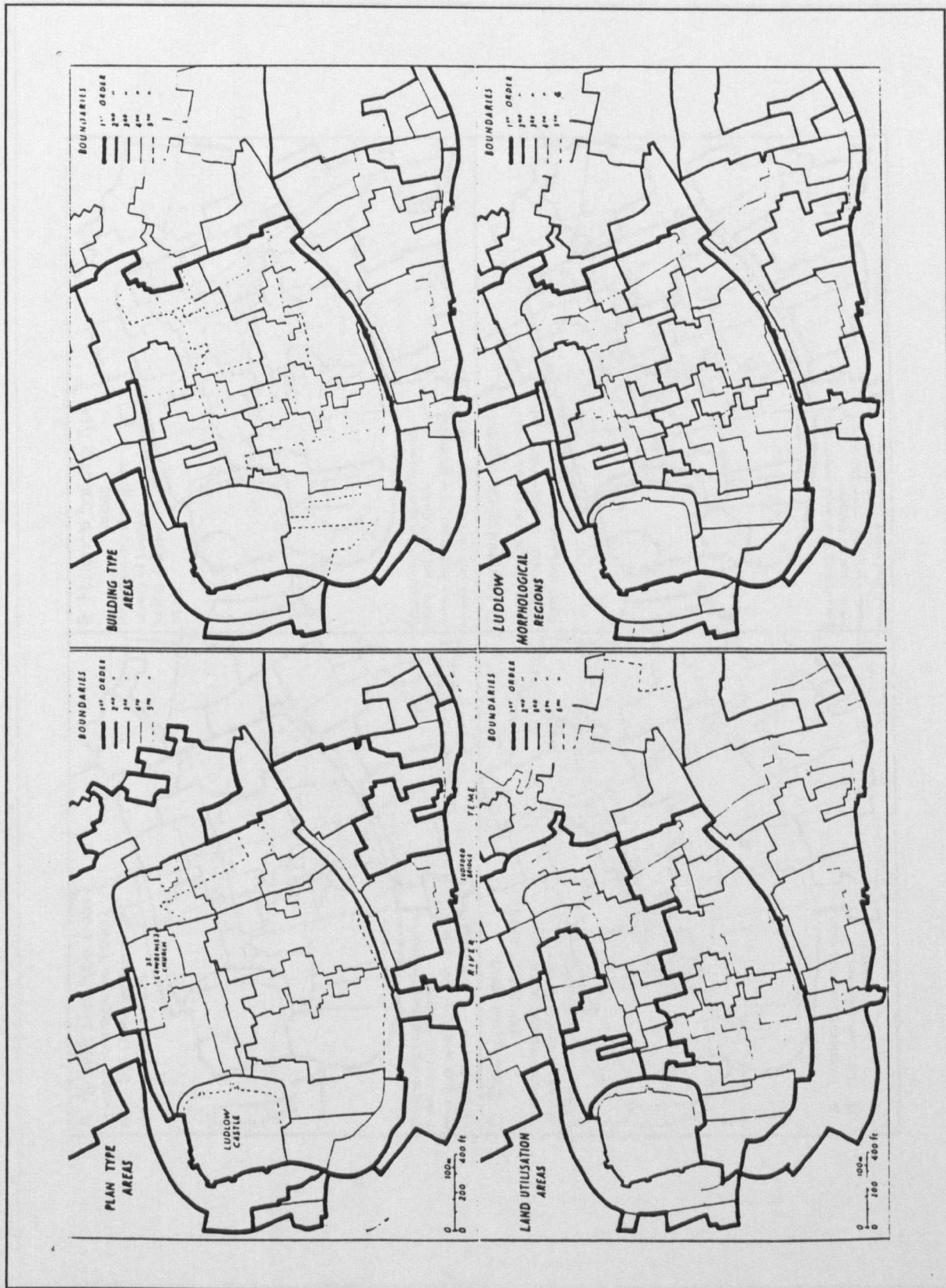


Figure 4.3; Ludlow - morphological regions (Conzen, 1975; figure 1, p.81 in Whitehand, 1981 (ed)).

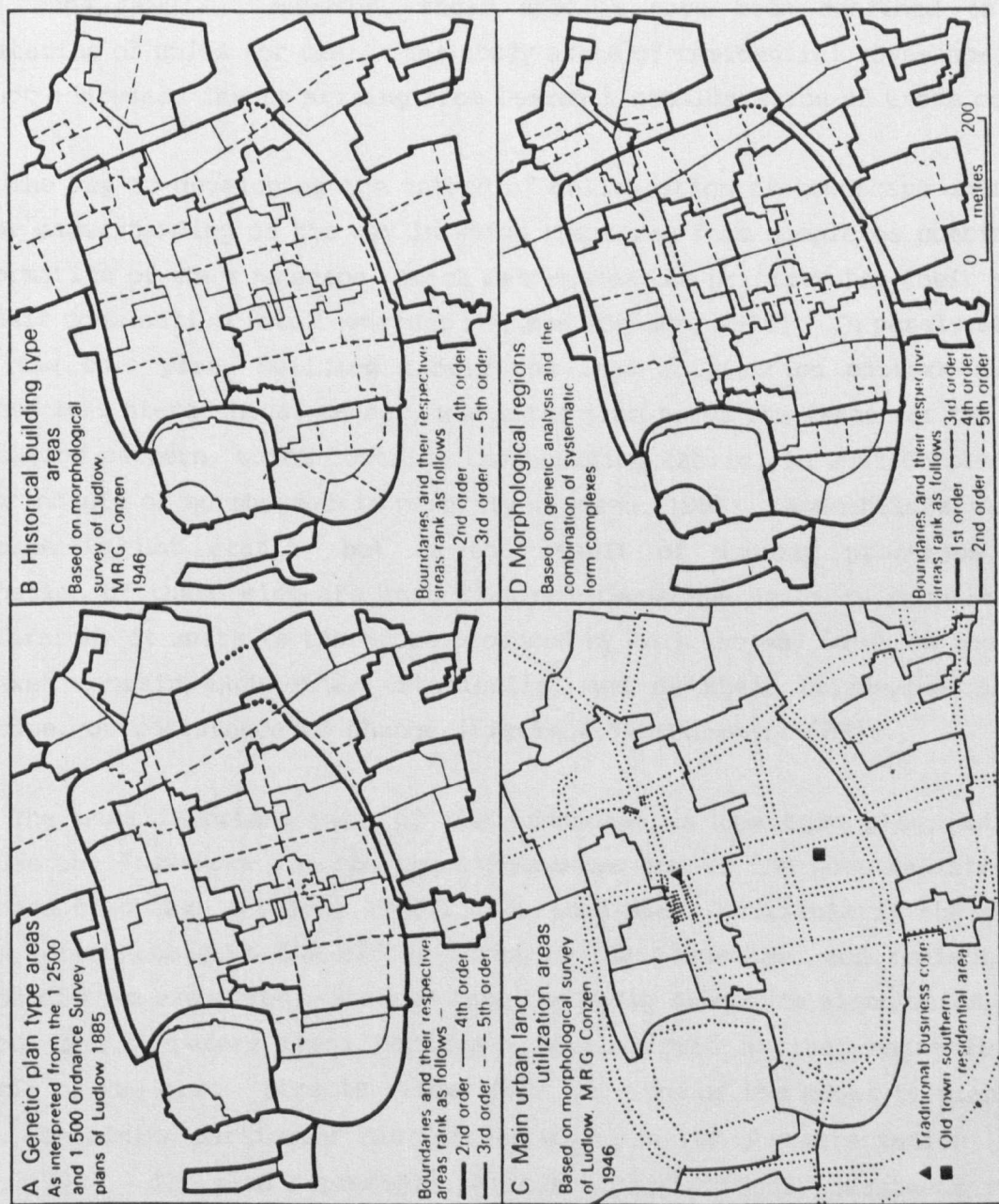


Figure 4.4; Ludlow - morphological regions (Conzen, 1988; figure 17.2, p.258 in Deneke and Shaw, 1988 (eds)).

largest being Conway and Ludlow (Conzen, 1966; 1988). Subsequent to Conzen's work on Ludlow, only a few morphological studies have attempted to delimit townscape units which could be used to assess urban management (Whitehand, 1989; Jones, 1991). However, these studies have been confined to the delimitation of units for small case study areas of residential townscape, and have not addressed issues arising from Conzen's consideration of urban cores.

The key to developing the method of delimitation of townscape units is a clear understanding of the way in which the three form complexes combine in the formation of the townscape, which determines the priority for their study and their combination into townscape regions (Conzen, 1988). In purely static terms the town plan, building fabric and land utilization pattern can be combined in a hierarchical manner, where the plan forms the frame for the land utilization pattern, which contains the building fabric, in what Conzen sees as a principle of morphogenetic priority (Conzen, 1988). Nonetheless, as the townscape is not static, but is the result of dynamic processes, the combination of these elements into distinct townscape units is complicated. The hierarchy of units is therefore produced by both the way in which the form complexes contain each other, statically, and by their permanence in the townscape, or resistance to change (figure 4.5) (Conzen, 1988).

The most important part of the townscape is the town plan, as this provides the framework for the other complexes and is the most resistant of the three to change (Conzen, 1960). The town plan, particularly the street system, often contains the oldest forms in the townscape, and reflects key periods of town expansion. Streets form the basic structure along which plots develop, and therefore their study and dating forms a vital basis for the analysis of the plan. Streets either form the core or the edges to plan unit areas, containing particular plot series with similar characteristics (Baker et al, 1992). The plan represents periods of significant investment in the town, associated with key phases of socio-economic and cultural change within that society. The form complex next most resistant to change is that of building form. Again it represents a considerable investment in the townscape, although in relation to the plan it is more susceptible to changing local economic impulses and architectural fashions. Building form will commonly display the greatest historical range of the three form complexes,

1	2		3	4
Systematic form complex	Degree of form persistence	Morphological periods	Morphological constituents of historical stratification	Contribution to hierarchy of townscape regions
Town plan	Maximal	High medieval 1090-1270	General outlines of street system, plot pattern and building arrangement	High rank (major genetic plan units) intermediate rank (neighbourhoods: street and precinctual units, high medieval suburbs)
		Late medieval 1270-1500 and early post-medieval	Major island and lateral encroachments on street market, ubiquitous changes to street lines by minor lateral encroachments, ubiquitous minor alterations to plot pattern	Intermediate rank (Eastern Dinham transformation, Bell Lane neighbourhood) lowest rank (morphotopes of market encroachments)
Building fabric	Considerable though varying with periods	High and late medieval 1090-1500	Few but prominent public buildings and defence structures. Very few houses by external indices, but structural remains inside and at rear of many post-medieval houses	
		Early modern 1500-1840	Majority of houses in localized period mixtures	Intermediate rank, but principally lowest rank (morphotopes)
		Victorian and Edwardian 1840-1918	Houses in peripheral location or on minor streets. A few commercial buildings in business core	Lowest rank (morphotopes)
		Inter- and post-war, post-1918	Very few buildings within Old Town	
Urban land utilization		Pre-1840	Major land use areas (business core, residential areas, institutional precincts)	Intermediate rank (traditional business core, traditional residential area, recreational area, castle ruins)
	Minimal	Recent (twentieth century)	-	

Figure 4.5; The systematic form complexes as morphological regulators in the Old Town, Ludlow (Conzen, 1988; figure 17.3, p.261 in Deneke and Shaw, 1988 (eds)).

unless the forces for change are intense in a particular period. However, in the case of the earliest periods of development, surviving buildings will usually only be key landscape features such as churches or castles. In those cities profoundly influenced by the Industrial Revolution, fabric representing these early periods of development may have been erased, particularly in settlements that expanded dramatically in the 19th century (Conzen, 1978). Land utilization, related to the general functioning of the town, is the least resistant to change and can occur within the existing framework of plan and fabric, although this produces an increasing non-conformability between fabric and function. Categorisation and analysis of the land and building utilization is then not fundamentally dependent on period of origin, although the pattern present needs to be understood in developmental terms. In the



initial stages of development, land utilization will determine the form of the building, positioning it above form in the static hierarchical grouping of complexes. However, in terms of survival of complexes, the present function ranks below building form, as the former is more susceptible to change. This causes some confusion in the hierarchical grouping of form complexes.

Through analysis of the development and transformation of each of the three systematic complexes, and their combination into morphologically distinct areas, the individualised local structure of the townscape can be articulated through the definition of townscape units (Conzen, 1975). The delimitation of these units is achieved by the superimposition of the three delineations of areal subdivisions for the form complexes, in order to arrive at a composite regionalisation (Whitehand, 1981a). The method used to derive the hierarchy of subdivisions is based on the degree of coincidence of the various boundaries defining the regions identified for the three form complexes. The method for achieving this is probably the least clearly defined of Conzen's ideas, and was acknowledged as a key matter for further work (Conzen, 1975). This process produces a hierarchy of townscape units, with the rank of these regions determined by the variation in the form complex elements. The smallest, or lowest rank, of townscape unit with a distinct character identified by Conzen is termed a "townscape cell" (Conzen, 1975, p.79 of 1981 reprint) or "morphotope" (Conzen, 1988 p.259). Variations in the building fabric have an important role in defining the fine grain represented by these morphotopes. These morphotopes group themselves into intermediate townscape units, which then combine at a number of levels of integration to form a hierarchy of intra-urban regions (Conzen, 1975).

For his delimitation of regions for Ludlow, Conzen identified a hierarchy of five townscape units (figure 4.4) (Conzen, 1988, p258). The first-order townscape units, or principal rank units, are the major urban plan development phases, such as the castle or medieval walled town. The second order units are again primarily defined by the plan, being neighbourhoods and streets within these major urban divisions. The lower order units are smaller groups of plots or buildings, or land uses. However, the definition of these intermediate units is far from clear cut, and land-use or building fabric can be a constituent of regions from second-order to fifth-order, depending on the

persistence and conformability of these elements within the plan. The exact delimitation of units, particularly the lower order ones, is ultimately subjective, demanding considerable knowledge of socio-economic, architectural and planning history (Larkham, 1990b).

## **TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY AREAS**

### **Analysis of the plan**

Given the importance of the plan in the construction of the hierarchy of townscape units, its analysis is the primary task in the process of unit delimitation. The analysis of the plans of the Birmingham and Bristol study areas is based on the concepts, terminology and techniques developed by Conzen in his studies of Alnwick (1960) and Newcastle (1962), considered previously. In the context of the present study, the methods of analysis employed in Newcastle need to be extended to consider plan change through to the 1970s in the two study areas. As in Newcastle, changes to the plan of the settlement are charted by the use of early pictorial and O.S. maps, tracing the development of the various plot series through a sequence of time slices. For many urban areas the first pictorial maps date from the early 18th century, and, as in the case of Newcastle, can be used to determine the extent of town development in the Medieval and Elizabethan periods. Although plan analysis of all periods of change should be supported by documentary evidence, it is particularly important for these early development phases as the accuracy of maps is more limited (Baker et al, 1992). However, the accuracy of map analysis improves in the 19th century with the introduction of O.S. plans in the mid-1800s. The present study uses a sequence of maps and plans from the 16th century onwards to map developments in the street and plot system, and to date these changes within the period covered by the maps, or more accurately when backed up by documentary evidence.

In the analysis of the plan, part of Conzen's three-fold division is used, namely the division into streets and street system and the plots and their plot pattern. The third division, the building arrangement within the plot pattern, is not used in this broad level of analysis. The analysis of the street system employs the categorisation used in the Newcastle study,

namely a division into Medieval streets, new streets, straightened and widened streets and breakthrough streets (figure 4.6). From this basis of street-system analysis, the development of the plot pattern and its subsequent transformation can be charted. As Conzen (1962) notes, with an area as complex as a city centre it is impossible to consider the development of individual plots. In the Newcastle study, plot analysis is simplified carrying out a generalised examination of plot change, considering primarily the overall patterning of streets and plots and the associated dates of development and redevelopment (figure 4.7). Generalisation is necessary as metrological analysis of plots is difficult in these areas, and O.S. maps lack sufficiently accurate plot boundaries to allow measurement (Conzen, 1988).

The categories employed in the analysis of plot transformation are those used by Conzen in Newcastle to describe the variety of transformations occurring within a large city, under the influence of the processes of building repletion, plot metamorphosis and commercial redevelopment. Within the current study, building repletion does not figure in the final plan analysis since, as Conzen (1962) notes, within the centre of large cities horizontal plot repletion is a historic rather than a contemporary process, and plot metamorphosis, in its advanced stages, is more usual given the more forceful economic impulses here. Within the centres of large cities, the climax plot phase was reached in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and unaltered institutive phase plot developments rarely survive, although they can be found in smaller market towns (Conzen, 1988). For all plots within the two areas under investigation, the climax phase of development had been reached by the 19th century, with subsequent redevelopment either maintaining or increasing plot coverage, thus allowing the simplification of the final composite maps based on the assumption that all plots are at the climax phase of development, rather than institutive or repletive phases.

In parallel to the plot change identified in Newcastle, the primary processes of plot transformation in the two study areas are metamorphosis (orthomorphic, hypometamorphic and metamorphic) and adaptive and augmentative redevelopment. In order to simplify the mapping of the processes of transformation, the categories of plot transformation termed orthomorphic and hypometamorphic are combined. This combination is used, as within these

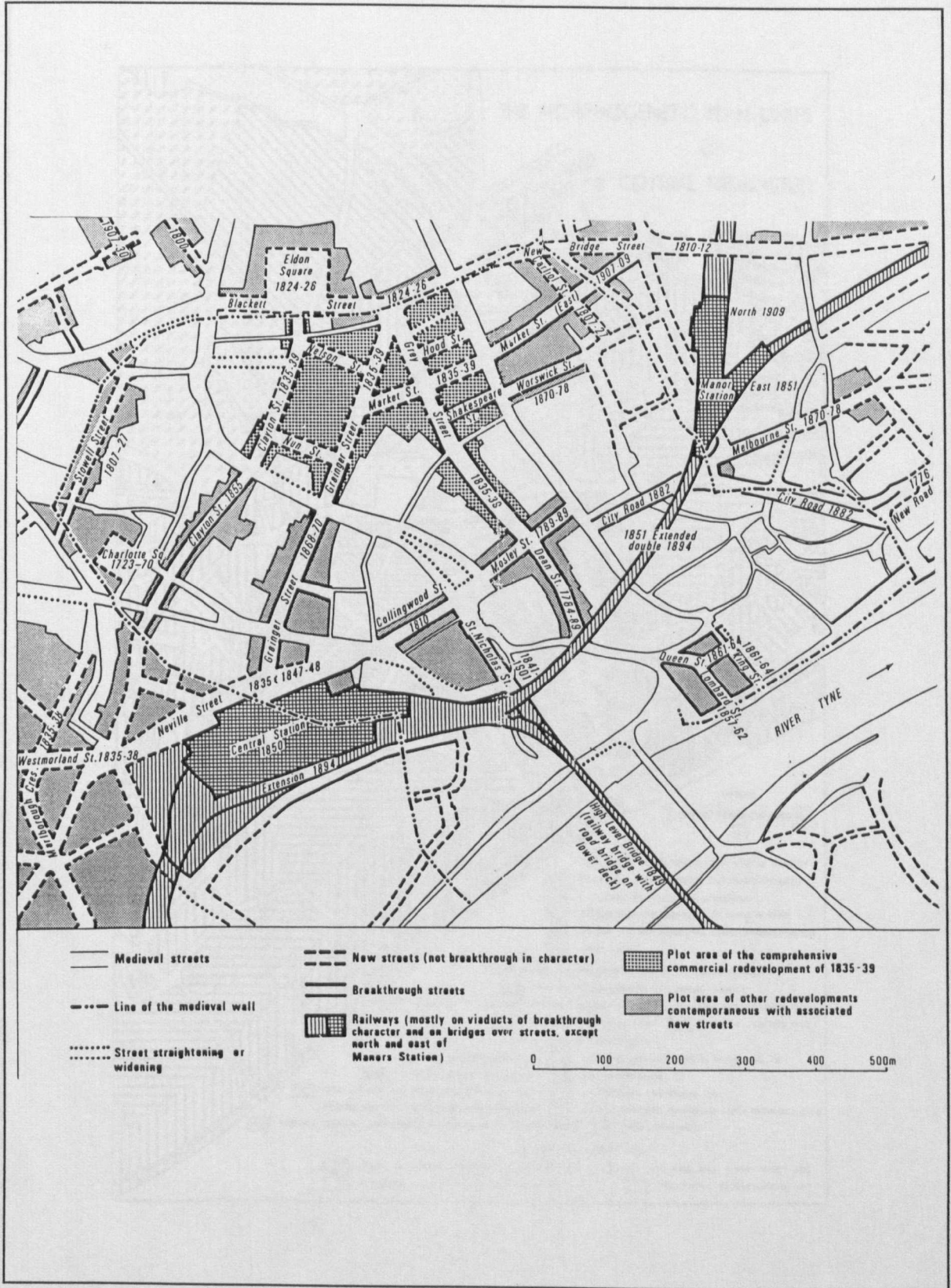


Figure 4.6; Analysis of street system development and change in central Newcastle (Conzen, 1978; figure 17, p.111 in Whitehand, 1981 (ed)).

THE MORPHOGENETIC PLAN UNITS  
OF  
CENTRAL NEWCASTLE

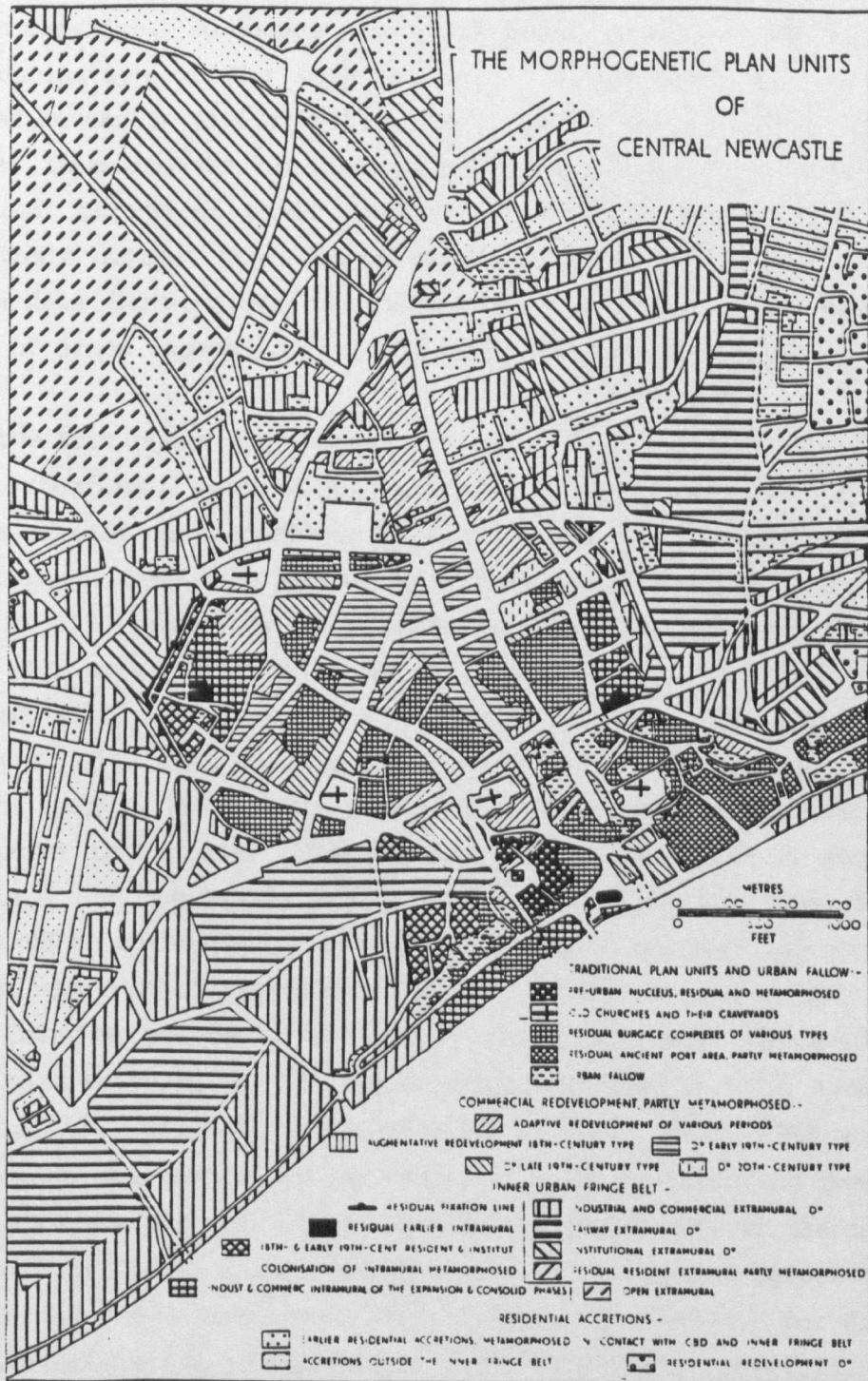


Figure 4.7; The morphogenetic plan units of central Newcastle (Conzen, 1962; figure 18, p.51 in Whitehand, 1981 (ed)).

dynamic central areas, the processes of transformation have left few plot series in a completely unaltered state, and all demonstrate a degree of alteration overtime. To demonstrate these transformations, the present study uses a combination of the mapping techniques employed by Conzen in his analysis of Newcastle (1962; 1978). The composite map indicates plot changes and street developments, colour coded to correspond to the particular morphological period of their development or redevelopment and shaded to indicate their current state in relation to their initial form. This then provides a detailed elucidation of the development of the plan, particularly key areas of urban expansion, for the two study areas (figures 4.8 and 4.9).

In the Birmingham study area, the analysis of the plan (figure 4.8) is based on cartographic evidence for seven cross-sections in time, illustrating the phases of plot development in this area from the 18th century through to 1970. The plans used were Westley's plan surveyed in 1731, Bradford's plan surveyed in 1750, Hanson's plan surveyed in 1778, The Society for Useful Knowledge plan surveyed in 1840, and O.S. plans surveyed in 1889, 1911, 1938, 1953-55 and 1970. Also used was a conjectural map, produced in the 19th century by J. Hill from various old plans and private surveys, showing the plan of the town in 1553. This provided an indication of the limited extent of development in the area occurring between the 16th century and the early 18th century. In the Bristol study area, the analysis of the plan (figure 4.9) is based on cartographic evidence for nine cross-sections in time. The plans used were Frost's reconstruction for 1250-1350 and Ricart's Plan and Calender for the period until 1480, Hoefnagle's plan surveyed in 1581, Millard's plan surveyed in 1673, Donne's plan surveyed in 1773, Ashmead's plan surveyed in 1833, and O.S. plans surveyed in 1882, 1903, 1945 and 1969-71. The final maps are composites derived from maps representing phases of the development of the plot and street system, occurring between the dates of the plans. For Birmingham, the periods covered are the period before 1731, 1731-1778, 1778-1840, 1840-1890, 1890-1938, 1938-55, 1955-1970. For Bristol, the periods covered are the period before 1480, 1480-1581, 1581-1673, 1673-1773, 1773-1833, 1833-1882, 1882-1903, 1903-1945, 1945-1969/71. Where other sources, such as historical records and photographs, were available these were used to supplement map analysis and provide more precise dating of plan changes in the two study areas. From a combination of the time-slice maps and

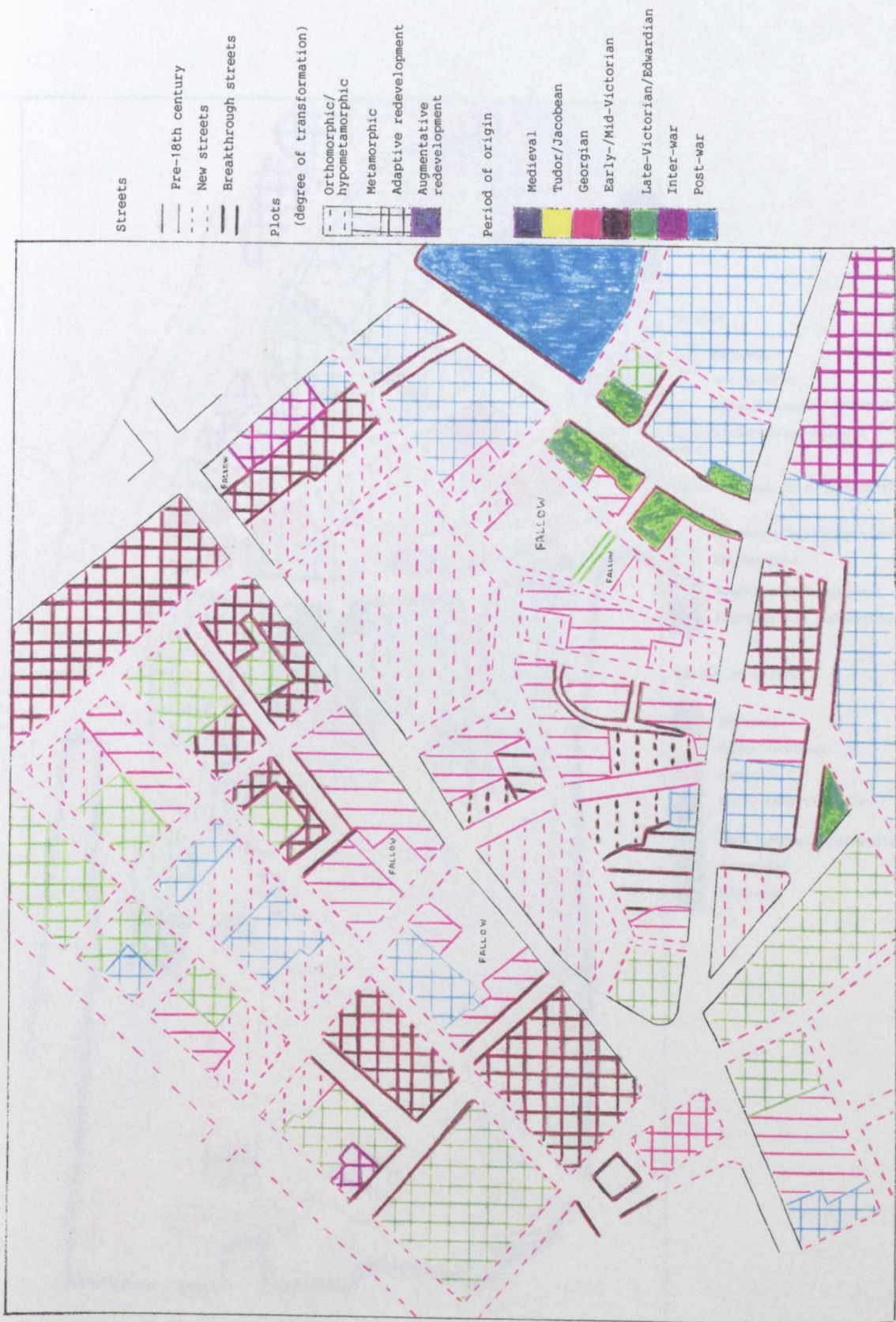


Figure 4.8; Analysis of the plan, Birmingham.



Figure 4.9; Analysis of the plan, Bristol.



historical records it was possible to link the plan changes to the key morphological periods outlined previously.

### **Building form**

Although building form is below plan in the hierarchy of form complexes, it is vital to a consideration of the visual character of an area. The terminology and methods used in the analysis of form draw on the analysis of fabric employed by Conzen in his study of Whitby (1958), and further developed in his examination of historical townscapes (Conzen, 1966). The building fabric is composed of individual buildings which can be classified morphogenetically using the criteria of original functional purpose and period of origin. The original functional purpose of the buildings consists of categories such as dwelling houses, industrial buildings, commercial buildings and community buildings, the latter two being the most common in major urban cores (Conzen, 1966). Within the study areas, the buildings are mainly commercial and community in origin, linked to the commercial transformation of these centres from the mid-19th century onwards. However, in Bristol, unlike Birmingham, some of the 17th and 18th century residential fabric remains, although it is now in commercial use. Also, within both areas, there are a number of warehouses and factories remaining, remnants of the mixed commercial-industrial nature of these inner zones in the 19th century, particularly associated with the Docks in Bristol.

These types are further divided into morphological period divisions, to produce historical type groups such as Georgian, early- and mid-Victorian, late-Victorian and Edwardian, Inter-war and Post-war. As stressed previously, to be geographically significant these period divisions must relate to formative processes of socio-economic history responsible for the creation of these types. Therefore, the visual image represented by the delimitation of these units is derived from the association of those buildings with a particular period of urban development, rather than from an association with particular architectural styles, such as palazzo, Queen Anne, etc. The key problems with the use of style to mark period of townscape transformation are that frequently in provincial centres there is a time lag in the adoption of styles and general styles undergo local adaptations. These divisions by

original functional purpose and period provide some indication of the specific characteristics of building plan, elevation and architectural style, which provides an indication of the visual impact of the building in the townscape, and a clear indication of historical stratification.

Using this classification system it is then possible to produce maps of building types, similar to those produced by Conzen for Ludow (1988) (figure 4.10). The maps of building form (figures 4.11 and 4.12) use the same colours

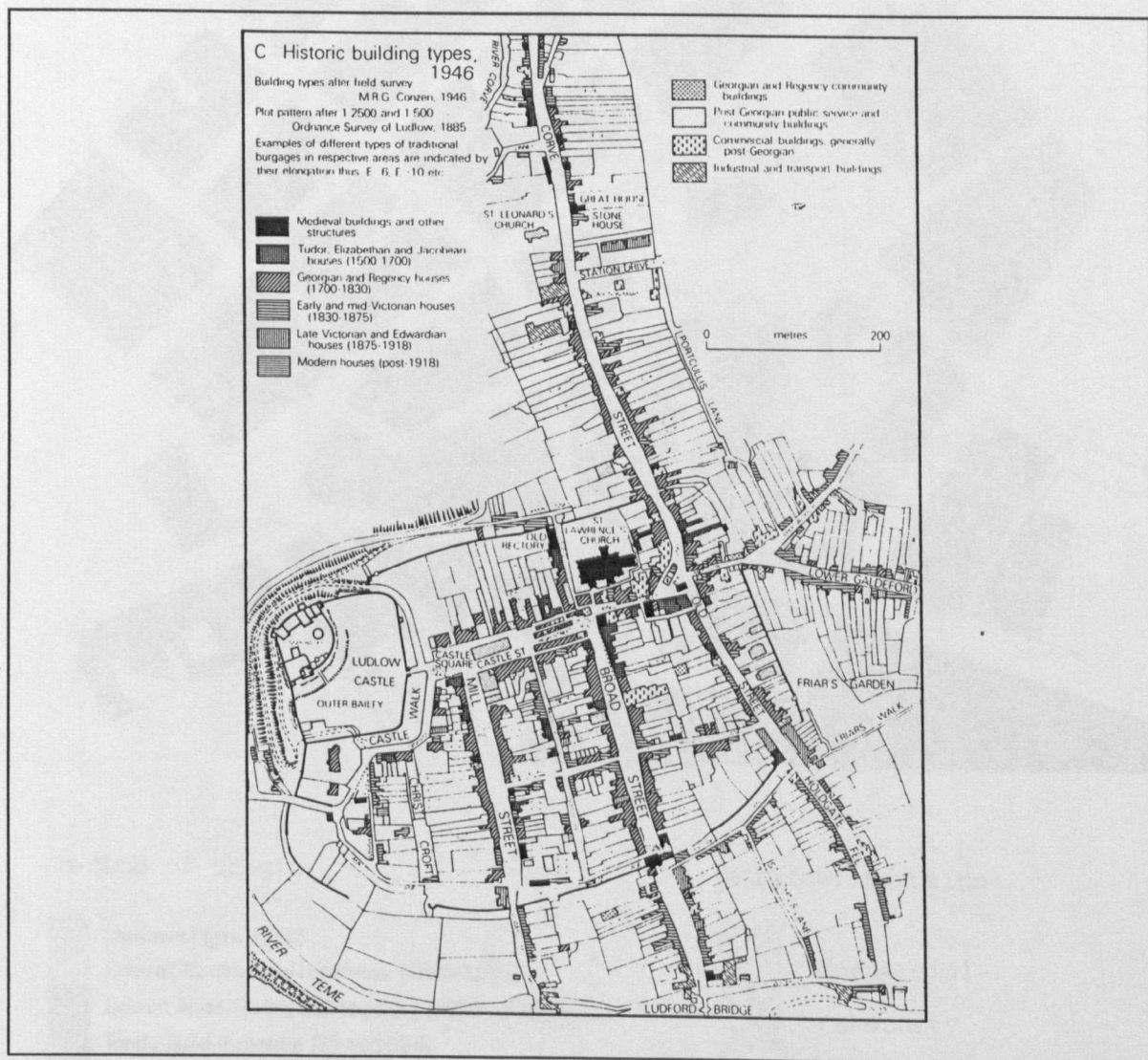
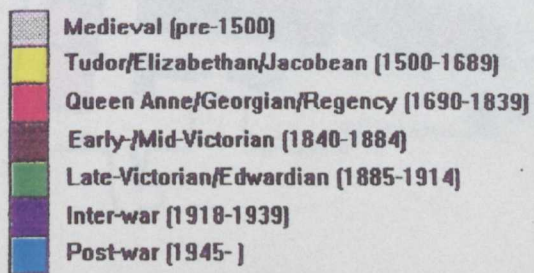


Figure 4.10; Building types, Ludlow (Conzen, 1988; figure 17.1(C), p.257 in Deneke and Shaw, 1988 (eds)).

to identify the different periods of building as those used to code periods of plan development and transformation. In the context of the present research, as the building fabric units were being defined for the start of the study in 1970, a combination of sources were used. These included direct observation of the townscape, the use of planning records and consultation of other documentary sources to classify those buildings present in 1970, both



Period of origin



Original function

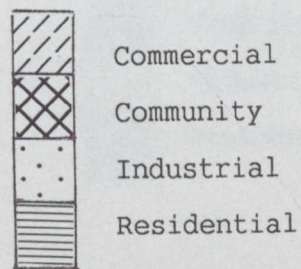


Figure 4.11; Building form, Birmingham; buildings present in 1970.

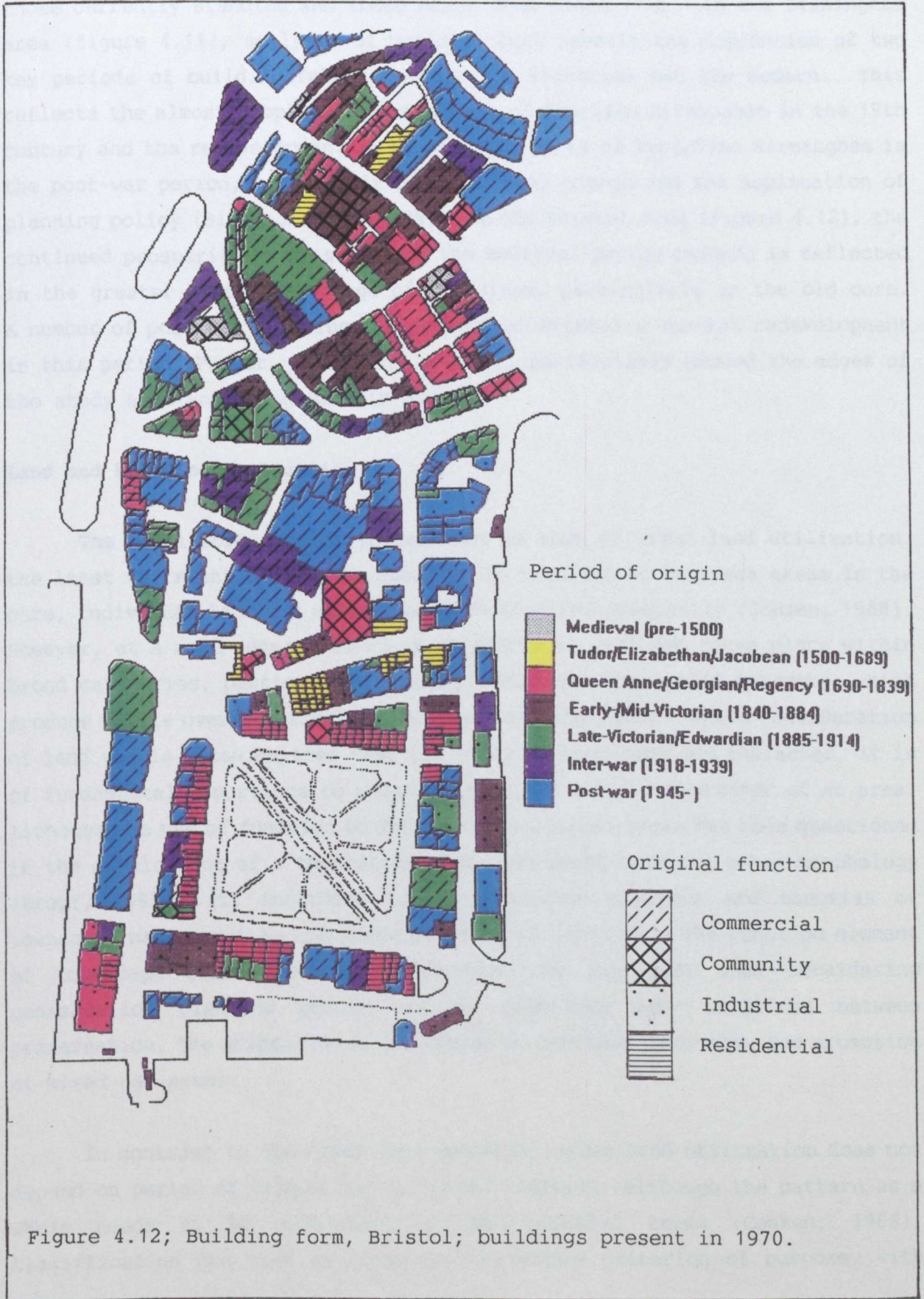


Figure 4.12; Building form, Bristol; buildings present in 1970.

those currently standing and those demolished since 1970. In the Birmingham area (figure 4.11), analysis of building form reveals the domination of two key periods of building fabric, namely the Victorian and the Modern. This reflects the almost complete redevelopment of Georgian Birmingham in the 19th century and the redevelopment of significant parts of Victorian Birmingham in the post-war period, as a result of commercial change and the application of planning policy (Birmingham CC, 1989). In the Bristol area (figure 4.12), the continued prosperity of Bristol from the Medieval period onwards is reflected in the greater historical range of buildings, particularly in the old core. A number of post-war buildings, a product of Bristol's central redevelopment in this period (Punter, 1990), are evident, particularly around the edges of the study area and along Baldwin Street.

#### **Land and building utilization**

The final form complex to consider is that of urban land utilization, the least resistant element to change. In traditional business areas in the core, individual land use units change their sites frequently (Conzen, 1988). However, at a more general level, much change in land use takes place within broad categories, particularly changes within the commercial category, which produce little overall effect on the townscape character. While consideration of land use is often omitted from the study of townscape and character, it is of fundamental importance to understanding the current character of an area. Although the use of function to define morphological areas has been questioned in the development of a theoretical and conceptual base for urban morphology (Kropf, 1993), its inclusion within townscape analysis and theories of townscape management to aid urban planning is critical. The function element of townscape classification is particularly important when considering conservation planning policy, as it underlies many conflicts between preservation, the adaptation of buildings to continue their use, and promotion of mixed-use areas.

In contrast to the other form elements, urban land utilization does not depend on period of origin for its classification, although the pattern as a whole needs to be understood in developmental terms (Conzen, 1966). Classification can then be based on the single criterion of purpose, with

element complexes illustrated by major functional categories, such as residential, commercial, industrial or community service, reflecting the classification for original function used in the categorisation of building fabric areas. Within the core areas of large cities, where land use is predominantly commercial, further subdivision is required to produce a more detailed classification of land use types. This aids the identification of particular functional areas, such as office and retail areas which possess distinct characteristics.

Using the functional classifications employed by Conzen in his study of Whitby (1958) as a starting point, a more detailed functional classification was developed, including residential, commercial, and industrial uses, although only part was used in the present study. This more detailed classification of function drew on DoE land use classifications (DoE, 1987b), and on a more differentiated retail classification (Barrett, 1989) (Appendix 2), based on that developed by Potter (1981). The classification developed offers differing scales of resolution (figure 4.13), 9 of the 10 intermediate categories being used in the current study. Vacancy is not noted as a category, as the use of the building is vital for the delimitation of regions. Where a property was vacant in 1970, the last recorded use of the building was taken as its function. However, evidence of long term vacancy was noted separately, as discussion of this represents a key conservation issue.

The function classified in the analysis is taken as the ground floor function, except when the dominant economic use for the building is not at ground floor, such as in the case of a major office block with ground floor entrance. Often a non-primary retail use exists on the ground floor, although this is a small percentage of the overall use, and could give a false impression of function. Conversely, in those parts of the city designated as primary retail areas in planning documentation the ground floor retail use of buildings in these areas is dominant, and any offices in upper storeys are classed as a secondary land use. The problem of mixed commercial functions within buildings was not addressed by Conzen specifically, with most of his analyses of commercial cores combining retail and office uses. In this study, the dominant use of a building is used, but a future consideration may be a classification to cover the mixing of uses (e.g. retail/offices or retail/

<u>Town Resolution</u>	<u>Area Resolution</u>	<u>Sub-Area Resolution</u>
Shops/Businesses/ Professional Services	Food	includes Barrett, 1989 (1); DoE, 1987 b (A3 & food in A1)
	Retail	includes Barrett, 1989 (3,4 (ex. amusement), 5 (ex. cleaners, optician, laundrette, betting), 6,7,8 (ex. medical, hair) 9); DoE, 1987b (ex. P.O., sandwiches, hair, funerals, washing, cleaning.)
	Other Services	medical (not NHS), funeral, driving school, hotels (DoE, 1987b, C1), cleaners, hair-dressers, betting, laundrette, nursery, leisure (ex. swimming), amusement, cinema
	Professional and Financial	includes Barrett, 1989 (2); DoE, 1987b (A2, ex. betting; B1)
Public/Community	Public or Community	includes Barrett, 1989 (11 inc. swimming); DoE, 1987b (D1 ex. nursery and medical non-NHS)
Industrial Premises/ Builders Yards/ Storage	Warehouse/Storage	DoE, 1987b (B8)
	Manufacturing/ Light Industry	light industry, r&d; DoE, 1987b (B1, B2)
	Other Industry	DoE, 1987b (B2-B7, special industrial groups A-E)
Residential	Residential	residential; DoE, 1987b (dwellings C3, hostels (C2))
Open Land	Development Site	

Figure 4.13; Function classification (see Appendix 2 for elements contained within the DoE, 1987b and Barrett, 1989 categories).

residential), particularly since current planning policies favour more mixed-use developments and encourage the use of upper floors.

As the delimitation of land utilization units for the two study areas was being carried out retrospectively for 1970, information on function was obtained from Business Directories, specifically Kelly's Business Directories. These directories, produced until the mid-1970s, detail the name and type of business, or name of private residential owner, for all properties within a town or city. The arrangement of the entries, in alphabetical street order, facilitated the extraction of land utilisation data for those properties within the two study areas. The maps of land utilization produced show the occurrence of the intermediate land use categories within the two study areas in 1970 (figures 4.14 and 4.15). It should be noted, that as the description of land utilization is not dependent on morphological periods, the shading scheme adopted on the maps detailing the land utilization pattern merely represents the different land uses present. In both study areas, commercial and public/community functions dominate, with professional and financial offices being a key component in each area. However, the areas differ in their other main land use component. In the Birmingham area (figure 4.14), a significant part of the primary retail area lies within the study area, with retail functions clustered around New Street and Corporation Street. In the Bristol area (figure 4.15), while less retailing exists, the primary retail zone being outside the study area, a significant amount of warehousing is present, principally to the south of the study area around the Floating Harbour allied to the Docks.

#### **DELIMITATION AND ANALYSIS OF TOWNSCAPE UNITS**

In line with the method of analysis outlined above, the variations within plan, building form and land use identified from the examination of these form elements were used as the basis for delimiting units for each of the form complexes. The delimitation of these units is based on the schema developed by Conzen (1988) for his analysis of Ludlow (see figure 4.4, p.116), using a similar labelling system to that employed by him in his plan analysis of Alnwick (1969) (see figure 4.2, p.115). However, the current analysis does not employ the sequential numbering system used by Conzen for the 4th (lower)



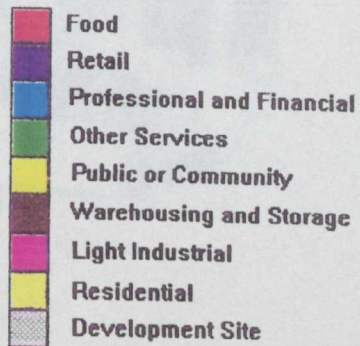


Figure 4.14; Land utilisation, Birmingham, 1970.

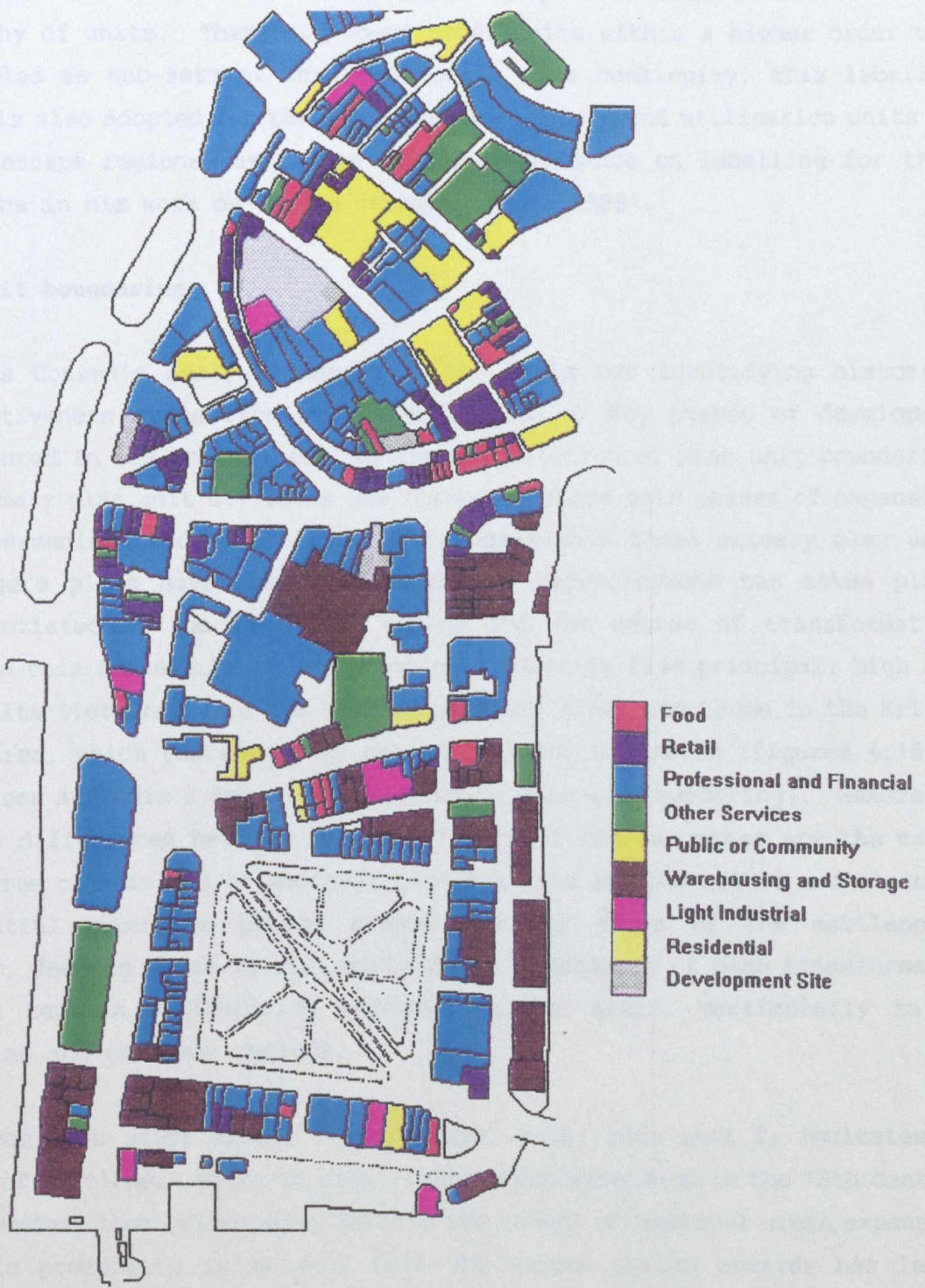


Figure 4.15; Land utilisation, Bristol, 1970.

order plan units, as this method seems to produce some confusion in the hierarchy of units. Therefore lower order units within a higher order unit are labeled as sub-sets of this unit only. For continuity, this labelling schema is also adopted for the building form units, land utilisation units and the townscape regions, as Conzen offers no guidance on labelling for these divisions in his work on Ludlow (Conzen, 1966; 1988).

### **Plan unit boundaries**

As Conzen's analysis suggests, the basis for identifying historical distinctiveness stems from an identification of key phases of development represented in the urban plan. In the delimitation of plan unit boundaries, the primary plan unit divisions are formed by these main phases of expansion. The intermediate and lower order divisions within these primary plan units show where plots have been transformed or redevelopment has taken place, differentiated by the timing of change and the degree of transformation. Based on this framework, it is possible to identify five principal, high rank plan units (1st Order) in the Birmingham study area, and three in the Bristol study area, which represent key phases of urban expansion (figures 4.16 and 4.17) (see Appendix 3 for an explanation of plan unit numbering). Generally, the key differences between the plan frames of the two areas are the extent and degree of survival of medieval plan features and the nature and timing of residential expansion phases around the old cores of the settlements. However, despite these initial differences, processes of plan transformation exhibit certain similarities between the two areas, particularly in the Victorian and post-war periods.

For both study areas, the principal rank, plan unit I, indicates the extent of settlement prior to significant urban expansion in the 18th century. This boundary then principally defines the extent of medieval urban expansion. Economic prosperity in Bristol from the Norman period onwards has left a significant medieval plan legacy, reflecting its status as a town during the medieval period. Consequently, it has a larger medieval plan legacy than Birmingham, which was a minor settlement at this time with little significant building. However, it should be noted that the study area in Birmingham does not encompass the medieval core of the settlement, which was around the Bull





Ring and Digbeth. In Birmingham, the boundary of plan unit I defines the western extent of the Tudor town. There was very little outward expansion of the settlement west along New Street before the 18th century (Gill and Robertson, 1938; Chalklin, 1989). The area beyond this remained primarily as farm land and orchards, with the exception of a few isolated dwellings. The only roads developed by this period were those along the present lines of New Street, Pinfold Street, Colmore Row and Bull Street. Due to the intensity of redevelopment pressures in the late 18th and 19th centuries, nothing except the street system survives from Birmingham's medieval past in this area.

In the Bristol area, the Saxon origins and Medieval prosperity of the town are clearly represented in the morphological legacy of plot and street patterns within the old walled core of the city (First order, unit I), which distinguishes this area from later developments. Medieval Bristol developed from the site of the original fortified Saxon *burh* and port on the north bank of the Avon, as the town's power and influence grew in the post-Conquest period (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975; Douglas, 1976). As with other walled towns, such as Newcastle (Conzen, 1962), the morphological legacy of the wall forms a fixation line which is preserved in the ring system of streets that once skirted it, St. Nicholas Street, Leonard Lane, Bell Lane and Tower Lane. This forms the divide between intramural and extramural development (Conzen, 1962). In Bristol, the intramural area is represented by second order plan units IA and IB, whilst the extramural area is represented by second order units IC and ID. The intramural area within this early wall was divided into four quarters by the intersection of the four main streets - High Street, Broad Street, Corn Street and Wynch Street (later Wine Street), again this street plan is still evident. These streets terminated in the four main gateways: St Nicholas' Gate, St Leonard's Gate, Old Gate (later New Gate), and St John's Gate.

The prosperity gained by Bristol from its trading and political importance in the 12th and 13th centuries precipitated a number of plan developments in the core. This exemplifies early control of urban development, through autocratic planning by ruling élites for reasons of enhancing trading influence or to protect power (Burtenshaw et al, 1991). In the mid-13th century harbour improvements were undertaken to provide a deep

harbour for Bristol, with the main development being the diversion of the Frome from its course skirting the old wall into a new deep channel. The area around Broad Quay became the main dock for ocean going ships, while smaller inland trade vessels continued up the Avon putting in at the old quay, which became known as the Welsh Back. Of this Medieval quayside development little remains, owing to redevelopment in the 19th and 20th centuries, although a transformed legacy of some small medieval plots is evident in secondary unit IC along Broad Quay. The diversion of the Frome and the development of the quays precipitated suburban development beyond the city wall and on to the marsh area between the Avon and the new channel of the Frome, particularly the development of Marsh Street and Bast Street (Back Street, later Queen Charlotte Street). This extramural suburb, part of the parish of St Stephen, was enclosed by a new outer city wall in the mid-13th century, running from New Gate to Frome Gate near St John's Gate (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975), adding a further fixation line. However, these suburbs beyond the walls were comparatively thinly populated, with physical expansion of the city's boundaries virtually ceasing during the 14th and 15th centuries, due to the reduction of population caused by the Black Death of 1348-9 and subsequent visitations of the plague (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975).

Therefore, within Bristol, as in the core of other settlements that grew during the Medieval period, the Medieval plan frame exhibits a significant degree of form persistence, particularly in the case of the street and alleys. As Conzen (1969; p7) noted in the case of Alnwick:

"Even where plots have been altered (and few central areas escape this form of change entirely), the plot pattern as a whole is full of residual features from earlier periods and may in fact appear unaltered in all its essential characteristics"

This then gives Bristol's core an important historical legacy, a high degree of morphological complexity, and a distinct character from the rest of the city centre despite almost complete building redevelopment from the Georgian period onwards. Of the medieval plan the most substantial legacy of forms remains within the intramural area of the old core, the extramural area having been exposed to almost total subsequent redevelopment. Within this intramural area, specifically secondary unit IA, both street systems and a significant plot series legacy survive, giving it a distinct pre-industrial plan character. Despite subsequent redevelopment, a number of Medieval plot series, with a characteristic long English burgage shape (Conzen, 1960),

remain in the core, with the most unaltered being around Broad Street, with smaller plots along the 'wall' streets of St Nicholas Street and St Stephen Street.

Beyond those principal units covering the pre-industrial legacy represented in the two study areas, the other principal unit divisions in the two areas are formed by the different phases of suburban residential expansion around the old settlement cores, associated with economic development and urban growth during the 17th and 18th centuries. The Dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century played an important part in this 18th century development of both Bristol and Birmingham, through the sales of monastic lands on the immediate outskirts of both settlements. In Bristol, the town was elevated to the status of a City and a Bishopric by Henry VIII following the Reformation and the Dissolution of the religious houses, and the City Corporation became the chief beneficiary of land transfers (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). By the end of the 17th century the Corporation owned between a quarter and a third of the land in the centre, including the Marsh that belonged to St Augustines (Chalklin, 1989). In Birmingham, the lands of the religious houses, principally the lands of St Thomas's Priory to the north of New Street, fell into private hands (Upton, 1993), with most of the land on the edge of Birmingham being held in large private estates after the 16th century. The transfer of lands into private and corporation hands was important in regulating the supply of land for development as both towns expanded in the 18th century, with both the Corporation in Bristol and private landowners in Birmingham becoming important agents in the development process. These areas of residential urban expansion in both the Birmingham and Bristol areas had an initial morphogenetic homogeneity and identity, resulting from the rapidity of their initial development or the degree of control exerted by the landowners, public and private, developing them.

While both study areas incorporate phases of residential expansion, associated with increases in the prosperity of Birmingham and Bristol, the nature and timing of these expansion phases differ between the two settlements. Bristol's continued mercantile capitalist prosperity, linked to the exploitation of the New World, is evident in earlier phases of residential expansion from the late 17th century (Tunbridge, 1977; Chalklin, 1989). These



date from an earlier period than the main phases of residential expansion within the manufacturing towns such as Birmingham, associated with the rise of industrial capitalism. In Bristol, trading developments and the formation of new industries, such as sugar refining and tobacco processing, were accompanied by a general growth in urban population between 1650 and 1750 and urban expansion (Chalklin, 1989). Early changes to the plan during this period parallel those observed by Conzen (1962) in Newcastle, including additions to the street system, alterations to burgages, predominately repletion and some amalgamation, and transformation of the inner fringe belt. Primarily, rebuilding in Bristol continued within the existing plan frame, with plots within the central city experiencing plot repletion, with plot tails increasingly filled up with workshops, warehouses and cottages, a common pattern of urban development (Conzen, 1962; 1978). The increasing concentration of dwellings within the Medieval walls is illustrated on pictorial maps of the 16th and 17th centuries, such as Hoefnagle's plan of 1581 and Millard's plan of 1673.

In addition to this intensification of building coverage in the core, Bristol also expanded outwards during this period of prosperity. While some of this residential accretion took place on private land in the wealthy areas of St Augustine's in the west and St Michael's Hill in the north, the principal developments were the Corporation controlled schemes on the site left by the demolition of the Castle, and on the Marsh between the Avon and the Frome (Chalklin, 1989). In the study area this residential development on the Marsh is represented by principal plan units II and III. The King Street development on the Marsh was the first residential development for wealthy merchants undertaken by the Corporation, with eighteen leases registered in 1664 (principal plan unit II). The success of this development led to further residential development by the Corporation on the Marsh at the turn of the century, finally developing the last piece of open land within the area (Chalklin, 1989). The ambitious Queen Square development, begun in 1699 and finished in 1718, and the spacious Prince Street, begun in 1725 (both principal plan unit III), changed the style of residential development for the élite in Bristol, introducing squares and brick building, which were later fully developed in Clifton (Tunbridge, 1977). These new developments were planned around a number of residential squares, terraces and crescents,

paralleling fashionable developments in London, and other expanding provincial ports, such as Liverpool (Chalklin, 1974) and Newcastle (Conzen, 1962). The existence of a sizeable wealthy class in Bristol meant that many of the suburban developments undertaken were for the élite (Baigent, 1988), unlike later developments in many of the growing manufacturing towns, such as Birmingham and Manchester (Chalklin, 1974) and Cardiff (Lewis, 1979), with resulting differences in the style and layout of these residential areas. A substantial part of the plot series from these developments survives around King Street, Queen Square and on one side of Prince Street, despite subsequent commercial redevelopment around the Docks in the 19th and 20th centuries and Second World War bomb damage.

For a provincial town, like Birmingham, which expanded rapidly in the 18th century, planned residential extension areas also form a key plan legacy around the core. While, as in Bristol, some of the early developments were built for the growing industrial élite, the majority of these developments catered for the expanding artisan populations of these rapidly industrialising towns (Chalklin, 1974). While the 18th century formed one of the key phases of development in the Birmingham study area, little evidence of it remains in the townscape beyond a legacy of streets and plot series in the area, as a consequence of commercial redevelopment in the 19th century. There were two distinct phases of development activity during the 18th century in the central area (Chalklin, 1974) which are reflected in the study area. The first modest developments at the beginning of the 18th century, catering for the growing wealthy élite, were between Bull Street and Dale End on former Priory land owned by John Pemberton (just outside the study area) (Upton, 1993). The development, initiated by Pemberton, reflected the aesthetic context of the time, centred on a planned Square (later Old Square), paralleling other developments such as those in London and Bristol (Chalklin, 1989).

Within the Birmingham study area, principal plan units II, including the cathedral, Temple Row, Temple Row West and Temple Street, also form part of this initial development impetus by wealthy landowners. It encompasses the first phase of westward urban expansion in the 18th century, visible on Westley's plan of 1731. The building of St Philips church (now the cathedral) between 1709 and 1715 on donated land, designed by Thomas Archer, provided a

focus for the development of large houses in this area along the new streets of Temple Row and Temple Street. While no housing from this period survives, the 18th century plot pattern remains around Temple Row and Temple Street, least altered at the junctions of Temple Street with Temple Row and New Street on the eastern side. Around the cathedral there are also examples of this relic plot series, including the former site of the Blue Coat school.

It was not until the middle part of the 18th century that housing development in this part of Birmingham began in earnest, linked to the more rapid increases in population between 1746 and 1754 (Chalklin, 1974). This prompted the absentee Colmore family to lease their abandoned New Hall Estate, to the north of St Philips church, for building, denoted by principal plan unit III. Following the grant of an Act of Parliament in 1746 to Ann Colmore, the estate was divided under the Colmore's control into streets and plots to be leased for building. Plots were leased on 99 and 120 year leases (Chalklin, 1974), with most of the plots in the first phase of development, as far as Great Charles Street, leased by 1750. Building reached Edmund Street by 1750 and Great Charles Street by 1778, evident on Hanson's plan of 1778. The area was laid out on a classical grid pattern, again reflecting fashionable estate developments in London, with wide streets named after the Colmore's children and regular plots of various sizes, between 5 and 30 yards wide. The first plots along Colmore Row and Edmund Street were around 7 X 44 yards, giving the first houses here large gardens. As building moved further to the north of the Estate towards St Paul's Square, plots became smaller and the development of court housing and workshops behind houses fronting the street took place, (Chalklin, 1974). This light industrial development was fuelled by the extension into the area of the canal, built between 1768 and 1778 (Chalklin, 1974; Large, 1984).

The Colmore Estate area remained a homogeneous area of Georgian townscape until the mid-Victorian period, when the renewal of leases prompted redevelopment. Despite the total redevelopment of the Georgian building fabric on the Colmore Estate during this period, the Georgian street layout and some of the plot series remain (unit IIIDi). Some of the least altered of the Georgian plots in the area are found along Newhall Street, particularly near its junction with Cornwall Street, where redevelopment heeded the earlier

plot boundaries. Remnants of the Georgian plot pattern can also be found along Colmore Row, although these are in a more metamorphosed state, as a breakthrough street, Barwick Street, was inserted and the commercial redevelopment along here was on a grander scale, leading to plot amalgamation.

While the Colmore Estate was the main area of new housing development in the mid 18th century, other estates with open land to the south and west of New Street were also being developed. The areas initially developed between 1750 and 1778 were those between New Street and Pinfold Street, part of the Inge Estate, and the area to the south of Pinfold Street, part of the Gooch Estate, principal plan unit IV. The absence of strong estate control, and the poorer position and quality of the land led to the development of densely packed, poor quality court housing and workshops in this area, with small plots and an extensive network of alleys (Chalklin, 1974). In common with the Colmore Estate, the area came under pressure from the expanding commercial core in the mid-19th century. Large-scale Victorian commercial redevelopments obliterated all of the 18th century fabric and most of the 18th century plot pattern, although most of the street system and some plots remain from this period.

By the early part of the 19th century the core of Birmingham was beginning to change from a mixed residential and commercial area into a predominantly commercial district. This changing role is illustrated by the development of the last block of open land in the study area in the 1830s, which was the first to be developed specifically for commercial purposes (principal plan unit V). The land had avoided development during the residential boom of the mid 18th century, as it had been leased in 1698 on a 120 year lease and was therefore unavailable (Whybrow and Waterhouse, 1976). Development began in 1827 with the laying out of two streets, Waterloo Street and Bennett's Hill, and the development of regular rectangular building plots from the late Georgian to the early Victorian period, some of which truncated the rear of earlier plots previously developed along Temple Street and Temple Row West. Despite substantial redevelopment during the late-Victorian and inter-war periods, many original plot boundaries from the initial phase of development remained in the area in 1970.

While all the principal plan units covering the two study areas retain plan legacies, usually the street system and less frequently plot series, from their initial period of development, significant changes to the plan have occurred from the 18th century onwards. This is not surprising given the dynamic nature of the city centre environment covered by the study areas. For both central areas, the key change precipitating the transformation of their plans was the transition of these areas from mixed residential and commercial areas to purely commercial districts in the Victorian period, and the increasing scale of this commercial redevelopment in the modern period. This process of transformation and redevelopment has produced a number of second to fourth order sub-divisions within the principal plan units, reflecting the erosion of their initial period homogeneity. Differentiation within each principal plan unit results from differences in the timing of redevelopment within the Victorian and modern periods, and the degree to which the original plot series was transformed.

Generally, in both centres, whereas growth had been slow and additive until the 18th century it accelerated and became more transformative after this. Increasing civic pride and commercial affluence led to a number of plan transformations and to the development of new public buildings (administrative, religious, charitable) and commercial buildings, including banks, hotels and inns. In Bristol, these processes of commercial transformation and civic action in urban replanning began in the 18th century, whereas in Birmingham the main period of urban restructuring in the core did not begin until the mid-19th century. In both centres, the transformations of the plan from the 18th century onwards can be divided into two main types. Firstly, the general commercial transformation of the cores increased the scale of development, precipitating plot pattern metamorphosis through the amalgamation of plots. Secondly, more fundamental reorganisation of the plan of both cores was achieved as a consequence of the development of large scale commercial concerns, including railways and docks facilities, and the increasing involvement of municipal corporations in the large-scale replanning of cities, leading to the complete adaptive and augmentative redevelopment of earlier plot series. The transformation of both centres by commercial and civic developments, including plot redevelopment and street layout alterations, parallel those occurring in other expanding large cities, such

as those noted in Newcastle by Conzen (1978).

In Birmingham, the most important commercial event precipitating plan change in the central area was the arrival of the railways in the mid-19th century. The development of New Street and Snow Hill stations within the area provided two key nodes around which the redevelopment of the centre took place. Snow Hill station, was the first to be opened in 1852, completely redeveloping a large block of 18th century buildings on the edge of the Colmore Estate (plan unit **IIIE**). The building of New Street Station between 1847 and 1854 prompted the comprehensive redevelopment of a large part of the 18th century street system and plot pattern just to the south of New Street (plan unit **IAiii**). Units **IVD** and **IVBii**, indicate plan changes from this period, formed by the development of the breakthrough street Stephenson Street. Unit **IVD** contains the Midland Hotel one of the many hotels built in association with the development of the railway. In Bristol the development of the Grand Hotel (unit **IAii**) in the core can be seen as part of the commercial transformation associated with the development of the railways. However, in the Bristol area, plan redevelopment linked directly to railway expansion did not occur, as the area was not close to railway development at Temple Meads and the passenger dock facilities.

In both Birmingham and Bristol, municipal corporations played a key role in initiating major plan changes in their respective cores, as their role in the provision of infrastructure and services increased. Municipal reform in 1835 brought an expanded role for Urban Corporations in urban redevelopment in both centres. In the mid- to late-Victorian period both Corporations became increasingly involved in road improvements and court and tenement housing clearance. However, in Bristol, the Corporation was active in stimulating change through the modernization of the narrow streets in the city centre from the 18th century. In 1733 the Carfax was opened up by the removal of the High Cross, and many of the city gates were also removed, facilitating commercial and civic redevelopment. St Leonard's and Blind Gate were removed in 1770 to open the approach to the new breakthrough street, Clare Street (third order plan unit **IDii**). The Corporation sought to tackle street congestion by the removal of markets from the streets, and the building of new covered market buildings, augmenting the medieval plot pattern (third order

plan unit IAiii) (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). In common with other cities, the development of market facilities provided a nucleus around which retail redevelopment took place, particularly in the 19th century (Shaw and Wild, 1979).

In the mid-19th century, Birmingham became well known for its pioneering urban redevelopment schemes and zealous municipalisation programmes and 'civic gospel' developed under Joseph Chamberlain in the 1860s and 1870s (Sutcliffe, 1974; Cherry, 1988). The most significant plan development in central Birmingham in the 19th century was the cutting of the imposing new commercial boulevard, Corporation Street, linking New Street and Aston Street (plan unit ICi). This breakthrough street was built by the City Council, between 1878 and 1903, and sought to improve Birmingham's standing as a regional service centre, whilst also removing slum housing from the core. Bristol Corporation also initiated a number of urban development schemes in the late 19th century, including the commercial breakthrough street Baldwin Street, as the city sought to develop a 'civic gospel' to parallel that of cities such as Birmingham (Cherry, 1988). The road improvements around Baldwin Street, the breakthrough street Telephone Avenue and the widened Queen Charlotte Street and Marsh Street prompted the total redevelopment of the area between the old core and Queen Square in the 19th century (secondary plan unit ID).

In Birmingham, the redevelopment of parts of the core for new civic buildings also prompted significant plan changes. In the west of the study area, the Council used its increasing powers to acquire a large block of land and obliterated the 18th century plot pattern to build the Council House between Edmund Street and Colmore Row (unit IIIB), next to the first civic redevelopment in the area, the Town Hall built in the 1830s (unit IIIA). As the power of local government increased towards the end of the 19th century, other parts of the Georgian townscape in the area were redeveloped for civic use, with the addition of a Museum and Art Gallery to the Council House in 1885 (unit IIIB), and the building of a separate extension built between 1910 and 1912 (unit IIIC) (Birmingham CC, 1989). During the late-19th century the Colmore Estate area became the main municipal and civic area, reinforced by the redevelopment of parts of the estate for hospitals (the Eye Hospital and the Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital) and educational facilities (including

School Board offices, the Art School and the Birmingham and Midland Institute). The importance that this area had attained as a result of the civic developments by the late-Victorian period, was underlined by the redevelopment of court housing for a new Post Office opposite the Town Hall in the 1880s (unit **IVB**). This increasing significance of the post office at this time is also evident in Bristol, with the development of a new post office in the old core in the late-Victorian period, the only significant plan redevelopment from this period in the core (unit **IAiv**).

In both study areas, large-scale commercial plan changes and civic developments formed the focus around which more general commercial transformation of the core took place. In Bristol, much of the commercial redevelopment in the Georgian and Victorian periods was piecemeal redevelopment within the core, which occurred within the existing Medieval plan frame. However, the more intense commercial transformation of Small Street and Corn Street, associated with its emergence as the financial core of Bristol, created a plan division within the core, between the metamorphosed plots in this area (unit **IAv**) and those along Broad Street which remained relatively intact, despite building redevelopment (unit **IAi**). Redevelopment around Broad Street focused on the provision of offices for the legal profession, on a smaller scale than those developed for the banks along Corn Street. A similar division is also evident in the mid- to late-19th century redevelopment of the Colmore Estate in Birmingham. Along Colmore Row, the first phase of redevelopment of the Georgian residential townscape by financial institutions increased the scale of development, leading to the transformation of the plot series through plot amalgamation, similar to that occurring in Corn Street, Bristol. However, the offices between the Colmore Row redevelopments and Great Charles Street, developed for professionals such as doctors, dentists, architects etc, were at a smaller, 'domestic' 3-4 storey scale, which continued the scale of the previous Georgian development, adapting to existing plot patterns.

In the Birmingham area, the other key commercial impetus for plan change represented was the development of specialist shopping provision in the Victorian period, a process common to many urban centres at the time (Briggs, 1956; Shaw and Wild, 1979; Shaw, 1988). As a consequence of the intensity of



this retail development all of the 18th century retail fabric was replaced by Victorian commercial development at an increased scale, adapting the 18th century plot pattern, for example along New Street and Temple Street. While individual developments had a considerable impact on the retail landscape, more comprehensive plot changes, initiated by the development of shopping streets (noted above), department stores and arcades had the most significant impact on the plan of the retail area. The construction of covered shopping arcades, such as the Great Western Arcade (unit **IF**) and the City Arcade (unit **ICiii**), was an important feature associated with retail development in a number of cities that grew rapidly in the Victorian era, such as Leeds and Newcastle (MacKeith, 1986). This retail transformation was also evident in the Bristol area, to a certain extent, although the main shopping area developed to the east of the study area along Wine Street.

In the modern period, both the increasing scale of commercial operation and the increased powers of local authorities in planning, served to increase the scale of plan transformation in both city cores. In both areas, bomb damage during the Second World War presented the opportunity for large-scale commercial redevelopment. Consequently, in the post-war period, both councils produced comprehensive redevelopment plans for their centres. In both cores, the bulk of the post-war plan redevelopment lies around the edges of these historic areas, although areas of piecemeal post-war comprehensive redevelopment exist within both areas, linked to the rise in the speculative commercial property market.

In Birmingham, the most significant area of post-war comprehensive redevelopment exists in the retail area centred on New Street and Corporation Street. Part of this redevelopment, along the north side of New Street (unit **IA**), was associated with rebuilding following bomb damage during World War Two, which destroyed the Victorian arcades in this area. This block also includes post-war commercial redevelopment resulting from the disposal of Council freeholds along Corporation Street to private commercial operators such as C&A, and pension funds such as Commercial Union. The Commercial Union development, is an augmentative post-war redevelopment of a shopping square and office block, which obliterated the Victorian commercial development associated with the breakthrough Martineau Street. The Rackhams redevelopment

(unit IIB) is also part of this redevelopment trend. Around the edges of the study area in Birmingham, there is also post-war office redevelopment linked to the redevelopment associated with the construction of the Inner Ring Road, such as along Suffolk Street and Great Charles Street. The bombing of central Bristol, in 1940, had destroyed over a quarter of the medieval core in a single night, specifically Wine Street and Castle Street, the city's main shopping streets (Punter, 1990). Unit IA covers that part of the medieval core remaining, while unit IB indicates that part of the core destroyed by bombing, which became an area of comprehensive redevelopment within the 1944 Reconstruction Plan for Central Bristol (Punter, 1990). Around the harbour edges of the study area, further bomb damage led to the post-war alteration of the plot series here, although in a more piecemeal fashion than the Wine Street area.

The other key feature of post-war plan redevelopment in both study areas has been the piecemeal commercial redevelopment of the plan, although in both areas this was mainly confined to particular areas of Victorian townscape. In Birmingham, the sale of the freehold of the majority of the Colmore Estate in the post-war period to private firms and property companies eroded the homogeneity of the area. Units IIID and IIIH are good examples of the way in which post-war redevelopment has eroded the Georgian and Victorian plot patterns. This piecemeal redevelopment of the area has resulted in problems in defining the conservation area boundary in the north of the area, which sought to exclude these post-war intrusions. In Bristol, while the post-war plans acknowledged the importance of some building control in the Medieval core and Queen Square areas, areas of Victorian townscape, such as Corn Street and Baldwin Street were not considered important to retain, and were designated for compulsory purchase and road widening (Punter, 1990). Due to this lack of concern for the Victorian townscape, little attempt was made to preserve these areas from redevelopment by private developers in the post-war period. Therefore, it is around Baldwin Street, Marsh Street and Queen Charlotte Street that most post-war comprehensive plan redevelopment took place.

Overall, the plans of both areas retain important legacies from their main periods of significant plan addition. For the Bristol area, plan element

legacies remain from both the Medieval and Georgian periods, whilst in Birmingham a significant Georgian plan legacy remains. Both centres exhibit plan changes, principally plot metamorphosis, associated with the transformation of these areas into commercial cores in the 19th century. However, in the Birmingham area the scale of this plan transformation was greater as a result of the influence of railway led plan redevelopment and the impact of municipal redevelopment, altering many of the Georgian plot series. Finally, in the post-war period the increasing scale of commercial change has led to the piecemeal redevelopment of many plot series in both areas eroding period homogeneity, whilst post-war rebuilding plans in both areas resulted in significant plan redevelopment in parts of the study areas further eroding earlier legacies.

### **Building form unit boundaries**

According to Conzen (1988), within historic townscapes the building fabric will usually show the greatest historical stratification and variation of the form complexes. The delimitation of building form units provides an important factor in the delimitation of lower order townscape units (Conzen, 1988). Following this principle, the maps of building form units for the two study areas reveal a high number of lower order units present (figures 4.18 and 4.19) (see Appendix 3 for an explanation of building form numbering). This is particularly evident in the Bristol area (figure 4.19) where periods of significant building addition extend back to the medieval period. The main building form regions are defined by the major periods of building fabric development and replacement, with lower order units formed where this period homogeneity has been weakened by subsequent redevelopment.

While as fixed capital investments most buildings have a tendency towards persistence, within dynamic city centre environments changing economic and social forces create pressure for the adaptation, rebuilding or replacement of structures from earlier periods. In particular the transformation of these areas into commercial cores in the Victorian period, and the increasing scale of commercial operation in the post-war period, have produced significant impulses for fabric change. In the face of such impulses for change, it is usually only prominent buildings serving public functions,





such as churches and local government buildings, that survive from earlier periods. However, the nature and pattern of landownership in an area plays an important role in the timing and extent of fabric replacement. In particular the nature of leaseholding and the extent of public ownership of land are important. Public ownership of buildings can frequently preserve them from redevelopment pressures resulting from the operation of land markets.

In Birmingham, the majority of the area covered by the study area was first developed in the Georgian period between 1730 and 1830, as private estates were sold off and developed to provide housing for Birmingham's expanding population during this period (Chalklin, 1974). On the Colmore Estate a variety of house types was developed. While large double-fronted houses were developed along the main streets of the development, such as Colmore Row and Newhall Street, the majority of the housing was smaller houses of one or two rooms per floor occupying side streets (Chalklin, 1974). Yet despite some variation in the size of houses in the area, the rapidity of leasing and building gave the area a degree of homogeneity. Homogeneity in the area was ensured by limited control of building siting, size and minimum cost, enforced through the leasehold agreements established (Chalklin, 1974). Homogeneity of development was also ensured indirectly through the dominance of a particular building style ("Georgian") and building materials (brick and stone) (Chalklin, 1974). On the Gooch and Inge Estates, developed to the south of New Street, the majority of the housing was of a low standard, predominantly densely packed court houses and back-to-backs with one room per floor (Chalklin, 1974). However, rapidity of development again ensured homogeneity.

Until the Victorian period the Birmingham study area exhibited a homogeneity as an area of Georgian residential building, despite the variety in house types. However, as noted, the core of Birmingham underwent total transformation into a commercial area associated with its development as a major manufacturing city during the Victorian period. Within the Birmingham study area, the main building form divisions reflect this transition. As a result of the intensity of this period of redevelopment, little of Birmingham's Georgian fabric survives. In line with Conzen's assumption, the

only buildings from the Georgian period surviving are prominent buildings with a public function. These are the Cathedral, built at the beginning of the century in the Baroque style (unit **A**) and the Town Hall (unit **B**), built in the 1830s in the Palladian style by Hansom and Welch (Birmingham CC, 1989). Unit **Eia** covers the only remaining Georgian commercial fabric in the core, built at the end of the Georgian period as part of the first phase of development around Bennetts Hill.

To the south of Colmore Row (unit **E**), the area was redeveloped in a piecemeal fashion during the Victorian period, although Victorian development around Bennetts Hill was the first phase development of the last piece of open land in the centre. Court housing to the south of New Street was removed by Victorian commercial redevelopments such as New Street Railway Station and the Post Office (unit **Eii**). The Post Office, designed by Sir H. Tanner (McKenna, 1979; Birmingham CC, 1989), with a 'chateau' style front building and late-Victorian brick functional rear forms an important link between the palazzo civic developments around Victoria Square and the Victorian commercial townscape along New Street. The Victorian retail fabric along New Street and the Victorian commercial thoroughfare Corporation Street demonstrate a stylistic mix of mid-Victorian Palazzo (units **Eiib** and **Eiic**), and late-Victorian Gothic, Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau forms (unit **Eia**). Although these buildings are separated in terms of date of development and style, they form an identifiable whole within the townscape, all being around 4-5 storeys and constructed of ashlar, brick or terracotta.

On the Colmore Estate, as the 99 and 120 year leases came up for renewal from 1860 onwards the Georgian buildings were replaced with mid- to late-Victorian buildings (figure 4.20a). The difference in timing of lease renewal produced two phases of Victorian redevelopment in the area, the first phase of redevelopment being along Colmore Row, in the palazzo style between 1866 and 1876 (unit **C**). The commercial redevelopment of Colmore Row was led by the banks, with one of the first palazzo commercial buildings to be constructed along Colmore Row in 1866, designed by H.R. Yeoville Thomason, being for the Birmingham Town and District Bank (figure 4.20b). The Council House, also designed by Yeoville Thomason in the palazzo style and built between 1875 and 1879, forms a link between the Palladian Town Hall and the banking buildings

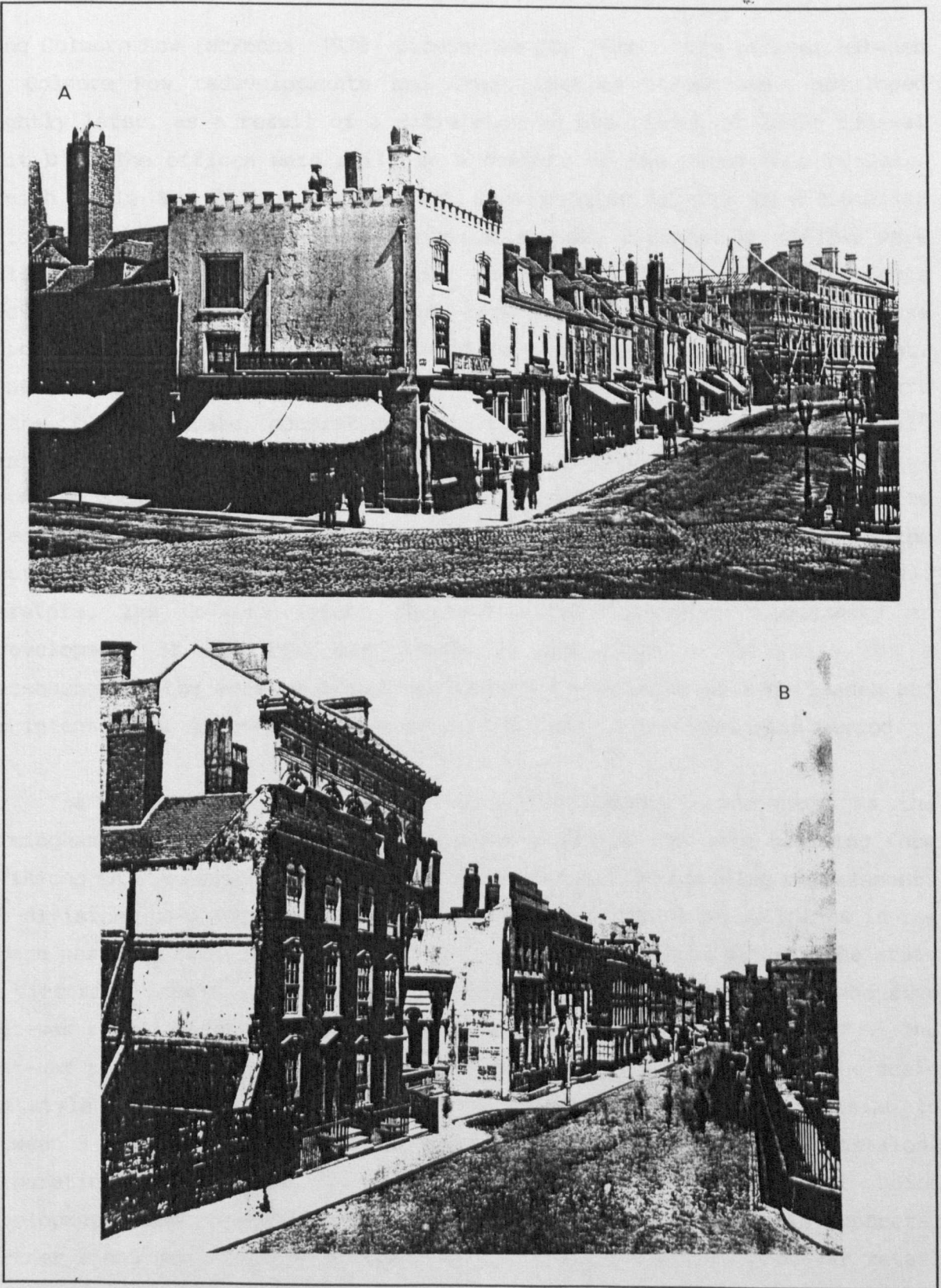


Figure 4.20; Replacement of the Georgian fabric in the 1860s and 1870s (source, McKenna, 1979).



along Colmore Row (McKenna, 1979; Birmingham CC, 1989). The offices between the Colmore Row redevelopments and Great Charles Street were developed slightly later, as a result of a difference in the timing of lease renewal (unit D). The offices were built in a mixture of the Queen Anne revival, Flemish gable and Gothic styles that were popular in the late-Victorian period. In addition to these more popular styles, a number of offices were built in the innovative Arts and Crafts style, primarily those of architects practising in the area. The smaller, 'domestic' 3-4 storey scale of these office buildings continued the scale of the previous Georgian development. Remnants of the industrial legacy can still be found in the north-eastern part of the Colmore Estate, consisting of a number of brick-built, "functional" print works, warehouses and workshops, which were constructed during the late-Victorian redevelopment of the area. Also to the west of the area, a separate extension to the Council House was built between 1910 and 1912 in the Edwardian neo-classical style by Ashley and Newman (Birmingham CC, 1989). Therefore, the Colmore Estate retained a morphogenetic homogeneity as redevelopment of the area was rapid, in the space of 40 years, as a consequence of the more or less simultaneous termination of many leases and the intensity of commercial pressure on the area in the Victorian period.

The other main period of building replacement represented in the Birmingham study area is the modern period. Within the main building form divisions in the Birmingham area representing Victorian building replacement, sub-divisions have been formed by piecemeal redevelopment of buildings in the modern period. Also, a major building form division exists between the areas of Victorian fabric with modern replacement and the area of comprehensive post-war retail redevelopment at the eastern end of New Street (unit F). The post-war redevelopment along the north side of New Street increased the scale and style of redevelopment, with new buildings in concrete and rising to between 8 and 11 storeys. Similar post-war commercial redevelopments along Corporation Street include Rackhams, C&A, and the Commercial Union development, a shopping square and office block of 12 storeys in concrete. Further along New Street, intrusion by large-scale concrete post-war retail redevelopment has been limited, with the Woolworths building being the only case (unit Eve).

Elsewhere in the Birmingham study area, office redevelopment in the modern period has created sub-divisions within unit **E**, particularly around Bennetts Hill and Temple Street, and within units **C** and **D**, covering the Colmore Estate. The area around Bennetts Hill and Waterloo Street has the highest concentration of inter-war buildings in the conservation area, represented in unit **Eiv** and units **Eva,b and c**. These inter-war office buildings are indicative of the type of developments built in many primary office areas at the time, typically portland stone faced, with some having tile-hung façades, in the English classical-deco style of the period, many containing fashionable Egyptian references. Their concentration in this area results from the timing of lease renewal of 100 year leases in the 1930s, the initial phase of development being in the 1830s (see discussion of plan unit divisions above). Other inter-war redevelopments are limited to single building developments around the conservation area, for example units **Dii a,c and e** representing inter-war office redevelopment along the widened Great Charles Street. Within units **C** and **D** covering the Colmore Estate, the piecemeal development of office buildings in the post-war period by private firms and property companies, has eroded the relative homogeneity of the area resulting from redevelopment in the Victorian period under Estate control. The fragmentation of the area resulted from the selling off of the Colmore Estate freehold in the post-war period. Unit **Civ** and units **Dii b,d and f, Diii** and **Dv** contain post-war office developments, built in concrete at an increased scale of around 8 storeys. There is also post-war office redevelopment linked to the redevelopment associated with the construction of the Inner Ring Road, along Suffolk Street, and five individual office redevelopments within the Bennetts Hill, Temple Street, and Temple Row office areas.

The configuration of building form units in Bristol is more complex than that for Birmingham, as more periods of building addition and replacement are represented in the area's built fabric, with buildings surviving from the Medieval period. However, the amount of building fabric surviving from the Medieval and Tudor periods is limited, and the earliest period from which a significant amount of building fabric survives is the Georgian period. Consequently, no major units delimiting the medieval period of building exist, the intramural core area and extramural medieval suburbs having been almost

totally redeveloped by commercial pressure from the Georgian period onwards. Of the buildings from the medieval period, only the churches survive in this area, despite the documented existence of a number of stone houses from this period. They form morphotopes of remnant medieval fabric within higher order units of later commercial redevelopment. Of the four main Norman churches within the walls, two survive; Christ Church (rebuilt in the 18th century) (unit **Hi**) and All Saints (unit **Hiia**), standing at the crossroads in the centre of the town. The other churches 'within' the walled town were those that crowned three of the principal gate ways to the town in the later Middle Ages. Of these only St John (unit **Iia**) and St Nicholas (rebuilt in the 18th century) (unit **Hi**) survive. Outside the city walls, many parish churches were rebuilt and new chapels and almshouses founded by wealthy merchants during the medieval period, for example the rebuilding of St Stephen's Church (unit **Evic**), part of the medieval expansion onto the Marsh.

While little building addition and rebuilding from the Tudor/Jacobean period remains within the medieval core, a legacy of Tudor suburban expansion and building addition remains within the area. Unit **C** covers the planned residential extension of King Street, built by the Corporation in the late 17th century. Homogeneity of form within the area was ensured by the rapidity of plot leasing, and by the imposition of strict leasing terms, including the specification of plot size, building uniformity in height and width, and the requirement to build in good timber, indicating the continuance of timber building in Bristol until the end of the 17th century (Chalklin, 1989). Important remnants of the first phase of building exist within King Street (units **Ciii** and **Cv**), as do examples of the growth in the number of charitable institutions in the Tudor period, fuelled by donations from the growing wealthy middle classes. By 1700 at least six new almshouses had been set up and older ones further endowed (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975), including St Nicholas Almshouses (1650-1652) (unit **Cv**) and the Merchant Venturers Almshouses (1696-1699) (unit **Ci**). However, the homogeneity of the King Street unit has been eroded by subsequent redevelopment in the Georgian and Victorian periods, associated with the development of the Docks. Within the core, little remains of the 16th and 17th century rebuilding of plot dominants along the main commercially valuable streets and quay areas by wealthy residents (Chalklin, 1989). Again, as a consequence of redevelopment pressures in the

city core only two outwardly 17th century buildings remain as remnant morphotopes, in Small Street (unit **Fvb**) and Broad Street (unit **Ivc**), although architectural remnants remain within redeveloped buildings within the core.

The Georgian period was one of the most significant phases of building addition and replacement in central Bristol, as the commercial activity in the core increased and the wealth of the city was expressed in new civic and commercial building. One of the first phases of Georgian residential expansion is represented in the study area (unit **A**). This delimits the Corporation initiated residential expansion scheme of Queen Square and Prince Street. In common with its previous developments, the Corporation leased the land in the development with strict building conditions, specifying a uniform development of brick and stone houses, the first time brick had been specified (Chalklin, 1989). The square's importance was underlined by the positioning of the Mansion House and the Custom House within it. Few of the original buildings from this period survive, due to the destruction of many during the 1831 Bristol Riots and redevelopment in the Victorian and Post-war periods. Therefore, numbers 66-70 Prince Street (Unit **Aiia**) and numbers 10, 17, 27-29 and 36-42 Queen Square form an important legacy from this period (unit **Aia**). However, the morphological unity of the square (unit **Aia**) was to a large extent maintained with the rebuilding of most of the houses following the 1831 riots in a similar style to the original buildings.

The Georgian period was also a key phase of building replacement within the old core of the city. Secondary unit **H** defines that part of the core redeveloped by the Corporation in an attempt to tackle street congestion through street widening, and by the further removal of markets from the streets through the building of new covered market buildings, including a new Market-House (1745), behind the Exchange (1743) (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). Other important remnant civic and commercial buildings surviving from this period include the old Post Office on Corn Street (unit **Hi**), the Merchant Tailor's Hall (1740) in Broad Street (unit **Iiii**), the Coopers Hall in King Street (unit **Civd**) and the Commercial Rooms (unit **Fivc**). Also, the sites of a number of existing civic buildings were redeveloped, including the Council House in 1704 (unit **Hi**). Several churches were also rebuilt in the fashionable classical style, including St Nicholas and Christ Church. The

increasing wealth of part of the population also led to an increase in the promotion of learning and the arts in the 18th century, reflected in the building of the Theatre (1766) (unit **Civd**) and the Library (1740) (unit **Ciid**) in King Street.

As in other cities expanding during the Victorian period, rebuilding of the core continued associated with the further commercial transformation of the area, and the growing influence of municipal corporations in urban planning. However, unlike in the Birmingham area, the Bristol area is not dominated by Victorian buildings, as a result of the longer period of rebuilding and differences in freehold and leasing in the city, with few large blocks of land available for redevelopment in this period. Areas of mid- and late-Victorian rebuilding then form both major rebuilding regions, and subdivisions within earlier building phases. One of the main areas of Victorian commercial rebuilding was around the Docks. The improvement of the Docks in the early-to mid-Victorian period, following the construction of the New Cut and the Floating Harbour, led to the development of a number of transit sheds around the Floating Harbour (unit **B**). It also precipitated some redevelopment of the fabric in the streets around the Quays, for example with the building of warehouses in King Street (unit **Civa**), Little King Street (unit **Aixc**), Prince Street and Queen Square (unit **Avi**), beginning the break-up of the period homogeneity of these areas. This reflects the decline in the desirability of the buildings and the transformation of these areas from residential to commercial use. Many of these warehouse developments were in the 'Bristol Byzantine' style, most fully expressed in the Granary warehouse (unit **Aixa**). Further transit sheds were developed in the streets surrounding the Floating Harbour during the second period of Docks expansion in the late-19th century (unit **B**). Warehouses continued to transform King Street and Little King Street in the late-Victorian period, and further warehouses were developed along The Grove and Prince Street, most significantly the Co-operative Wholesale Society warehouse (unit **Aiib**). The commercial transformation of Queen Square also continued with the development of further warehouses (unit **Aviib**) and new office buildings (unit **Aviib**).

Secondary building form divisions associated with Victorian commercial redevelopment also exist in the old core of the city, associated with the

continued evolution of the area into a business centre. Key legacies from this period include the redevelopment of Corn Street as the centre of the financial sector, the development of the post office in Small Street, and the development of Baldwin Street. In common with developments on the Colmore Estate in Birmingham, a number of banking buildings were developed in the mid-Victorian period along Corn Street and in Broad Street, including the Bank of England in Broad Street (C.R. Cockerell 1844-7) (unit F).



Figure 4.21; Baldwin Street/Clare Street c1956 showing the Victorian commercial fabric (source, Bristol CC planning files).

This formed the core, around which later Victorian redevelopment took place. The widening of Small Street in the mid-19th century prompted the complete redevelopment of one side of the street in the late-Victorian period to build a new post office (unit G). These phases of redevelopment isolate unit I, within the old core of Bristol along Broad Street, as an area of purely piecemeal replacement of the build fabric with no one period dominating. Outside the old core, unit E contains an area of late-Victorian redevelopment linked to the development of the mid-Victorian breakthrough streets of Baldwin Street and Telephone Avenue, and the redevelopment of the Georgian breakthrough street, Clare Street (figure 4.21).

Redevelopment in the modern period served to further erode period

homogeneity within secondary units covering redevelopment of the medieval core, King Street and Queen Square, creating further sub-divisions within these units. However, in addition to these piecemeal redevelopments, two areas of comprehensive post-war redevelopment are identifiable within the Bristol study area. In common with other major urban centres, such as Birmingham, redevelopment of the core during the period 1918 to 1939 was limited in comparison to the 19th century. As much of the land to the south of Baldwin Street remained under the ownership of the Corporation, there was little impetus to develop this area, and only two buildings were built, one on Prince Street and the other on Queen Square. Most commercial redevelopment in the inter-war period was concentrated in the core, where ownership was mixed, for example in the High Street retail area, Clare Street/Corn Street, Baldwin Street and along the newly created Colston Avenue, where a number of offices in 'art deco' and 'modern' styles, including Electricity House, Eagle House and St Stephen's House were built (unit **Jiv**). Building development in response to technical change was also evident in the development of the Telephone Exchange (unit **Diii**).

In the post-war period, while piecemeal redevelopment continued throughout the study area, concentration on rebuilding areas bomb damaged during the Second World War, and the control of planning in directing development into areas zoned for comprehensive redevelopment, channelled redevelopment activity into a number of key zones. Unit **Ji** represents the bomb damaged area of Wine Street, comprehensively redeveloped in the post-war period, while unit **Jiii** represents part of the Lewis Mead scheme, part of the 1966 reconstruction plan for central Bristol. The 1966 Development Plan Review was dominated by concerns for road traffic, linked to plans for comprehensive commercial redevelopment and the segregation of traffic and pedestrians using decks. The pedestrian deck scheme was planned to link the two sides of Colston Avenue from Lewis Mead to the end of Broad Quay, where the Bristol and West office redevelopment (unit **Div**) reflected the scheme. The traffic management proposals in the 1966 plan also led to the introduction of new building types into the core, with the designation of land for multi-storey car parking, such as within the Unicorn Hotel development (figure 4.22) (unit **Aia**).



Figure 4.22; Prince Street c1952 showing the remnant Georgian fabric prior to redevelopment as Narrow Quay House and the Unicorn Hotel (source, Bristol CC planning files).

The area to the south of Baldwin Street was also zoned for comprehensive redevelopment, with a large amount of post-war rebuilding and temporary warehouse development taking place in this area (unit **D**). Within the 1952 and 1966 plans for the reconstruction of central Bristol, provision was included for the continued existence of the Docks, allowing the introduction of warehouses on bomb damaged sites in the city. Temporary warehouse buildings on bomb sites remained along King Street (unit **Cvi**) and Queen Charlotte Street (unit **Di**) until the 1970s. The development new offices in the area around Baldwin Street, such as the modern, Portland Stone buildings Royal London House and Bridge House, produced a change in the scale and style of development in this area (unit **Di**). In the 1960s further changes were introduced with increasing vertical repletion producing tall tower and slab blocks, such as around Marsh Street (unit **Dvi**). However, a number of developments within the core were built in a more restrained neo-Georgian style giving some concessions to their immediate context, particularly for new office buildings in Queen Square.

Generally, building form units in the Birmingham study area reflect a relatively simple building replacement pattern. With the exception of units identifying Georgian building remnants, the main units define periods of Victorian and post-war redevelopment, with sub-divisions within the periods



of Victorian replacement identifying periods of modern piecemeal replacement of the Victorian fabric. In the Bristol study area, a more complex pattern of building form units emerges, as more periods of building addition and replacement are represented, particularly in the old core of the city. The main units define periods of Tudor and Georgian building addition, periods of Georgian and Victorian building replacement in the medieval core, and comprehensive redevelopment in the post-war period. Numerous sub-divisions are evident in the units as a result of piecemeal redevelopment in the Victorian and modern periods, and ,in the core, the survival of building remnants from earlier periods, particularly the medieval period. In both study areas, patterns of land ownership have played an important role in the nature of the built fabric present in 1970.

#### **Land utilisation unit boundaries**

The delimitation of land utilisation units for both study areas reflects the general form of land utilisation units delimited by Conzen (1988) in Ludlow (figures 4.23 and 4.24) (see Appendix 3 for an explanation of land utilisation numbering). The divisions identified encompass the broad, intermediate divisions between commercial functions, office, retail and industrial/warehouse, and civic functions within both core areas. These encompass the main character divisions resulting from differences in function. However, within parts of the two study areas identification with a dominant function is difficult, and a number of mixed-use areas exist. As noted by Conzen (1988), while individual land use units within business cores show low site constancy, broad functional regions within the core exhibit some degree of historical continuity. Within the two areas under investigation, these broad functional regions are the land use regions resulting from the commercial transformation of these core areas in the 19th century, although in a medieval city such as Bristol a longer land use legacy is evident in the core of the city.

Bristol held powers of self government from the 12th century onwards, with charters protecting the trade privileges and interests of the burgesses and allowing them to form guilds. During the 14th century, merchants became increasingly important in the governance of the town as feudal and military

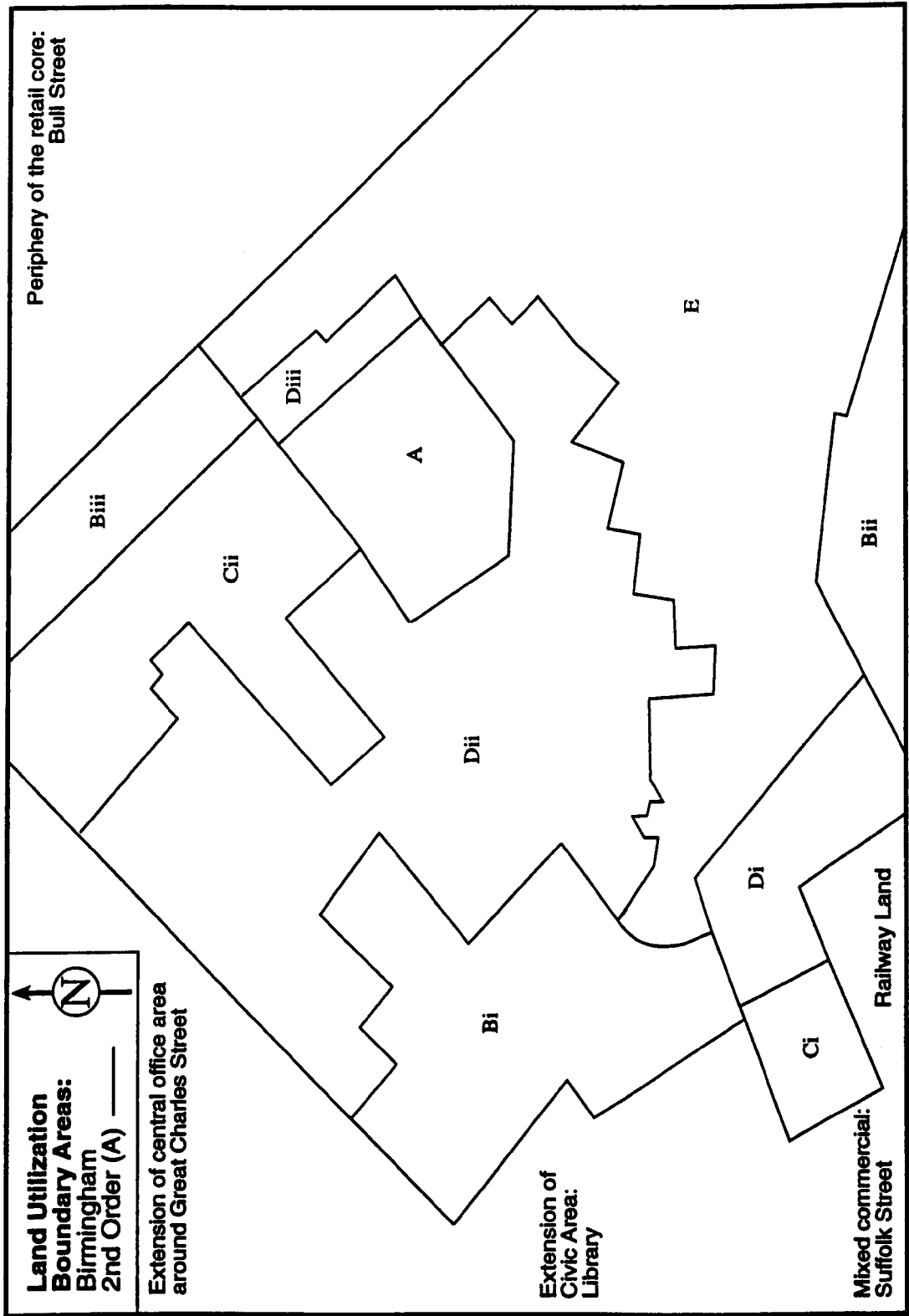


Figure 4.23; Land utilization unit boundaries, Birmingham.

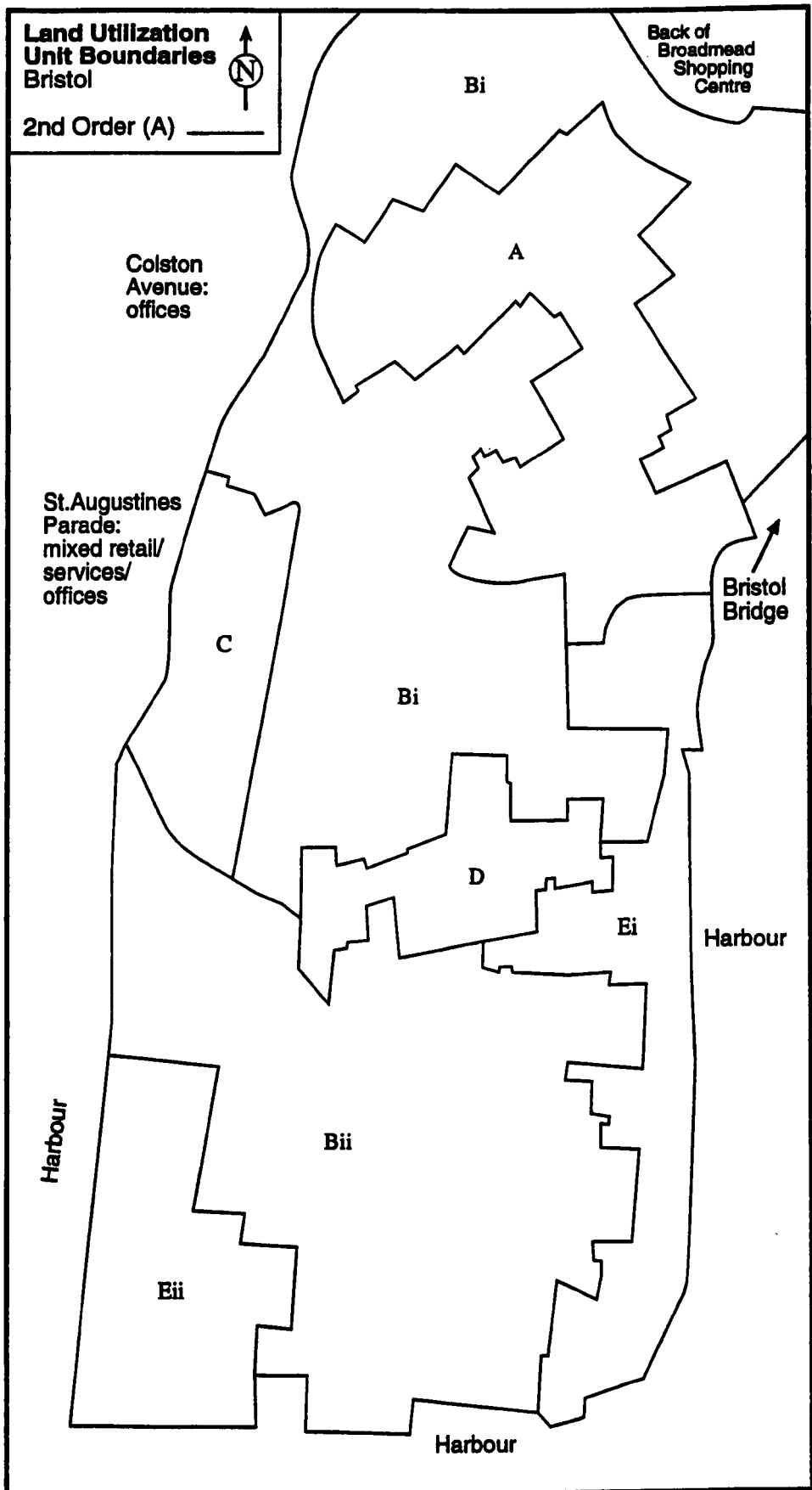


Figure 4.24; Land utilization unit boundaries, Bristol.

influences declined (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). Bristol's central area displayed the common characteristics of the pre-industrial 'mercantile city', with the élite living within the centre within distinct occupational quarters (Vance, 1977), which influenced the subsequent commercial structure of the core. One of the most important guilds from this period was the Guild Merchant, which played an important part in the development of the town, with its guildhall in Broad Street becoming the judicial and administrative centre of the borough (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). Also, the Kalenders' Guild, laymen and clerics, had a house close to All Saints Church, concentrating legal and government functions within this area. Lawyers also lived in the parishes in the centre around Broad Street and Small Street, with these areas retaining their prestige well into the 18th century (Baignet, 1988). The Broad Street area remained identified as the key location for the legal profession well into the 20th century (Tunbridge, 1977). Both the civic/administrative and the mixed commercial functions associated with the core of the pre-industrial city are reflected in the mixed commercial and administrative functional character of the old core of Bristol in 1970 (unit A). This mixed use unit covers most of the old core of the city, apart from Corn Street where commercial redevelopment in the Victorian period produced a concentration of financial office functions.

Within both study areas, the main land use divisions stem from the 19th century transformation of the core areas from areas of commerce and residence to areas purely for commerce and civic functions, associated with the transition from the pre-industrial to industrial city (Vance, 1977). Expansion of the city's commercial base in the 19th century precipitated an intensification of commercial uses within the core, namely specialist office and retail functions. The key processes underpinning the functional transformation of both central areas in the 19th century, were the increasing separation of home and work within the Victorian city, and the increasing suburbanisation of the wealthy sections of the population. Also, by the end of the 19th century, both city Corporations had aided the decline of residential functions through the removal of slum housing from the core, using powers of civic improvement and land purchase gained from the 1875 Artisans Dwellings Act (Cherry, 1988; Chinn, 1991; Skilliter, 1991). In the 19th century the growing influence of municipal corporations also precipitated the

introduction of new functions into the cores of both cities. In the Birmingham study area in particular, the development of civic functions in the 19th century led to the formation of the civic district to the west of the study area, as the result of the development of a number of important civic buildings, such as the Council House (unit Bi).

Within both areas, primary office districts developed in the 19th century, based around the redevelopment or conversion of 18th century professional residential districts. In the Bristol area, Queen Square and Prince Street remained the most fashionable residential parts of Bristol for merchants until the mid-19th century when increasing commercialisation of the Docks transformed this area into an office area, although with office functions still linked to Docks trade (unit Bii). Also, plan improvements by the Corporation, such as road widening in the core and the cutting of Baldwin Street in the 19th century, precipitated the redevelopment of this area for commercial purposes, with the Corn Street area becoming the central financial district. Redevelopment in the post-war period further expanded office provision in this area, altering the mixed use character of the edge of the old core. In Birmingham, as commercial functions in the core developed, the Colmore Estate became less desirable as a residential district, and commercial functions began to encroach into the area. As the 99 and 120 year leases on the Colmore Estate began to come up for renewal from the 1860s onwards, redevelopment transformed the area into the primary office area (unit Dii). Along Colmore Row, Georgian townhouses were replaced by Victorian bank buildings, and the area became the financial centre of the Victorian city. Banking also developed on the other side of Colmore Row within the commercial development of the Bennetts Hill area in the mid-Victorian period, extending the office area to the south towards New Street. The Colmore Estate also became a focus for the offices of professionals, such as doctors, solicitors and architects, developing from its previous position in the 18th century as a residential area, containing professionals, such as lawyers and doctors in the area (Chalklin, 1974).

The other major commercial change during the 19th century was the rapid increase in specialist shopping provision in both centres, a process common to many urban centres at the time (Shaw and Wild, 1979; Shaw, 1988). In

Birmingham during the 19th century, there was an increasing specialisation in shops, trades and crafts (Chalklin, 1974), which fuelled the expansion of the retail centre away from the Bull Ring, along New Street. Also, the development of the retail boulevard, Corporation Street, arcade development and the development of department stores, such as Lewis's on Bull Street, during the late 19th century provided important boosts to shopping development in Birmingham (Briggs, 1956; Shaw and Wild, 1979; Birmingham CC, 1989). This provided the basis for the development of the primary retail area that survives today along New Street and Corporation Street (unit E). The development of the Great Western Arcade, linking Corporation Street and Snow Hill Station pulled retailing north-westwards, while two hotels were developed in the 1870s to accommodate travellers, the Great Western Hotel at the front of the station and the Grand Hotel on Colmore Row. The legacy of this development survives in a mixed land use pattern around Snow Hill (unit Cii). In Bristol, specialist retail provision developed from the market areas around the cross, spreading out along Wine Street and Castle Street to the east of the study area. The development of the commercial boulevard Baldwin Street and the development of new market buildings in the 19th century enhanced retail provision in this area. This remained the main shopping street until World War Two, when the area was destroyed by bombing and the new retail centre was moved to Broadmead. However, remnants of this retail past survive in the mixed-use area around the old fruit and vegetable market (unit A), and in the mixed use secondary retail area around Broad Quay (unit C).

Within both study areas, industrial decline and changes in production had removed much of the industrial legacy from the cores of both cities. Nevertheless, remnants of the industrial past of these areas remained, particularly around the former city Docks in Bristol, which only ceased commercial operation in the late 1960s. From the 14th century onwards, the Quays and Welsh Back had been the prime location for many merchants, mariners and ships carpenters, and where many merchants had both warehouses and houses (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). The Key and Welsh Back remained a primary focus for the merchant housing and warehousing in the city, until the second phase of dockside redevelopment in the late 19th century. During this period there was increased development of warehousing and transit sheds around the Docks, and the dockside was transformed principally into a warehousing area

(unit E), with further warehousing encroaching onto surrounding streets such as Queen Square and King Street. Following bomb damage to buildings around the Docks in the Second World War, their temporary replacement with warehouse buildings (many of which survived until the 1970s) reinforced this use. In Birmingham, light industrial development was fuelled by the extension of the canal into the Colmore Estate area in the late-18th century, with a significant number of metal workers moving into the area (Chalklin, 1974; Large, 1984). Remnants of this industrial legacy can still be found in the north-eastern part of the Colmore Estate, consisting of a number of print works, warehouses and workshops, which were constructed during the 19th century redevelopment of the area (unit Cii).

Overall, the land utilisation units defined in both study areas correspond to the broad land use divisions in the core, which have their origins rooted in the 19th century commercial transformation of both areas. However, it is clear that mixed-use areas have become increasingly eroded by post-war office redevelopment around the edges of the primary office areas, while industrial functions in both areas have declined as a result of long term processes of economic restructuring.

### **The delimitation of townscape regions**

The identification of units for each of the three form complexes forms the basis for the delimitation of townscape units (figures 4.25 and 4.26) (see Appendix 4 for an explanation of townscape unit numbering and plates showing the visual character of the units). These units are formed by the hierarchical combination of the three form complex units, using Conzen's principles of form complex differentiation by form persistence and historical stratification and morphogenetic priority (Conzen, 1988). This forms the basis for identifying the key components of the high, intermediate and lower ranks of units, with the actual delimitation of their boundaries derived from analysis of boundary coincidence of form complex units. For the study areas, the constituents of the various ranks of the hierarchy of townscape regions are detailed in figures 4.27 and 4.28, based on those produced by Conzen (1988) for Ludlow. Using this hierarchical framework, in line with Conzen's analysis, the highest rank of regions, contained by first order boundaries,

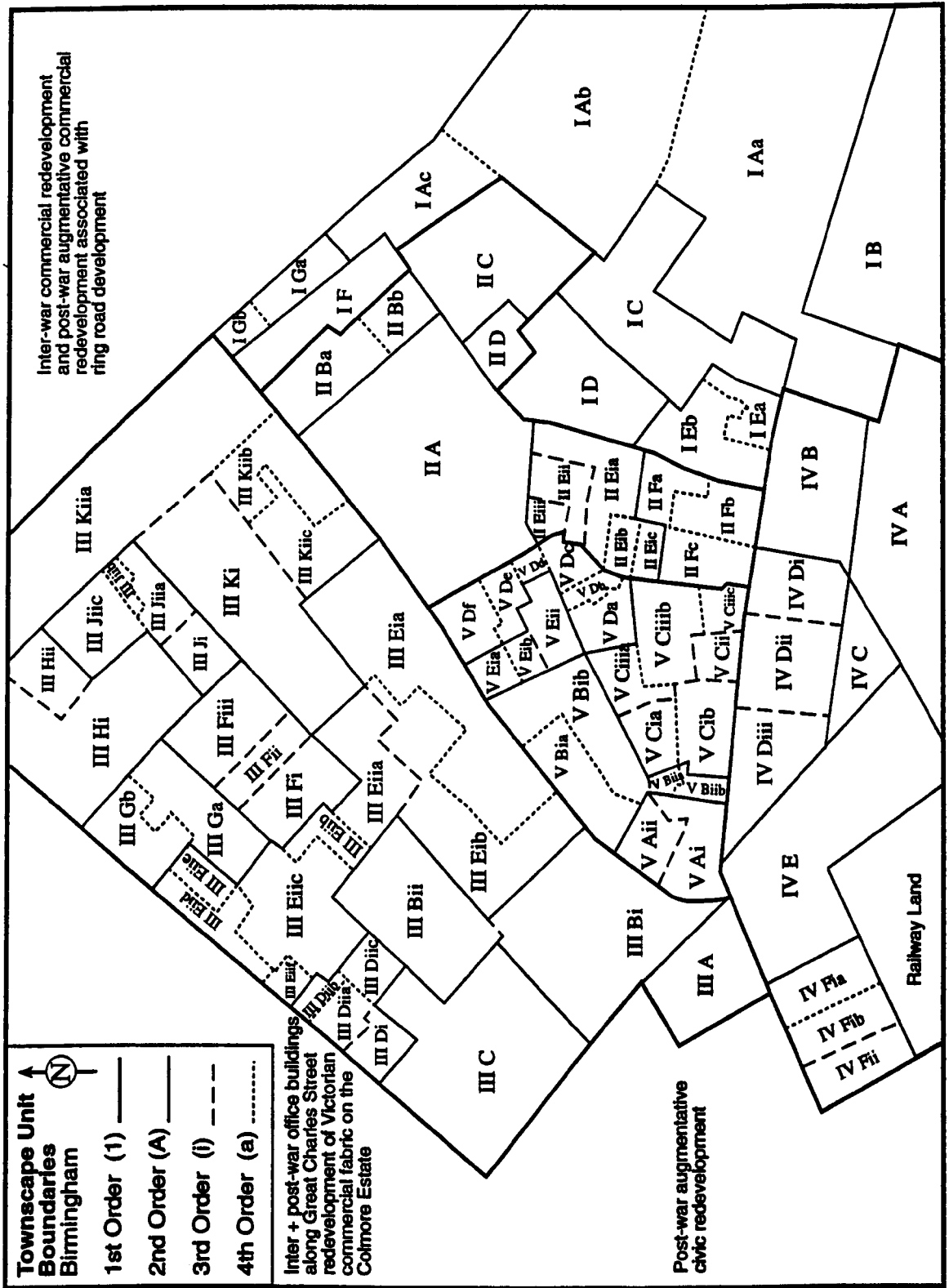


Figure 4.25; Townscape unit boundaries, Birmingham.





1	2		3		4
Systematic Form Complex	Degree of Form Persistence	Morphological Periods	Morphological Constituents of Historical Stratification	Contribution to Hierarchy of Townscape Regions	
Town plan	Maximal	Queen Anne - Georgian 1690 - 1840	General outlines of street system, plot pattern	High Rank (major genetic plan units) (Phases of town development) Intermediate Rank (Neighbourhoods: street and plot remnants eg Newhall St, Temple St)	
		Mid - Late Victorian 1840 - 1914	Breakthrough streets, plot transformation and redevelopment	Intermediate Rank (eg New St, Cannon St, Colmore Estate transformations)	
		Post-War 1945 -	Comprehensive redevelopment areas, minor plot redevelopment	Intermediate Rank (Corporation St redevelopment), Lowest Rank (Individual redevelopment's, eg Colmore Estate)	
Building fabric	Considerable though varying with periods	Queen Anne - Georgian 1690 - 1840	Few but mainly prominent public buildings (Cathedral, Town Hall)		
		Early - Mid Victorian 1840 - 1885	1st Phase of commercial redevelopment, isolated groups and prominent structures remaining	Intermediate Rank but principally lowest rank (Morphotopes)	
		Late - Victorian 1885 - 1914	High percentage of commercial buildings	Intermediate Rank but principally lowest rank (Morphotopes)	
		Inter-War 1914 - 1939	Limited redevelopment - isolated areas and individual buildings	Lowest Rank (Morphotopes) (eg Bennets Hill)	
		Post-War 1945 -	Redevelopment of edge of area and individual offices	Intermediate Rank (Edge of Area) Lowest Rank (Morphotopes) Individual developments (Colmore Estate)	
Urban Land utilisation		Mid - Late Victorian 1840 - 1914	Major land use areas (Business Core, Civic Centre)	Intermediate Rank Traditional Business Core, Civic Centre	
	Minimal	Recent (twentieth century)			

The systematic form complexes as morphological regulators in Central Birmingham, according to the framework provided by Conzen (1988) Figure 4.27

1 Systematic Form Complex	2 Degree of Form Persistence	Morphological Periods	3 Morphological Constituents of Historical Stratification	4 Contribution to Hierarchy of Townscape Regions
Town plan	Maximal	<p>High - Late Medieval 1090-1500</p> <p>Tudor - Elizabethan - Jacobean 1500-1690</p> <p>Queen Anne - Georgian 1690 - 1840</p> <p>Mid - Late Victorian 1840-1914</p> <p>Twentieth Century 1918-</p> <p>High - Late Medieval 1090-1500</p> <p>Tudor - Elizabethan - Jacobean 1500-1690</p> <p>Queen Anne - Georgian 1690-1840</p> <p>Mid - Late Victorian 1840-1914</p> <p>Inter-war 1918-1939</p> <p>Post-war 1945-</p> <p>Mid - Late Victorian 1840 - 1914</p> <p>Recent (twentieth century)</p>	<p>General outlines of street system and plot pattern in intramural area and early suburban extensions within expanded walls.</p> <p>General outlines of street system and plot pattern in suburban extensions.</p> <p>General outlines of street system and plot pattern in suburban development. Street widening, break-through street and plot redevelopment in the core.</p> <p>Breakthrough streets, street widening, plot transformation and redevelopment.</p> <p>Road improvements and comprehensive redevelopment areas, minor plot redevelopment. Few - only churches.</p> <p>Very few houses by external indices, but structural remains inside later buildings.</p> <p>Key public buildings in the core, residential buildings in suburban extensions and dock buildings.</p> <p>Key phase of civic and commercial redevelopment; high percentage of public and commercial buildings</p> <p>Limited redevelopment, isolated areas and individual buildings.</p> <p>Re-development of bomb damaged areas and individual offices.</p> <p>Major land use areas (business core, docks).</p>	<p><b>High rank</b> (major genetic plan units) Phases of town development</p> <p><b>Intermediate Rank</b> (Neighbourhood: street and plot remnants in core and Broad Quay/Marsh Street.</p> <p><b>High rank</b> (major genetic plan units) Phase of town and development</p> <p><b>Intermediate: street and plot remnants - King Street.</b></p> <p><b>High rank</b> (major genetic plan units) Phase of town development</p> <p><b>Intermediate: street and plot remnants Queen St/ Clare St/ Markets.</b></p> <p><b>Intermediate rank</b> (Baldwin Street/Broad Quay redevelopment)</p> <p><b>Lowest rank: individual developments e.g. Post Office, Small Street.</b></p> <p><b>Intermediate rank</b> (Wine St/Nelson Street)</p> <p><b>Lowest rank: individual redevelopments eg Queen Street</b></p> <p><b>Intermediate Rank</b> but principally lowest rank (Morphotopes) - remnants core and King Street.</p> <p><b>Intermediate Rank</b> (markets, cross, Queen St) but principally lowest rank (morphotopes) remnant commercial buildings: core and docks.</p> <p><b>Intermediate Rank</b> (core, Baldwin St) but principally lowest rank (morphotopes)</p> <p><b>Lowest Rank</b> (Morphotopes)</p> <p><b>Intermediate rank</b> (Wine Street/Baldwin St/Broad Quay)</p> <p><b>Lowest rank</b> (morphotopes) individual developments (core and Queen Sq)</p> <p><b>Intermediate Rank</b> traditional business core, docks</p>
Building fabric	Considerable though varying with periods			
Urban Land utilisation	Minimal			

The systematic form complexes as morphological regulators in Central Bristol, according to the framework provided by Conzen (1988) Figure 4.28

are those of the major genetic plan units identifying the key phases of urban expansion (figures 4.25 and 4.26). The second and third order boundaries, delimiting the intermediate regions, are principally formed by areas of plot metamorphosis or redevelopment, which have broken up the homogeneity of phases of urban expansion, by land utilisation units, and by the major building form divisions. Below this, the lowest rank regions, or morphotopes, contained by the fourth order boundaries are formed primarily by variations in the building fabric, although these are also combined with minor differentiations in the plan.

#### Assessment of character using townscape units; Birmingham

The present townscape analysis identifies a number of distinct regions within the Birmingham study area, reflecting particular periods of socio-economic and political change in the development of Birmingham's core development. It highlights the deficiency in the current assessment of character offered by the LPA. In 1980, the Draft Central Area District Plan merely described the area as being composed of two key foci, St Philips and the Council House and a number of important groups of listed 19th century commercial buildings (Birmingham CC, 1980). This cursory statement of area character remained as the sole official statement on character until 1990, when a more detailed urban design study of the city centre was published, and incorporated in the UDP and conservation documents (Tibbalds et al, 1990). This study identified further subdivisions in the area, based primarily on the different functional areas within it; the civic, retail and office areas. It also offered some analysis of the key building elements in the area, including landmarks, styles and materials. However, this study failed to offer any spatial definition of distinctive areas, or to incorporate any urban historical information. Historical and architectural information, amassed by the LPA for use in planning enquiries, was not used to enhance official character assessments of the area.

The morphogenetic analysis provides a detailed visualisation of the spatial variation in historicity within the conservation area, identifying the key elements that contribute to the character of the study area. In accordance with Conzen's schema (Conzen, 1988), these regions are nested in

a hierarchy within the area. The boundaries for these regions derive from the combination of the unit delimitations for the three form complexes, detailed above. Figure 4.27 details the way in which the three form complexes contribute to the hierarchy of townscape regions. The principal areas of townscape significance (high rank townscape regions), defined by the first order boundaries, are the major generic plan units which reflect the key phases of town development in Birmingham. They define those areas of townscape developed during the Georgian period which derived an initial homogeneity as a result of their rapid development during this period. While little of the built fabric of Georgian Birmingham remains within the core, the plan framework of streets and plot series laid out in the Georgian period are important in providing the foundation for subsequent redevelopment within the study area. In particular, knowledge of the nature and timing of these initial phases of development is critical in understanding variations within the Victorian redevelopment of this area. Reference to these initial phases of development help in the identification of different transformative processes during the Victorian period, which have left a varied legacy of Victorian commercial and civic townscape. These variations are reflected in the identification of intermediate rank regions and morphotopes in figure 4.25. In particular many of these minor townscape unit divisions reflect the divide between redevelopment in the mid-Victorian period and that occurring within the late-Victorian period.

Of key historical significance in the Birmingham area are those regions that exhibit the unaltered townscape legacy of those periods of Georgian expansion within the study area. As only three areas remain where all three form complex elements originating from the Georgian period survive, their maintenance is a particular priority. The Cathedral and its church yard (unit **IIA**) is the only area of townscape to have remained unaltered since the early Georgian period with original plot pattern, building form and use. It thus forms a key survival reflecting the first phase of outward expansion around Temple Row. Unit **VBib** forms a particularly important area of townscape in Bennetts Hill, again through its retention of the plot pattern, buildings and functions of the initial phases of development in the 1830s. It is also significant in that it marks the last phase of Georgian expansion in the study area, and the transition from residential to commercial building within the

core. Finally, the Town Hall, designed by Hansom and Welch, in the 1830s (unit **IIIA**), is an important development as a surviving example of the first phase of 19th century redevelopment on the Colmore Estate, which along with the development of other important civic buildings, such as theatres, reflected the growing wealth and importance of Birmingham as a town. While the Cathedral and the Town Hall gain significance from being important public buildings, ensuring survival, the importance and significance of the commercial buildings in unit **VBib** also needs emphasis.

The other main priority for townscape management and conservation is the maintenance of the variety of Victorian commercial and civic redevelopments represented in the study area. It is the variety and distribution of these phases of Victorian redevelopment that provide the most significant contribution to the character of the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area. Three primary elements from this period can be identified, plot metamorphosis, building redevelopment and land use change, resulting from the development of either professional office or retail functions in the core, comprehensive townscape redevelopment resulting from railway development and civic sponsored improvement schemes. While these larger redevelopment schemes provide the most spectacular illustration of Victorian commercial change in the core, the other areas of townscape exemplifying this transformation are no less significant in representing this period of Birmingham's history.

Probably the most important event precipitating change in the central area was the arrival of the railways in the mid-19th century, fuelling the second phase of industrial expansion in Birmingham, and bringing the centre within the sphere of influence of a larger population. The development of New Street and Snow Hill stations within the area provided the key nodes around which the redevelopment of the centre took place. Snow Hill station, opened in 1852, precipitated the redevelopment of a large block of 18th century buildings on the edge of the Colmore Estate in the mid- and late-Victorian periods (intermediate unit **IIIK**). This unit includes the Grand Hotel (unit **IIIKiic**), one of a number of mid-Victorian hotel developments in the core resulting from railway development. However, despite being an integral part of the 19th century redevelopment of the area's townscape, the Snow Hill unit lies outside the current conservation area, probably as the Great Western

Hotel in front of the station was closed and was scheduled for demolition in the late-1960s, and the station was also due for closure and redevelopment. Failure to provide conservation protection for these buildings has led to the further encroachment of post-war redevelopment into the surviving areas of Victorian townscape here.

In the south of the study area 18th century court housing was removed by the development of New Street Station, opened in 1854, encouraged by the Corporation in a conscious effort to remove slum housing. Despite the redevelopment of New Street in the 1960s (unit **IVA**), some of the Victorian townscape associated with this development survives. Unit **IVB**, is an important survival from this period of railway led redevelopment. Formed by the development of the breakthrough street Stephenson Street, it contains the Midland Hotel one of the many hotels developed along New Street, associated with the development of the railway. However, it is the only one to survive, the others, such as the Queens Hotel which fronted the old New Street Station, having been demolished in the post-war redevelopment of the station and the eastern end of New Street (Birmingham CC, 1989). Another Victorian commercial redevelopment associated with the station development is unit **IVC**, a triangle of land formed by the development of Stephenson Street. Redevelopment took place in the late-Victorian period, the buildings being functional red brick and terracotta structures. The survival of the plot pattern, building form and use from this period make it a distinct townscape unit representing Victorian commercial redevelopment.

The Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area is an important area within the core as it contains key townscape legacies associated with the growing power and influence of local government in the Victorian period. The two elements of this legacy are the visible symbols of administration present in the townscape, and those parts of the townscape reflecting civic sponsored improvement schemes. The building of the Town Hall (unit **IIIA**) in the 1830s provided the nucleus around which other key civic buildings were developed in the Victorian period. By the end of the late-Victorian period, a distinct municipal district had developed, focused on Victoria Square at the junction of Colmore Row and New Street, and extending from the western edge of the Colmore Estate towards Broad Street (outside the study area), an area that

remains in this use today (units **IIIA, B & C**). The increasing influence of the Council and its increasing power to acquire land and instigate development is clearly reflected in the surviving civic buildings, particularly the Council House (unit **IIIBi**) and the Council House Extension (unit **IIIC**). The development of the Post Office opposite the Town Hall in the 1880s (unit **IVE**), as well as being a good example of late-Victorian commercial redevelopment, has an added importance as a townscape unit in that it symbolises the increasing civic importance of Victoria Square, and the municipal redevelopment of the area.

This civic district also became the focus for educational buildings, with the construction of Queen's College in the 1840s (unit **IVFia**) among the first educational functions in the study area. As Council involvement in education increased, unit **IIIBii** near the Council House was redeveloped in the mid-Victorian period as School Board offices and an Art School. Also, unit **IIIC** contains the educational organisation, the Birmingham and Midland Institute. Until the 1960s, this mid-to late-Victorian civic/educational district extended into the western edge of the Colmore Estate, between Congreve Street, Paradise Street, Easy Row and Great Charles Street, containing the Library, the original Birmingham and Midland Institute, the Liberal Club and the University. However, this area was cleared in the late 1960s for the development of a new library complex, wiping out the Victorian plan and building form, although the civic use of the area was retained. The significance of buildings such as the Town Hall and the Council House seems to preclude the further erosion of this Victorian civic district.

Civic involvement in urban improvement and the commercial transformation of the core provides one of the most historically significant commercial townscape legacies within the study area, namely the late-Victorian augmentative redevelopment which created Corporation Street (unit **IC**). This is an important unit in the conservation area, as only this section survives of the part of the Corporation Street development between New Street and Bull Street, having been isolated from the later development between Bull Street and Aston by post-war redevelopment (units **IA** and **IIC**). The group of Corporation Street buildings is critical in defining the Victorian commercial style which this part of the conservation area was designated to cover in



1982, but also has a deeper historical significance as a symbol of civic boosterism and the influence of Joseph Chamberlain in the late-Victorian period, and the development of civic involvement in slum clearance (Birmingham CC, 1989; Chinn, 1991).

The areas of townscape highlighted above are of critical importance to the character of the conservation area, as the tangible expression of the impact of the most powerful agencies in the transformation of city centres in the Victorian period, namely the railway companies and local government. However, the other areas of Victorian redevelopment identified by intermediate townscape units cannot be dismissed as being of little importance to the character and history of the area. In LPA character assessments of the Colmore Row area (Birmingham CC, 1980; Tibbalds et al, 1990), these areas of Victorian commercial townscape are differentiated into important building groups, based on architectural criteria, and backcloth buildings. This simple classification denies the deeper historical importance attached to all areas of Victorian commercial fabric, revealed by townscape analysis. For example while LPA analyses differentiate between those Victorian buildings fronting Colmore Row and other Victorian buildings on the Colmore Estate, they should rather be seen as part of a single area reflecting the redevelopment of Georgian Birmingham into a commercial core from the mid-Victorian period (unit III). A degree of stylistic differentiation in the Victorian transformation of the Colmore Estate results from the separation of mid-Victorian redevelopment, along Colmore Row, and late-Victorian redevelopment behind this resulting from differences in the timing of lease renewal. Also, differentiation results from the degree to which Georgian plot patterns survived this transformation and the function of these transformed areas, separating unit IIIE, office redevelopment with remnant Georgian plots, from units IIIF, G, H, J and K, more transformative Victorian mixed commercial and industrial redevelopment.

However, despite these differences, a degree of morphogenetic homogeneity was retained in this Victorian redevelopment as the land continued in the ownership of the Colmore Estate, which continued to control the scale of the building and the use of materials during redevelopment. This unity was maintained until the next phase of redevelopment in the post-war period, where

the disposal of Estate freehold led to piecemeal office redevelopment in units III E to K, and particularly in units III F, G, H. This piecemeal redevelopment of the area resulted in problems in defining the conservation area boundary in the north of the area, which sought to exclude these post-war intrusions. Therefore, while the late-Victorian print work and warehouse developments around Snow Hill can be seen as equally significant in the evolution of the townscape in central Birmingham as the mid-Victorian banking redevelopment along Colmore Row, they were excluded by a designation policy based on the criterion of enclosing fabric considered listable by national standards. Without the benefit of conservation protection in this area, the homogeneity of the Colmore Estate will continue to be eroded. Extension of the conservation area in 1985 to cover that part of Edmund Street excluded by initial designation was a minor advance in correcting this early deficiency.

The deficiencies of initial boundary definition are also evident in the exclusion of the Victorian retail townscape until the extension of the conservation area in 1982, principally because few buildings in this area were listed until the early 1980s. However, the retail redevelopment of the Georgian townscape around New Street in the mid-to late-Victorian period has equal historical significance in the development of Birmingham's core as the redevelopment on the Colmore Estate, included in the first conservation area boundary. Units IE, IIF, IVDi & iii, VCiic and VBiib are significant in the representation of 19th century retail transformation of the Georgian townscape, with a legacy of Georgian plot patterns, and the survival of the buildings and original commercial function from this phase of redevelopment. The Victorian commercial fabric along New Street has been little affected by piecemeal post-war redevelopment (only in units IVDi and VCii), and consequently maintenance of these units, along with unit IC covering Corporation Street, is important to the maintenance of the totality of the Victorian retail character of this core area.

The Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area was designated principally to preserve and enhance the Victorian character of the core, detailed above. However, as was noted in chapter two, the areas of townscape that are considered worthy of protection changes over time, and recently more modern areas of townscape have begun to receive listing and conservation area

protection, in particular townscapes from the inter-war period. Within the Colmore Row Conservation Area, it should be noted that the area around Bennetts Hill derives a character distinct from other parts of the conservation area by virtue of a concentration of inter-war office redevelopments here (unit V). This is a consequence of the timing of lease renewal in this area of townscape, first developed in the 1830s and 1840s, giving building legacies predominantly from the late-Georgian, early-Victorian and inter-war periods. Also, unit IB represents inter-war redevelopment associated with the introduction of new functions into the core, containing King Edward House and the Odeon cinema built in 1935 on the former site of King Edward's School. Identification of these areas of inter-war townscape character within the Colmore Row area is important for the further development of townscape management strategies beyond the preservation and enhancement of the Victorian townscape legacies.

#### Assessment of character using townscape units; Bristol

As in Birmingham, analysis of the townscape within the City and Queen Square Conservation Area identifies a number of distinct areas related to key periods of socio-economic and political change in Bristol's history (figure 4.26). Again, these townscape regions are nested in a hierarchy within the study area, with the boundaries of these regions derived from the combination of the unit delimitations for the three form complexes, detailed above. Figure 4.28 details the way in which the three form complexes contribute to the hierarchy of townscape regions in the Bristol area. The principal areas of townscape significance (high rank townscape regions), defined by the first order boundaries, are again the major generic plan units which reflect key phases of town development in Bristol. In contrast to Birmingham, the periods of townscape development evident within the Bristol study area range from the medieval period through to the modern period. This long legacy of townscape development imbues the study area with a high degree of historicity reflecting Bristol's development as a city. As a consequence of this long legacy of urban development and change, these main units have become highly fragmented by subsequent waves of redevelopment activity, breaking the morphological homogeneity of these areas and creating a large number of intermediate units and morphotopes, particularly within the Medieval core.

The character of the Bristol study area is naturally very different from that of the Birmingham area, as a result of differences in the timing of the main morphological periods of initial urban development and expansion, and phases of redevelopment. However, the processes of urban change and the agencies involved in these processes represented in areas of townscape within both study areas are similar. In Bristol, as in Birmingham, current character reflects the transformation of the area from residential and commercial to purely commercial uses, and the action of powerful agents of urban change, particularly local government. As in Birmingham, an understanding of the timing and nature of the key phases of urban development and expansion represented in the study area is critical in interpreting the subsequent redevelopment of these areas and the resulting character differences. In Bristol key character differences exist between the high rank townscape regions, namely unit I, representing the extent of the medieval development in the area, and units II and III, representing phases of residential expansion in the Tudor and Georgian periods respectively. This broad difference in character was partly recognised in the designation of two separate areas of special control in 1964; the City area and Queen Square area (Bristol CC, undated).

In Bristol, the medieval intramural core (unit IA) forms a distinct area within the study area. This part of the townscape remains an isolated part of principal townscape unit I, defining the extent of medieval building in the study area, where townscape legacies from the medieval period still exist. Intermediate sub-divisions have been formed in unit I by the redevelopment of the medieval extramural area in the Victorian and post-war period, units IC and ID (although a highly metamorphosed medieval plan legacy remains in part of unit IC), and the comprehensive redevelopment of part of the intramural core area following bomb damage (unit IB). Unit IA then defines a complex area of townscape with a high degree of historical stratification, reflecting a long time span of intensive *insitu* accumulation and transformation of forms, consistent with other traditional settlement kernels with medieval origins (Conzen, 1988). In parallel with Conzen's study of the old town of Ludlow a dense hierarchy of townscape regions results from the different morphological periods of building fabric replacement represented.

As a result of the commercial transformation of the core, and associated building replacement, in the Georgian, Victorian and modern periods, little of the built fabric from the medieval and Tudor period remains within unit IA. Building survivals from the medieval period are confined to the prominent church buildings within the core, forming morphotopes of remnant townscape (All Saints, unit IAic; St Stephens, unit IAviif; St Johns, unit IAxivh). However, whilst the number of these survivals is small, their physical prominence in the townscape and their critical symbolic role in representing the medieval period of urban social and spatial development in Bristol, mark them out as vital to the medieval character of the unit. Also, whilst the number of buildings surviving from the Tudor period within the core is small, namely two merchant houses (one in Small Street unit IAxic; one in Broad Street unit IAxiiig), their symbolic weight and presence is again critical, in continuing the unbroken record of historical stratification so vital to the character of the core and in representing a key period in Bristol's development as a mercantile city (Vance, 1977).

While these surviving buildings are important in defining the historic character of the core, the unique character of this unit derives principally from the medieval plan legacy of streets and plots, which have provided a framework within which subsequent redevelopment has taken place. The street system is the most persistent legacy, remaining substantially unaltered from the medieval period. The survival of this system creates the intimate, enclosed and irregular experience characteristic of townscapes with medieval origins, and a key component of the area's character. This medieval plan character is reinforced by the survival of plot series from this period, which have served to limit the scale of building in the core to a degree. The degree to which this medieval plot legacy has survived the transformations associated with commercial redevelopment in the Georgian and Victorian periods further differentiates the character of the core. Three main intermediate areas can be defined; the area around Broad Street, Corn Street/Small Street, and the Markets.

The medieval plots along Broad Street and around the Cross (units IAi, IAxii, IAxiii, IAxiv) remain the least altered, with remnants of the long burgage style of plot (Conzen, 1960). This gives the area a particular

intimate character. The built fabric within these units is mixed, forming a large number of morphotopes, each representing piecemeal commercial transformation over a long period of time by individual owners. Units covering the 'wall streets' of St Nicholas and St Stephens Street also display these characteristics as a result of medieval plot survival and Georgian and Victorian building replacement (units **IAiv**, **IAvii**). Around Corn Street, the medieval plot series have undergone more metamorphosis, through the transformation of this area into the main banking and civic area in the late-Georgian and Victorian period, which involved building at an increased scale and the amalgamation of plots (units **IAv**, **IAvi**, **IAviii**, **IAix**). Unit **IAvi** along Corn Street is particularly important in representing the Victorian commercial transformation of the area, paralleling banking developments in Colmore Row in Birmingham, with both buildings and land use surviving from this period. However, homogeneity resulting from this phase of redevelopment has been eroded to an extent by piecemeal building redevelopment in the modern period. Unit **IAviii** is also important in defining one of the few comprehensive commercial plot transformations within the core, reflecting the power and prestige associated with the development of post office facilities in the late-Victorian period, a transformation again with a parallel in Birmingham. The development of the Grand Hotel (unit **IAx**) also reflects this large-scale Victorian commercial redevelopment, developing accommodation to cater for increased passenger travel. Finally, the markets area (unit **IAii**) represents an important townscape legacy from Bristol's period of economic strength in the Georgian period when Corporation wealth and influence led to townscape redevelopment. In parallel to the Victorian developments in Birmingham, the augmentative redevelopment undertaken by the Corporation to create the markets, reflects the power of this agent in shaping the townscape of Bristol from the Georgian period onwards. In conjunction with the Georgian civic remnants around the Carfax (represented in a number of morphotopes eg unit **IAia**), it forms an area with a strong Georgian civic character. In townscape management terms, LPA recognition of the historic character of this area is aided by the distinct boundary to the area formed by the medieval street pattern. However, awareness of the variation in character within the area is implicit rather than explicit, tied to streets rather than to areas of historically specific townscape transformation (Bristol CC, undated). Also, character retention through protection by strong design control and

listed building control could lead to fossilisation of the townscape; clearer appreciation of the dynamic of townscape development is undoubtedly required.

The Medieval extramural area has a very different character to the intramural area, as a result of comprehensive redevelopment of this area in the Victorian and post-war periods (units IC and ID). The impact of Corporation sponsored road improvement schemes in this area is clear, with the cutting of Clare Street, in the late-Georgian period (unit IDi), and Baldwin Street, in the mid-Victorian period, precipitating the total transformation of the area through commercial redevelopment. The rapidity and intensity of commercial transformation in the mid-to late-Victorian period gave the area a degree of period morphogenetic homogeneity which remained until the 1960s (see figure 4.21, p.163). In the post-war period, the limited appreciation of Victorian townscape legacies in the city led to the zoning of the area for road widening and comprehensive redevelopment in planning documentation. The townscape was therefore not afforded protection, unlike the City, King Street and Queen Square areas. While some townscape in the area was erased by bombing during World War Two, much of the Victorian building fabric, and pre-Victorian plan legacy was removed by comprehensive commercial office redevelopment in the post-war period. The townscape around the medieval Marsh Street was particularly affected (unit IDiii) by office development, as was the area along Broad Quay (unit IC). The area south of Baldwin Street was affected by office development and the expansion of the telephone exchange (unit IDvi), while Queen Charlotte Street was also transformed by large scale office redevelopment (unit IDvii). Important survivals from this period of comprehensive Victorian redevelopment can be found in units IDi, IDv, IDviii). Failure to include this area in initial townscape protection schemes was a serious deficiency in the development of conservation protection in the study area, which led to the almost total erasure of the pre-World War Two character. It is a clear illustration of the need for comprehensive character assessments prior to boundary delimitation, and the need to base townscape management and conservation on more than building fabric alone.

As noted the Tudor and Georgian periods represent important phases in Bristol's history. The growing wealth of merchants within the city and the increasing urban population during these periods, and the growing power and

influence of the city Corporation, produced a combination of stimuli that precipitated the outward residential growth of the city. The phases of residential expansion represented in the study area illustrate the action of the city Corporation, as a major land owner, in this development process. The King Street development (unit II) and the Queen Square and Prince Street development (unit III) are key legacies of townscape expansion, which through the rapidity of their initial development and the control exercised by the Corporation had an initial morphogenetic homogeneity.

King Street (unit II) is an important area of townscape representing the development of Bristol in the Tudor period. Whilst it contains important plan and building form legacies from this period, morphological homogeneity has been disrupted by building form replacement associated with the transformation of this area from a residential district to a commercial area in the Victorian period. Second order boundary divisions in the unit separate the surviving Tudor plan legacy (unit IIA) from those parts of the principal unit redeveloped in the post-war period following bomb damage primarily as temporary warehousing for the Docks (units IIB and IIC). Within unit IIA the street line and plot series form a persistent legacy that continues to reflect the plan regularity of this planned suburban extension, despite building replacement. Within the intermediate unit, important morphotopes are formed by the survival of building fabric, and in two cases land use, from the period of initial development. Units IIAic and IIAva are important residential fabric survivals indicating the character of the initial development, although the buildings are now in commercial use. The almshouses in units IIAia and IIAva are important survivals from the Tudor period where all three form complex elements have survived, and symbolising the growth in the number of charitable institutions, fuelled by donations from the growing wealthy middle classes (Lobel and Carus-Wilson, 1975). Within unit IIA, building replacement from the Georgian period onwards has given the townscape in this area a notable historical stratification. However, this replacement specifically reflects two key phases of development in Bristol's history. Firstly, the status of this area as a residential district for wealthy merchants continuing into the Georgian period is reflected in the development of buildings such as the library (unit IIAib) and the theatre (unit IIAiii). Secondly, the transformation of the area from a residential district to a commercial area



in the Victorian period, linked to the expansion of Dock facilities, is represented in morphotopes identifying Victorian warehouse developments (units **IIAid**, **IIAii** and **IIAvb**). Further stratification is produced by limited piecemeal redevelopment in the post-war period, principally warehouse development following bomb damage. Again, in terms of townscape management, while a clear boundary to the area is recognised, internal assessment of the components of the area's character, and historical significance of these components, has been limited (Bristol CC, undated). In particular recognition needs to be given to the importance of Victorian building replacements to the character and history of the area.

Queen Square and Prince Street (unit **III**) is an important area of townscape representing the first phase development of Bristol in the Georgian period. It contains important plan and building form legacies from this period, representing the first residential venture to be developed around squares and to utilise brick as a building material, a form of development that became characteristic of building for the wealthy middle-classes in the 18th century (Chalklin, 1989). Significantly, townscape analysis identifies the clear link between the development of Queen Square and the Docks around the Floating Harbour, associated with warehouse development by wealthy merchants living in the area. However, the initial morphological homogeneity of the area has been disrupted again by building form replacement associated with the transformation of this area from a residential district to a commercial area in the Victorian period, and redevelopment following bomb damage and commercial replacement in the post-war period.

Second order divisions within the principal unit separate that part of the unit that retains elements of its Georgian character as a result of the survival of plan and building form legacies (unit **IIIA**), and comprehensive commercial redevelopment in the Victorian (unit **IIIB**) and post-war (unit **IIIC**) periods along Prince Street, and Dockside warehouse development from the Victorian period onwards around the Floating Harbour where a different character exists (units **IIID**, **E**, **F**). The Georgian character of unit **III** is most evident in intermediate unit **IIIAi**, covering Queen Square, where the regular planned plot series from the initial phase of development remains intact, and particularly within unit **IIIAia** where a significant building form

legacy from the Georgian period remains. This Georgian building legacy covers both the initial phase of building in the early 18th century and rebuilding in 1831 following the destruction of buildings on the north and west sides of the square during rioting (Punter, 1990). However, unit IIIA<sub>i</sub> also contains a number of morphotopes reflecting the piecemeal commercial transformation of the Square and Prince Street from the Victorian period onwards. The Georgian character of Prince Street has been more substantially altered by commercial redevelopment from the Victorian period onwards. Victorian warehouse development, units IIIB, IIA<sub>vb</sub> and IIA<sub>vd</sub>, has altered the scale of building in the area, while comprehensive post-war redevelopment of one side of the street following wartime bomb damage has totally altered the character of the street (unit IIIC) (see figure 4.22, p.165). The Georgian character of the area remains in isolated pockets, to the north of Prince Street (unit IIIA<sub>ia</sub>) and to the south of the street at its junction with The Grove (units IIIA<sub>ii</sub>, IIIA<sub>va</sub>). Survival of the street's Georgian character could be threatened by further post-war intrusion into the street, particularly in the area of remaining townscape around the Prince Street roundabout.

The commercial transformation of the area is also evident in Victorian building replacement on the east and south sides of Queen Square, where the introduction of offices and, in particular, warehouses has produced a different character to this part of the Square (units IIIiii, IIIvi, IIIvii, IIIviii). While these developments break the morphological homogeneity of the Square, they form an important part of Bristol's social and commercial history. Inter and post-war office redevelopment has also taken place around Queen Square, further fragmenting morphological homogeneity (units IIIvii, IIIix, IIIix). However, the affect on the visual townscape character of the area has been very different to that resulting from Victorian redevelopment, as many buildings reflect the domestic scale of the Georgian buildings and utilise neo-Georgian styling or retained façades.

Little of the dockside townscape from the Georgian period of expansion in the 18th century survives, as a consequence of the rebuilding of many warehouses in the Victorian period. That remaining within units IIIA<sub>ii</sub> and IIIA<sub>va</sub> on Narrow Quay is therefore of great importance in representing development during this period. The main surviving Docks legacy is

represented by the warehouse fabric from the Victorian and post-war periods. The Victorian period, as a time of rapid technical change in Dock facilities, provides the strongest legacy in the area, in the piecemeal redevelopment of building fabric in the King Street, Queen Square and Prince Street areas noted above, and in the development of transit sheds around the Floating Harbour. Victorian transit sheds form an important component in the dockside character along the Welsh Back (unit **IIIF**). Protection and enhancement of the dockside townscape character is then important to both units **II** and **III**. However, as industrial buildings, the warehouses do not receive the same degree of protection, through building listing, as other Victorian townscape. Also, with the closure of the Docks, and therefore the removal of the functional basis for continued use of these buildings, this townscape will become vulnerable to redevelopment pressures from commercial office functions. The development of townscape management strategies relating to the future of area character surrounding the Docks as it enters this period of transition perhaps form the most important challenge for conservation policy within the City and Queen Square Conservation Area in the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

The preservation and enhancement of conservation area character is the central concern of conservation practice in England and Wales. However, the achievement of this objective has been limited by a lack of understanding of the character of conservation areas by LPAs, particularly of those conservation areas covering city cores. In the absence of a clear understanding of what constitutes area character and a method for its identification, LPAs have resorted to the identification of key building groups to identify area character. This approach is evident in statements relating to area character contained within the small amount of assessment documentation for both study areas. This chapter has argued that this approach constitutes a limited understanding of area character, which can restrict the development of effective townscape management strategies. It has been argued that the character of an area of townscape constitutes more than a collection of buildings, and that character principally derives from the symbolic meaning embodied in the townscape, as an expression of the socio-economic and cultural development of an urban society on a particular site.

The task for character analysis is then the illumination of this socio-economic and cultural meaning embodied in the townscape.

The chapter uses the townscape analysis techniques developed by the geographer M.R.G. Conzen, as a method by which the composition of the townscape can be analyzed, through a consideration of its three principal elements (plan, building form and land utilisation), and linked to its socio-economic and cultural meaning. Conzen's mapping techniques allow both the representation of the dynamic of townscape development, and a visualisation of the historical significance of individual parts of the townscape. In this chapter his analytical techniques have been extended to provide a historically informed 'thick' description of the components of the character of two conservation areas covering dynamic city centre environments. For both study areas, a hierarchy of townscape units have been delimited, representing areas of distinct meaning and character within these areas.

What this detailed analysis of the two areas has suggested is that within the boundaries defined by the LPAs, smaller areas of townscape significance exist, which are not currently identified by character assessments of the area. In both areas, the analysis also exposes the use of early boundaries merely to enclose areas of listed buildings, rather than areas of townscape significance. The problem of poor boundary definition remains within the Birmingham study area. Further to this, as analysis involves all townscape elements and their contribution to the socio-economic and cultural history of the area, it exposes the differential treatment of buildings within conservation practice, where buildings are afforded significance and therefore protection on the basis of nationally defined criteria of building worth rather than local historical significance. In both study areas, this approach denies significance and protection to industrial buildings and minor commercial buildings that represent periods of commercial transformation in the Georgian and Victorian periods.

The analysis of both areas suggests that identification of the main phases of urban plan creation should form the basis for the development of a framework of townscape management areas. It also highlights the importance of an understanding of landownership patterns, and their influence on urban

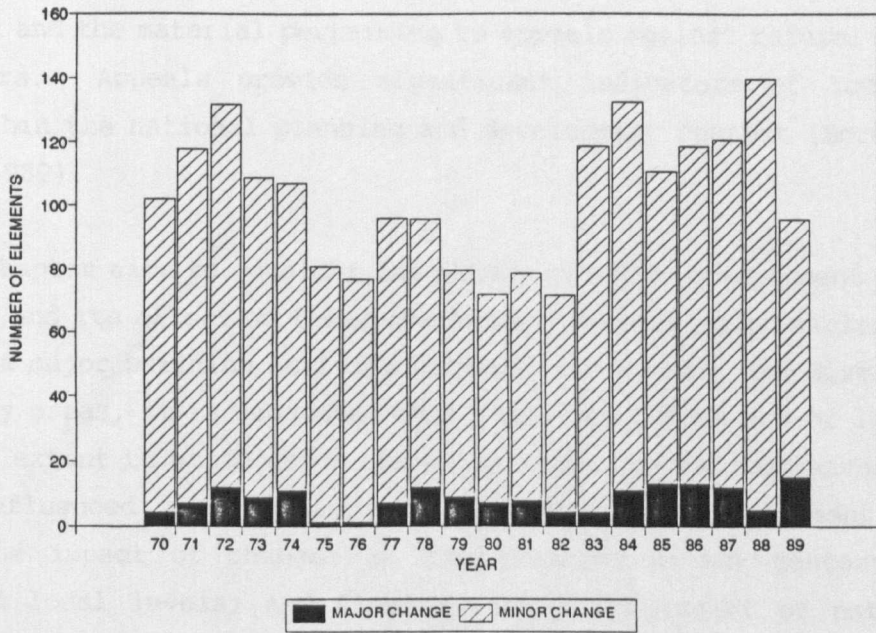
development (Dennis, 1979), to an understanding of the differential character of city areas. These areas of plan creation represent key periods in the development of an area, and form a framework within which subsequent redevelopment takes place. Identification of the character variation between these areas should form the basis for the development of current and future conservation priorities and strategies. For the Birmingham area this should entail the maintenance of the range of Victorian commercial redevelopment represented in the area and the maintenance of the Georgian plan framework legacy. Priority needs to be given to the protection of the part of this legacy remaining outside the conservation area. In Bristol, while much of the historic fabric in the key townscape areas of the medieval core, King Street and Queen Square is afforded protection through listing, the analysis highlights the erosion of the Victorian commercial legacy within the study area. Further attention needs to be given to the maintenance of the remaining legacy from this period, particularly as the closure of the Docks removed the commercial justification for the retention of part of this townscape. Particularly in the Bristol area, but also in the Birmingham area, an awareness of the potential for the alteration of the functional character of these areas needs to be developed. Generally, both LPAs need to be more aware of the true depth and variation in character within these heterogeneous conservation areas, and in particular the importance of all townscape components to this character if local historicity is to be maintained and enhanced.

## CHAPTER FIVE : MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER

During the study period, economic, social and cultural change, operating at the local level, exerted considerable pressure for fabric change within the two study areas. This development pressure was reflected in the number of applications for planning permission submitted to both LPAs during the period 1970-1989. Within this time period there were a total of 1960 applications for the Birmingham area, while for the Bristol area the corresponding figure was 1399 applications. While these volume levels alone suggest that significant pressures for redevelopment, adaptation and repair existed within the two areas, aggregate figures mask the precise nature of the change. Detailed analysis of the volume of development by type of change proposed is important in highlighting the different problems faced within each conservation area, and differences in LPA responses to particular pressures and influences. In development control studies, differentiation is usually made between those applications for major and minor changes to the townscape. Reflecting previous studies of city centre and conservation area fabric change (see Larkham, 1988a), the volume of minor change to the built fabric (minor alterations, internal alterations and façade alterations, advertising signs, and changes of use) exceeds that for major change (new building, major rebuilding of an existing building and floorspace additions) in the study areas (figure 5.1). As Larkham (1988a) notes, the dominance of minor change over major change is particularly marked in commercial centres. The impact of minor change on area character, and the disparity in the type and volume of minor change between the two study areas, will be considered in chapter six.

Major changes, particularly demolition and new building, and latterly major rebuilding schemes, have the greatest visible impact upon townscape character in conservation areas. Further to this, major changes are frequently those that generate the most controversy within the development control process and within the wider public domain, particularly where demolition of buildings is involved. Detailed consideration of applications for major development therefore provides important insights into the evolution and application of local conservation policies, and the nature of the

RATIO OF MAJOR/MINOR TOWNSCAPE CHANGE  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



RATIO OF MAJOR/MINOR TOWNSCAPE CHANGE  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

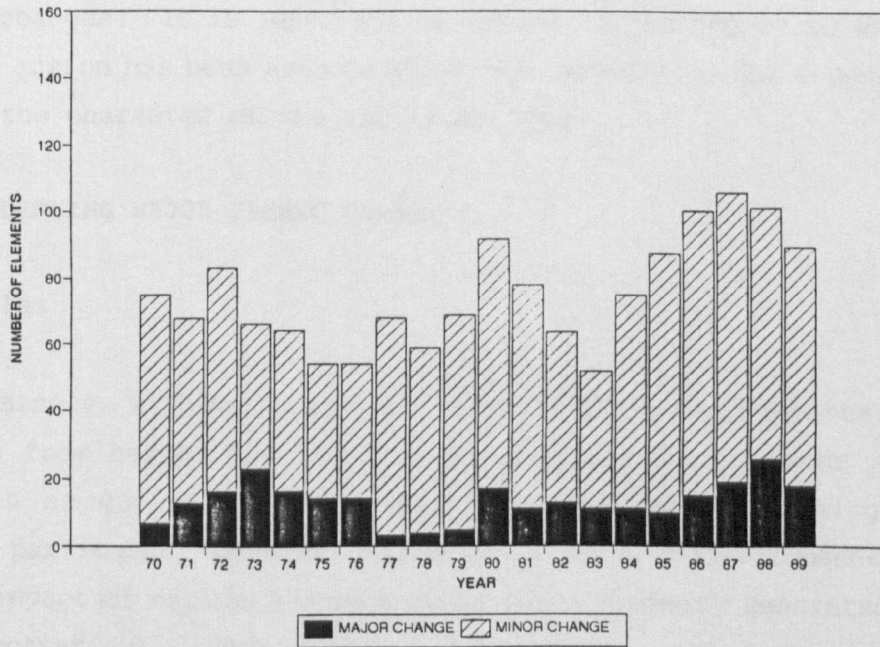


Figure 5.1; Ratio of major to minor townscape change in the two study areas

relationships between planning officers and other agents in the urban development arena, particularly developers, architects and the public. The nature of the contestation that exists in the application of conservation policies in commercial cores can be further explored by investigating refused applications and the material pertaining to appeals against refusal to the DoE by developers. Appeals provide significant indicators of local policy strength within the national planning and development context (Scrase, 1988; Rawlinson, 1989).

This chapter aims to consider the nature of major development in the two study areas, and its effect on their character. In seeking an explanation for variations in major building activity between, and within, the Birmingham and Bristol study areas, it is suggested that three key issues are of importance; firstly, the extent to which major change in these central conservation areas has been influenced by fluctuations in commercial development markets; secondly, the impact of changes in the planning policy context at both national and local levels; and finally, the local impact of national and international stylistic shifts in architecture. Further to this, both the functional and physical character of the conservation areas and the action of direct and indirect agents has had an effect in shaping the local impact of these wider changes. It is important to establish the degree to which local conservation action has been able to shape the impact of wider trends in order to maintain the character of the two study areas.

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING MAJOR FABRIC CHANGE**

### **Building cycles**

Increasingly, within the centres of major cities the impetus for urban change comes from beyond the local area, and is tied to wider structural factors, such as capital mobility and corporate decision-making (Harvey, 1989b). In particular, temporal patterns of major redevelopment activity reflect the impact of national cycles of building activity generated by wider economic fluctuations. The analysis of building cycles is particularly important, as their incidence can be linked closely to phases of urban development and the growth of cities (Whitehand, 1972; 1983). However, broad



economic trends have a specific impact on particular urban environments (Massey, 1991). In this respect the nature of an area's character and the action of local decision makers are important in understanding the variable impact of these processes.

A number of studies have been carried out analysing trends in building activity in the UK (Lewis, 1965; Esher, 1981; Barras, 1987). Barras (1987) identifies three cycles of varying duration. The longest, urban redevelopment cycles of 20 to 30 years duration, are associated with the major phases of industrial capitalism's development in the U.K. from the 1780s onwards. The post-war cycle has been associated with de-urbanisation, counter-urbanisation, footloose industry and the increasing importance of the service sector to the UK economy (Barras, 1987). Of significance to the current study is the recent onset of a new cycle, with growth being generated by the financial, leisure and information technology industries. The redevelopment of property in the city centre to incorporate changing technology and working practices highlights important concerns for conservation practice. These trends are already becoming evident in pressures for the adaptation of historic buildings and an increasing pressure for new commercial building.

Superimposed on the dominant long swing of post war urban development are shorter cycles affecting building. These short cycles are related to the business cycle and supply-side production lags which particularly affect commercial developments, causing periods of undersupply and rent increases (Barras, 1987). The main factor influencing the increasingly spectacular sequence of booms and slumps seen in the private commercial sector has been change in the supply cycle, particularly the growing influence of speculative financial investment in property development. It is this instability of development markets, mis-matches in the supply and demand of commercial property, and the uneven impact of economic trends that are critical to the consideration of development pressure in the conservation areas.

The period of study coincides with the end of the post-war upswing in non-residential building activity, which began with the abolition of building licences in the early 1950s and continued through the 1960s commercial redevelopment of many city centres (figure 5.2):

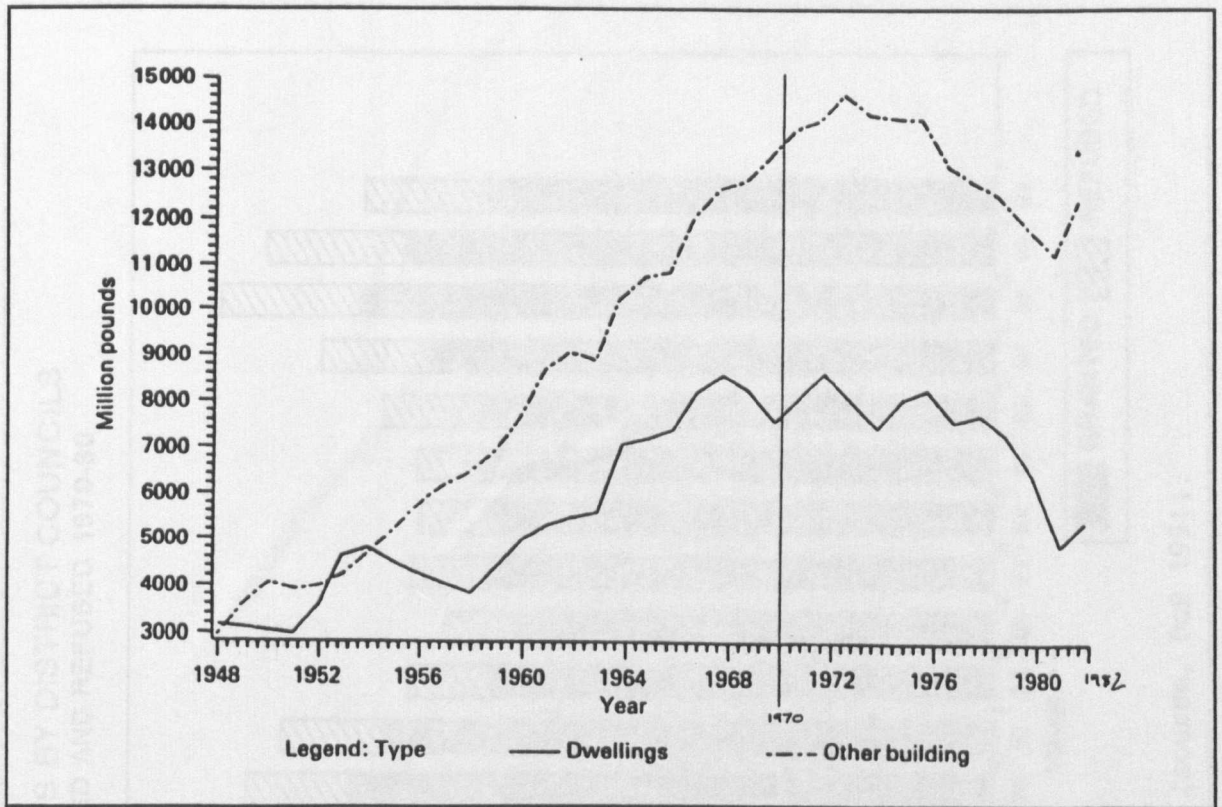


Figure 5.2; Gross domestic fixed capital formation in building: 1948-1982 (source, Barras 1987, p.11)

This development upswing reached a peak in the property boom of 1972-1973, associated with the Conservative government's 'dash for growth' stemming from the 1971 budget (Punter, 1990). However, this date marks a decline in total building activity to a trough in 1981 (figure 5.2), precipitated by oil price rises and a near tripling of short term interest rates after 1974, which fuelled a recession in the UK economy, linked to a decline in manufacturing industry (Barras, 1987). However, in figure 5.2 there is evidence of the beginning of the economic up-swing that occurred in the UK economy in the mid-1980s, fuelled by an expansion of the professional services sector, and precipitating an increase in building activity (Punter, 1990).

These fluctuations in economic fortune and development activity are, in part, reflected in national figures for planning decisions by district councils in the period between 1970 and 1989 (figure 5.3). This shows a peak of decisions in 1972-73, reflecting the property boom identified by Barras (1987). Figure 5.3 also shows the crash of 1974, followed by a minor recovery in the late-1970s. The decline in applications after 1980 reflects the slump

PLANNING DECISIONS BY DISTRICT COUNCILS  
DECISIONS GRANTED AND REFUSED 1970-90

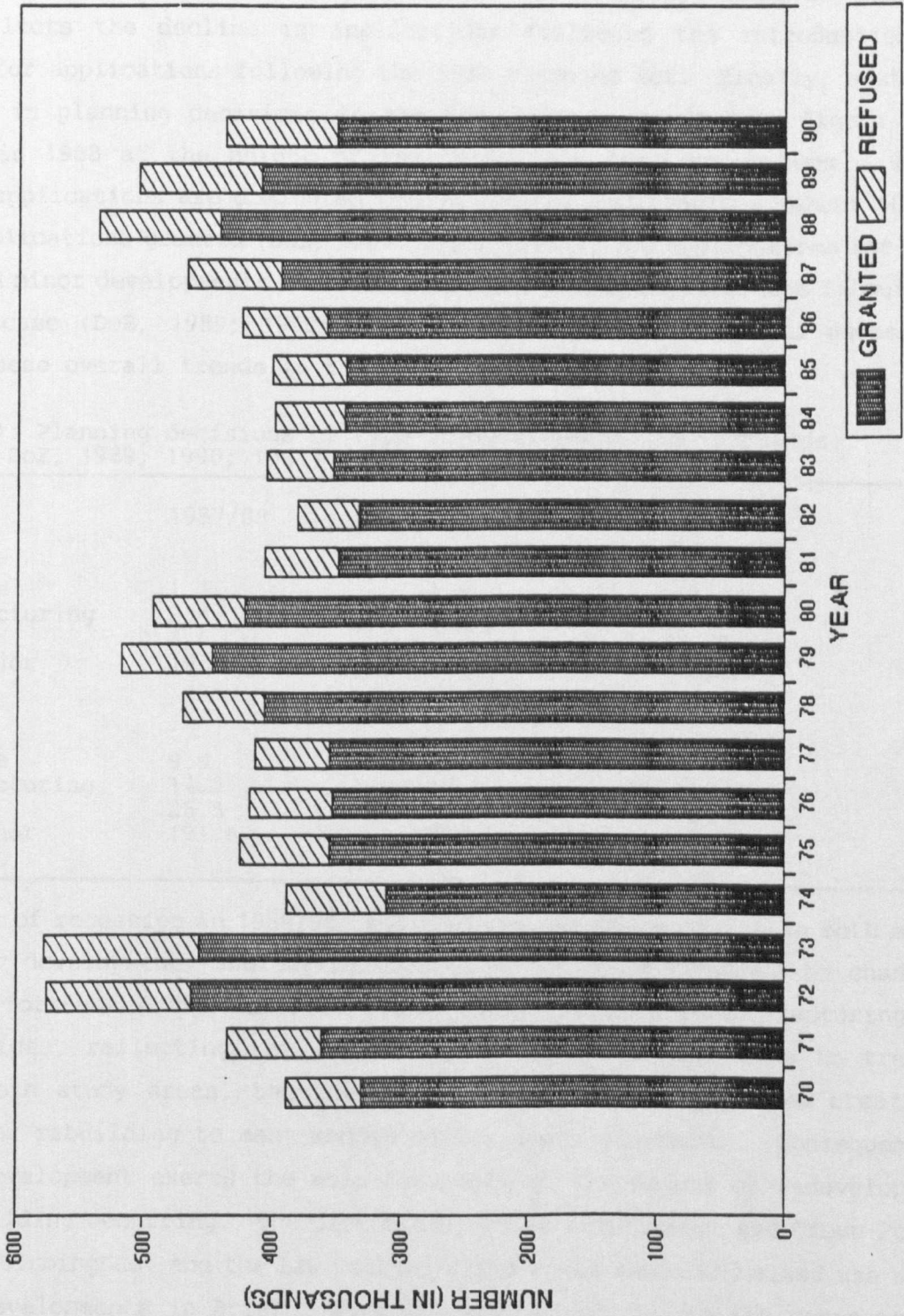


Figure 5.3; Planning decisions by District Councils (source, DoE 1991).

in development activity during the recession of the early 1980s, but also in part reflects the decline in applications following the introduction of charges for applications following the 1980 Planning Act. Finally, a steady increase in planning decisions in the mid-1980s is evident in figure 5.3, peaking in 1988 at the height of the late-1980s development boom. While overall applications are dominated by householder applications (about 40% of total applications granted (DoE, 1989; 1990; 1991)), and applications for both major and minor developments are dominated by dwelling applications (about 50% in each case (DoE, 1989; 1990; 1991)), commercial applications seemed to follow these overall trends in the late-1980s (table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Planning decisions by type of development (in thousands)  
(Source: DoE, 1989; 1990; 1991)

	1987/88	1988/89	1989/90
<b>Major:</b>			
Offices	1.1	1.6	2.2
Manufacturing	2.4	3.2	3.5
Retail	1.6	1.8	1.7
All major	19.2	23.5	24.5
<b>Minor:</b>			
Offices	9.9	11.4	12.1
Manufacturing	14.2	15.3	15.1
Retail	26.5	27.6	25.9
All minor	191.6	217.6	210.3

The onset of recession in 1989/90, seemed to be led by retailing in both major and minor development, indicating this sector's quick response to changing economic fortunes. This was followed by major projects in manufacturing and then offices, reflecting the lag in these areas in responding to trends. Within both study areas, the presence of a primary office area creates a demand for rebuilding to meet modern office space standards. Consequently, office development exerts the main influence on the amount of redevelopment and rebuilding occurring. The City Plaza retail development and Crown Public House in Birmingham, and the Law Courts, Grand Hotel Annex and mixed use Welsh Back redevelopments in Bristol were the few exceptions to the dominance of offices in new building and major rebuilding activity in the two areas.

The impact of recent short term cycles and economic trends was reflected in applications for new building and major rebuilding in the two areas between

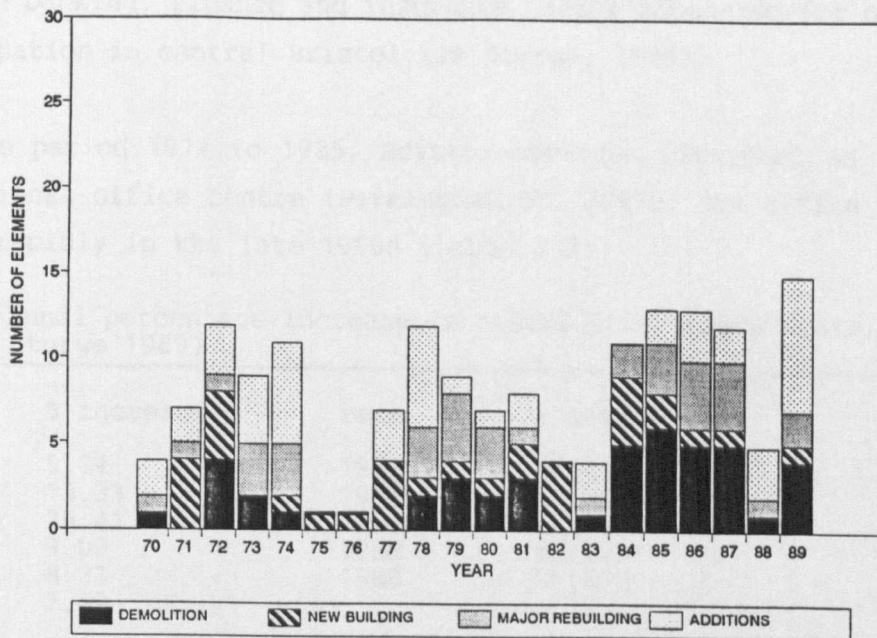
1970 and 1989 (figure 5.4). Of significance was the differential impact of the commercial building cycle on the two areas. In the Birmingham area, peaks in application submission for major development coincided with general peaks in commercial development activity in the early 1970s and the late 1980s. Also, there was evidence of a slight recovery in the development market between 1978 and 1981, although this was arrested by the recession of the early 1980s which deeply affected Birmingham's economy (Spencer et al, 1986; Birmingham CC, 1989). Birmingham's commercial problems were associated with a loss of confidence in the area, in relation to other regional centres, linked to the decline of manufacturing throughout the West Midlands region. An over-supply of office space in the city centre resulted, with many offices developed in the early-1970s remaining unlet, depressing demand for new floor-space:

"The amounts [of new floor space completed] show tremendous variation from the peak in 1975 when 1.2 m sq.ft. was completed at the height of the office boom to the trough in the early 1980s when completion rates slipped below 100 000 sq.ft.. Since 1982 completion rates have recovered and have averaged 260 00 sq.ft. per annum." (Birmingham CC, 1987c)

This peak of activity, in the completion of new office space relates closely to the peak in application submissions in 1972, given the lag in development time between the submission of a planning application and the completion of the building. More major development activity was present in the late-1980s, reflecting the growth of Birmingham as a regional office centre. This growing importance was reflected in increases in office rents. By January 1990, Birmingham's prime office rent levels were growing more rapidly than those of most major regional centres (Birmingham CC, 1991b).

In the Bristol area, similar peaks to those visible in the Birmingham area in the early 1970s and late 1980s were evident, reflecting general development cycles. However, unlike in Birmingham, activity was more sustained throughout the late-1970s and early-1980s, with the only significant 'dip' being 1977-79, when a moratorium on speculative office building operated in the centre (Punter, 1990). While both Birmingham and Bristol had to deal with declines in traditional employment bases, the higher level of new build activity in the Bristol study area in the 1970s and 1980s reflected Bristol's sustained growth as a major national office centre. Bristol was better placed than Birmingham to take advantage of economic opportunities in the late 1970s, such as office relocations. The Bristol office market gained from the boom

AMOUNT OF MAJOR TOWNSCAPE CHANGE  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



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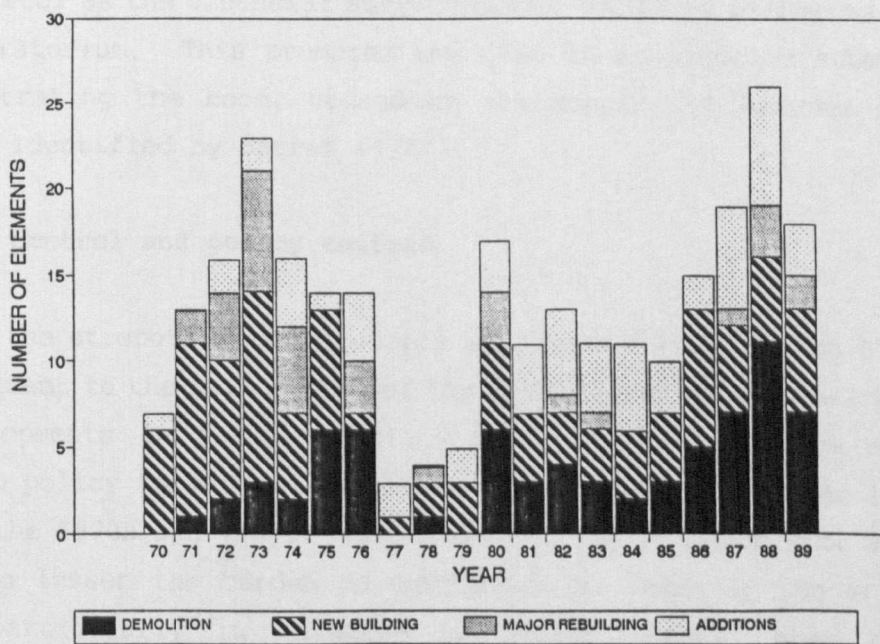


Figure 5.4; The amount of major townscape change in the two study areas.

in financial services in the 1980s, and picked up a sizable proportion of the offices decentralising from London along the 'M4 corridor', particularly benefiting from the influx of insurance firms (Bateman, 1985; Punter, 1990). By 1987, the banking, finance and insurance sector accounted for over 40% of office occupation in central Bristol (JP Sturge, 1989).

In the period 1974 to 1985, Bristol overtook Liverpool as the fourth largest regional office centre (Birmingham CC, 1987c) and office floorspace rents rose rapidly in the late 1980s (table 5.2).

Table 5.2; Annual percentage increase in office floor space rents, Bristol (Source, JP Sturge 1989).

Year	% increase	Year	% increase
1979	5.74	1985	7.14
1980	13.33	1986	36.67
1981	29.41	1987	17.07
1982	9.09	1988	16.67
1983	8.33	1989	28.57
1984	7.69		

These changes parallel closely the trends in application submission (figure 5.4). The rise in rents in 1980-81 resulted from the under supply of office space in Bristol as the financial service sector expanded following the office building moratorium. This prompted the rise in application submissions in 1980 demonstrating the boom, caused by the supply lag between demand and investment, identified by Barras (1987).

#### **Development control and policy context**

While the strength of local policy is essentially dependent on the local LPA's commitment to the maintenance of the local character of the conservation area, developments in planning policy nationally have had a significant influence on policy formation and conservation management at the local level throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Of particular significance were attempts in the 1980s to lessen the burden on developers by reducing the influence of planning, particularly in relation to design issues, seen by central government as unnecessarily hindering the market (Ambrose, 1986; Punter, 1986; Thornley, 1991). In conjunction with these changes there was a move towards centralisation in the planning process, with increased weight given to

government policy circulars over local development plans and particularly non-statutory policies within planning disputes and at appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment (Scrase, 1988). Consequently, during the 1980s increasing tension developed in planning due to conflict between a 'laissez faire' approach and local development and design concerns. This conflict at the local level is reflected in the time taken to process applications, the number and type of applications refused or withdrawn, and appeals to the Department of the Environment (Punter, 1990).

#### Time taken to process applications

The importance of the speed at which applications submitted are decided by the LPA stems from the significance attached to the processing of applications by central government in monitoring the efficiency of LPAs (Thomas, 1988). Since the publication of Circular 22/80 (DoE, 1980), central government has increasingly pressurised LPAs to increase the percentage of applications decided in under 8 weeks (56 days). However, within local planning, many developments in policy and practice have run counter to this trend, particularly moves to increase consultation of the public and local and national amenity bodies in the planning process, and increased application negotiation and discussion between planners and architects (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994).

National trends in the time taken to process applications in England since 1979, when figures were first produced, indicate the effect of government attempts to streamline the planning process, with the percentage decided within 8 weeks rising from about 60% in 1979 to almost 70% in the period 1982 - 1984 (figure 5.5). However, after 1984, despite government efforts to increase efficiency, the time taken to process applications increased, with fewer applications decided within 8 weeks. This was a result of a combination of factors, namely the rising volume of planning applications in the late 1980s, coupled with a decrease in the resources available to planning authorities, increasing public participation in development issues, and a popular backlash against the rising tide of development. Considering the average time taken in each study area over 20 years, both the Birmingham and Bristol areas showed a decrease in the number of days taken in the early



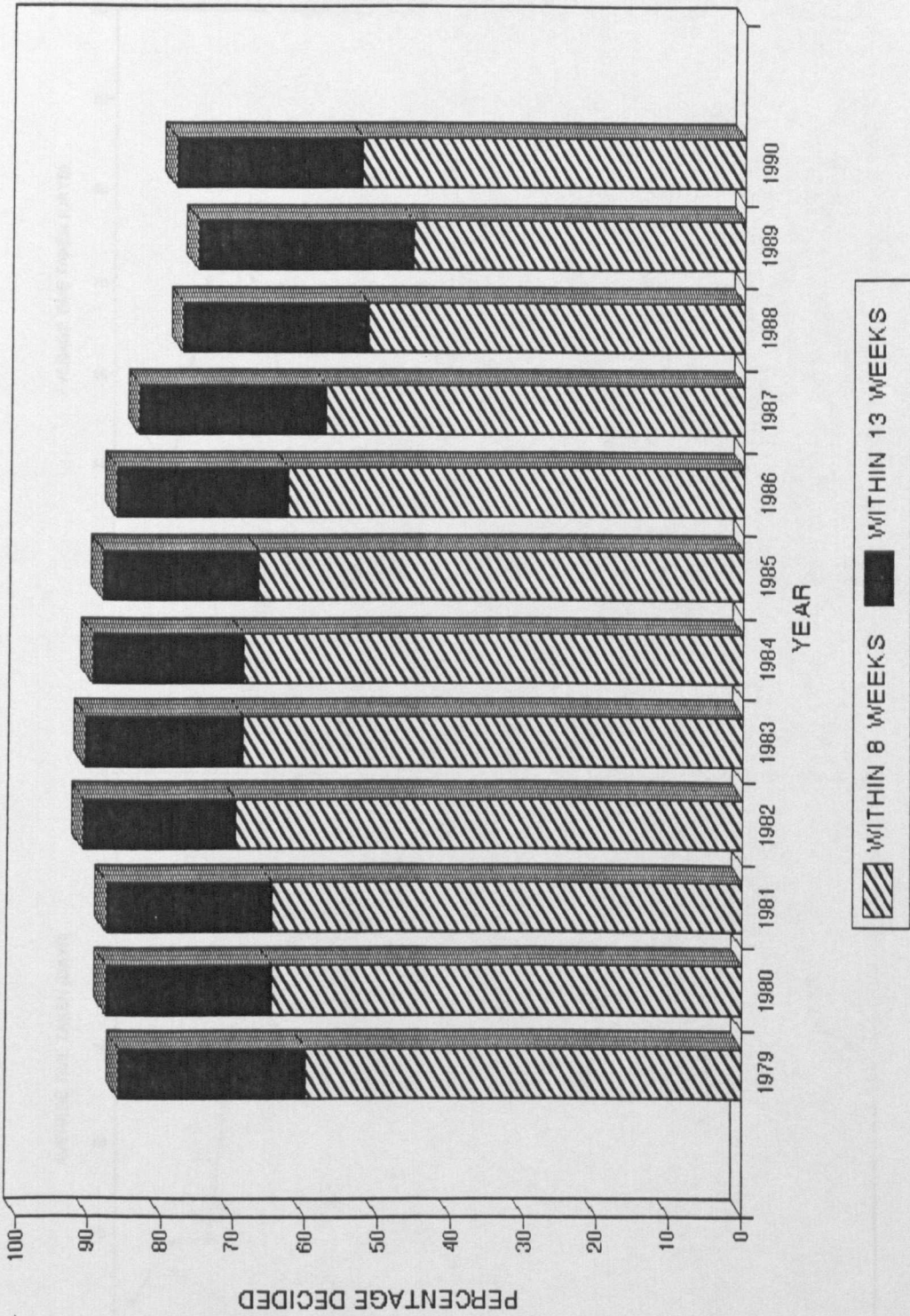
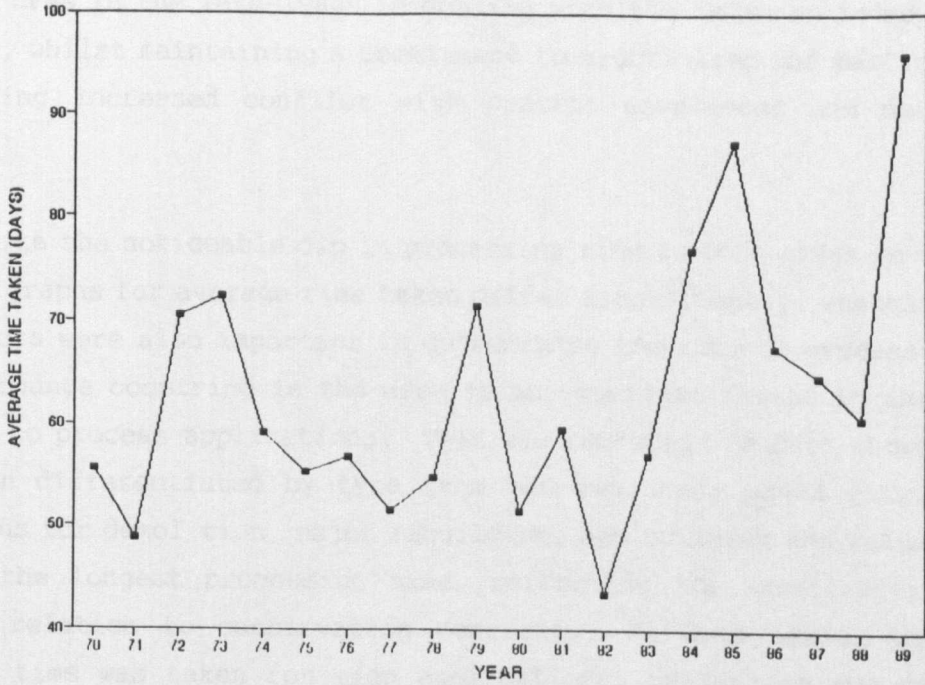


Figure 5.5; Speed of planning decisions by District Council (source, DoE 1991).

TIME TAKEN IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



TIME TAKEN IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

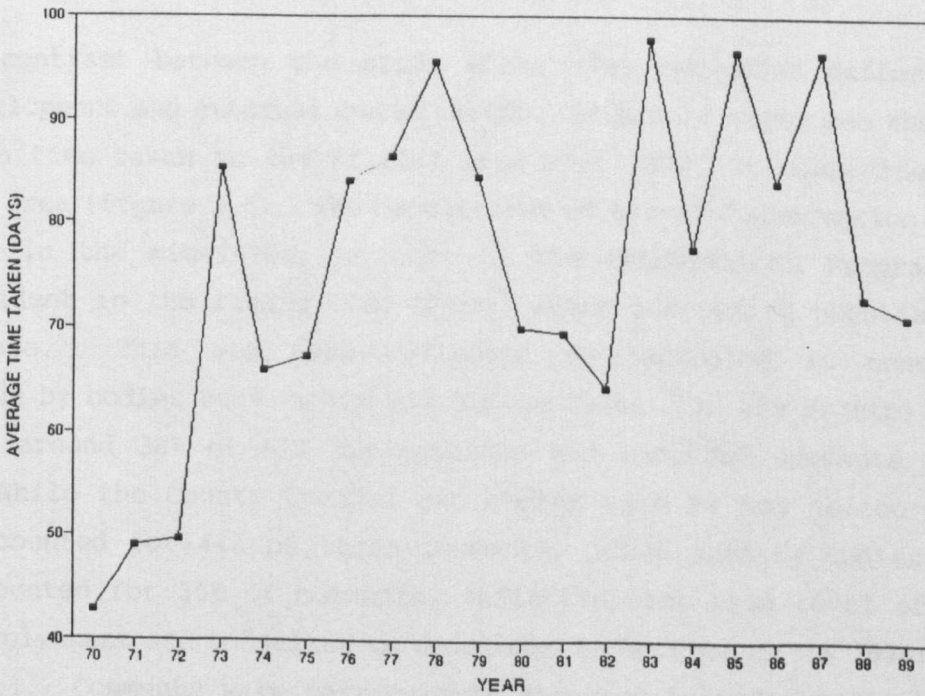


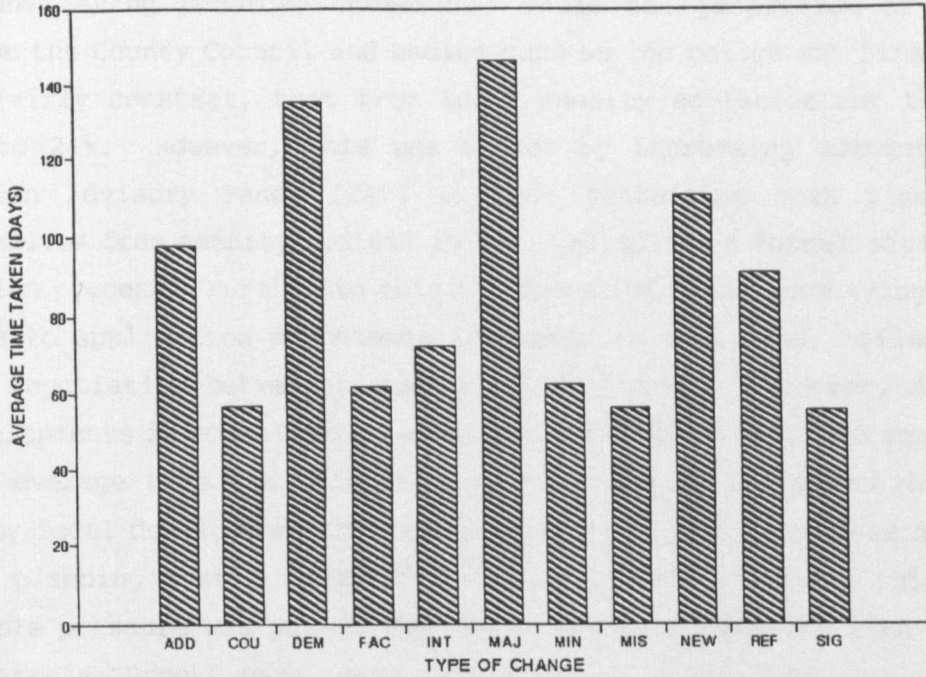
Figure 5.6; Time taken in determining applications in the two study areas.

1980s, followed by a dramatic increase in time taken in the late-1980s (figure 5.6), mirroring national trends (figure 5.5). This highlights the problem that faced LPAs in the late-1980s in dealing with the increase in application submission, whilst maintaining a commitment to negotiation and participation, precipitating increased conflict with central government and development interests.

Despite the noticeable dip in processing time in both areas in the early 1980s, the graphs for average time taken differ significantly, suggesting that local factors were also important in determining the rate of processing. The nature of change occurring in the area is an important factor in the average time taken to process applications. This was reflected in data showing speed of decision differentiated by type from the two study areas (figure 5.7). Applications for demolition, major rebuilding, new building and refurbishment exhibited the longest processing time, reflecting the sensitivity of this change in relation to conservation concerns. In both areas, the lowest processing time was taken for sign applications, reflecting the relatively non-controversial nature of these applications. This may then in part account for the lower average time taken to process applications in the Birmingham area since here these applications were numerically dominant.

The contrast between the study areas also reflected differences in policy development and external consultation. Of significance was the overall increase in time taken in the Bristol area post 1972, in comparison to the Birmingham area (figure 5.6). The development of strong conservation policies in Bristol in the mid-1970s, as part of the Conservation Programme, was clearly evident in the rising time taken, where increasing negotiation was taking place. This was also reflected in increases in comments on applications by bodies outside the LPA in the 1970s. In the Bristol area, in the 1970s, around 30% of all applications had recorded comments on their content. While the County Council and bodies such as the police and fire service accounted for 44% of those comments, local amenity bodies and the public accounted for 36% of comments, reflecting the high level of amenity society involvement and consultation developed in Bristol in the 1970s (Brook, pers. comm.). Comments were particularly directed towards applications for demolition, new building, change of use and alterations to the façade of a

TIME TAKEN IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



TIME TAKEN IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

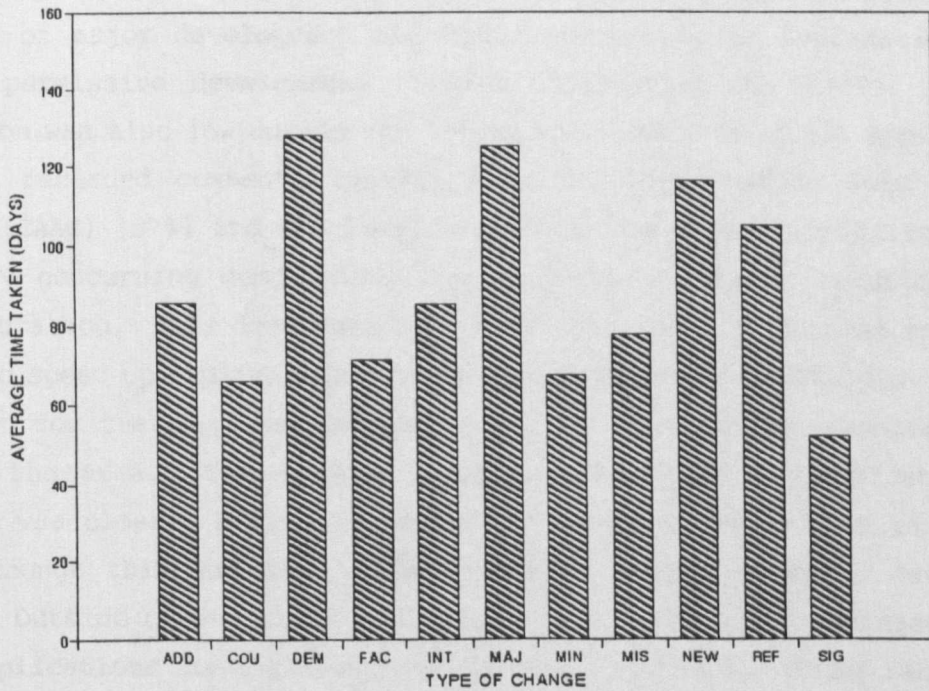


Figure 5.7; Time taken in determining applications, differentiated by type of change, in the two study areas.

building. In the 1980s, outside consultation increased, with 49% of applications having recorded comments. While the proportion of comments coming from the County Council and bodies such as the police and fire services remained fairly constant, that from local amenity societies and the public declined to 24%. However, this was offset by increasing comments by the Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP) (a body containing both planners and representatives from amenity bodies) to 23%, reflecting a formalisation of the consultation process. Further to this the number of conditions tying planning permission to application amendments increased in the 1980s, reflecting the increased negotiation between planners and applicants. However, during the 1980s developments in consultation encountered difficulties. The more erratic levels of average time taken in the mid-1980s can be linked to the attacks launched by local development interests on what was seen by them as an overtly sensitive planning system in Bristol (Punter, 1990). During this period, considerable pressure was put on the LPA to reduce processing time and relax design controls (Brook, pers. comm.).

While similar trends were evident in the Birmingham area, they were not as strong. The economic concerns of the 1970s are significant in understanding the generally low average time taken during this period, with low levels of major development and rapid processing of applications in a generally permissive development climate (Birmingham CC, 1989). Outside consultation was also low during the 1970s, with only 13% of all applications attracting recorded comments, mainly from the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) (37%) and the local branch of the Victorian Society (29%), principally concerning demolition, new building and major rebuilding, and façade alteration. This development climate, coupled with central government pressure to speed up application processing in the early-1980s, provides some explanation for the slow development of strong conservation negotiation and policy in the area. The gradual emergence of conservation strategies in Birmingham was clearly reflected in the rise in processing time in the mid-1980s, although this was also linked to the increase in major development activity. Outside consultation and comment on applications increased to 65% of all applications having recorded comments, although these became more concentrated in origin, with 70% coming from the CAAC and 15% from the Victorian Society, again reflecting a formalisation of the consultation

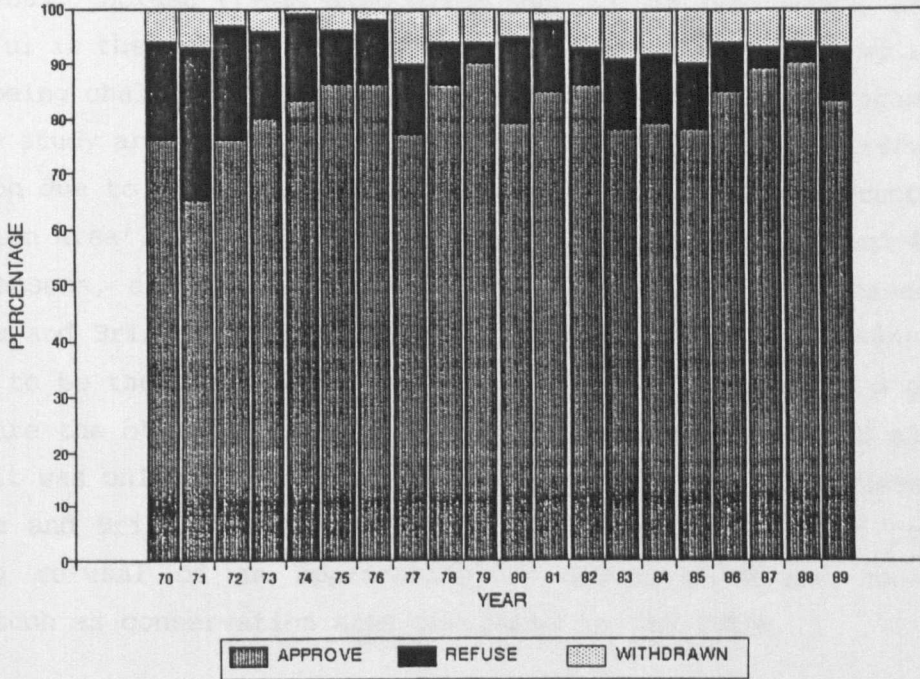
process. While most comments were directed to façade alteration and sign schemes, a high number were directed towards major development schemes. The rise in average time taken in the mid-1980s reflected attempts to develop design and conservation standards, while the later reduction in time taken reflected the challenge to these policy developments resulting from appeal decisions against the LPA.

### Applications refused and withdrawn

The strength of conservation policies at the local level can be investigated by considering the proportion and type of applications refused or withdrawn. At the national level, Jones (1993) noted that rates of refusal overall in England remained more or less constant, at approximately 14.7% per annum, from the early 1960s until 1986. However, there was an overall rise in the amount of refusal and withdrawal activity in the 1980s, reflecting the move of many LPAs to increase control on matters of design and other local policies (Punter, 1990; Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994), and the growing politicisation of planning with conflict between developers and planners (Ambrose, 1986). While this trend was represented in the two study areas in the changing proportion of applications refused and withdrawn over time, the precise trends in each area were distinct (figure 5.8). There was a high percentage of refusals in the early 1970s in the Birmingham area, linked to the high level of commercial activity, and a planning decision system still largely driven by clear cut technical decision making. Again, the relaxation of LPA control as a consequence of economic stagnation in the late 1970s was evident. The Bristol area, in comparison, shows lower rates of refusal in the 1970s, although higher rates of withdrawal than the Birmingham area. This reflects the generally permissive development climate in central Bristol at the time (Brook, pers. comm.), but with the development of conservation control evident in the rise in the percentage of withdrawn applications.

In the 1980s, the development of conservation concerns, application negotiation and increasing contestation was evident in both areas, with the increase in the percentage of both refusals and withdrawals (figure 5.8). In line with general trends, both LPAs became reluctant to refuse applications outright, given the increasing willingness of applicants to go to appeal, and

APPLICATION DECISION OVER TIME  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



APPLICATION DECISION OVER TIME  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

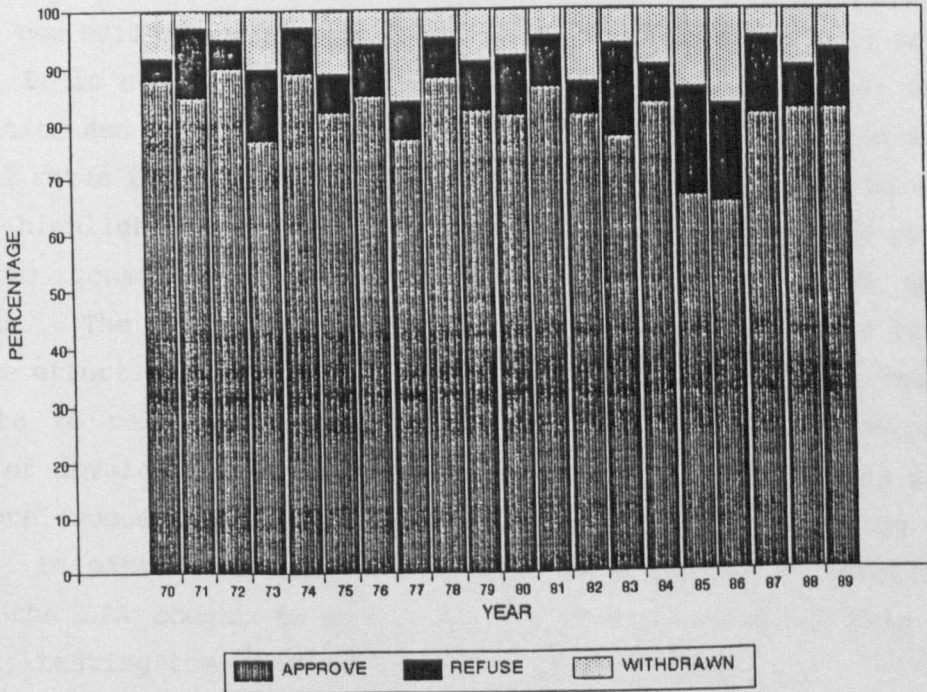


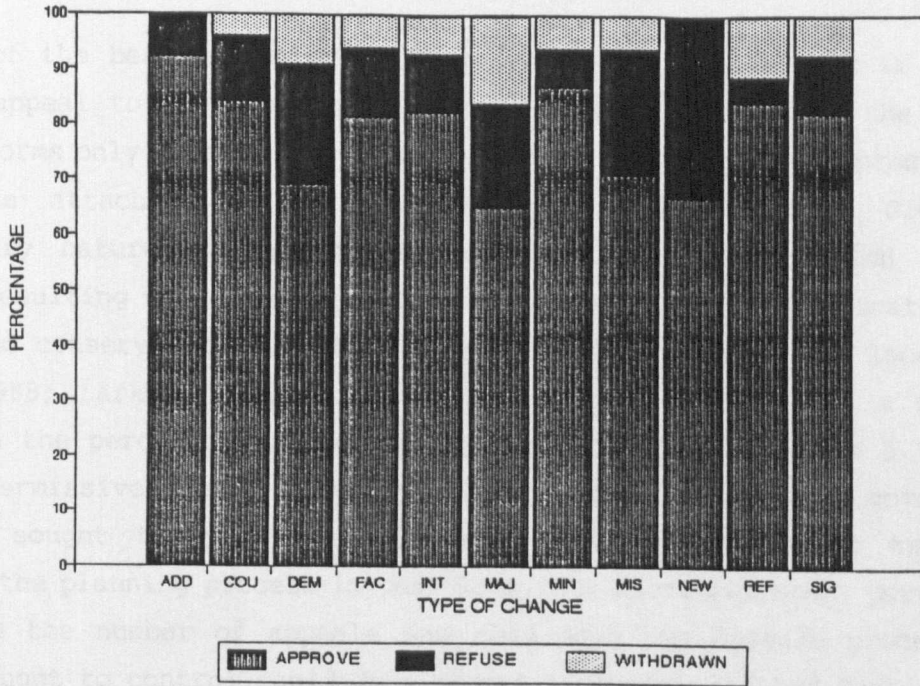
Figure 5.8; Percentage of applications approved, refused or withdrawn over time in the two study areas.

the decision to award costs against the LPA (Bruton and Nicholson, 1987; Scrase, 1988). Scrase (1988) also notes that in the late 1980s, LPAs became more careful in their use of refusal reasons, given the increasing likelihood of these being challenged at appeal, with less use of single, vague reasons. In the two study areas this trend was evident in the use of the refusal of an application due to it being seen to be 'detrimental to the character of the conservation area'. In the 1970s this reason constituted 45% and 40% of all refusal reasons, and was the sole reason in 37% and 53% of cases, in the Birmingham and Bristol areas respectively. However, in the 1980s while it continued to be the main reason for refusal, with detriment to a building's architecture the other main reason, constituting 44% and 39% of all refusal reasons, it was only used as the sole reason in 14% and 26% of cases, in the Birmingham and Bristol areas respectively. This reflects the problems of sustaining refusal of an application on unquantified and non-statutory concerns such as conservation area character in the 1980s.

Examination of the proportions of applications approved, refused and withdrawn differentiated by type of development (figure 5.9), highlights the degree of contention surrounding major development within both the Birmingham and Bristol study areas. In both conservation areas, applications for demolition, new building and major rebuilding were most frequently refused or withdrawn. It is clear that these types of change were important areas for the negotiation and testing of stated policies. In the Birmingham area, the high refusal rates for major developments (new building, demolition and major rebuilding) highlights the key areas of policy contention, and the particular challenge to conservation area character and policy posed by these developments. The high rate of refusal and withdrawal for major rebuilding reflects the effort put into negotiation on these applications by the LPA and the attempts to resist this type of development. Over the majority of categories of development, the Bristol area had more applications withdrawn implying more 'success' in application negotiation, and suggesting strength in policy. In particular the high refusal rate for major rebuilding was important: the LPA sought to guard against the over-use of this type of development, testing the strength of their policy stance.



APPLICATION DECISION BY TYPE OF CHANGE  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



APPLICATION DECISION BY TYPE OF CHANGE  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

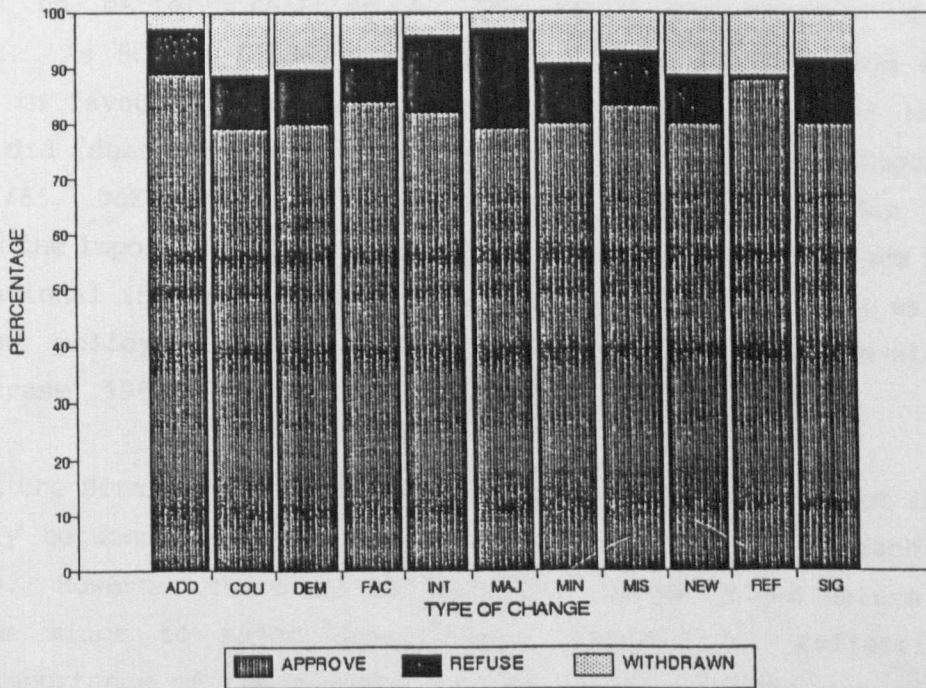


Figure 5.9; Percentage of applications approved, refused or withdrawn, by type of change, in the two study areas.

## Appeals to the Secretary of State for the Environment

One of the best indicators of policy strength in an area is the LPA record on appeal to the Department of the Environment. While the appeals procedure forms only a small part of the planning decision-making process, the significance attached to the decisions is far reaching. Given the discretionary nature of the UK planning system, the operation of, and decisions resulting from, the appeals process have important implications for planning and conservation policies at both the national and the local level (Davies, 1988; Larkham, 1995a). During the 1980s, there was a dramatic increase in the percentage of refusals coming to appeal (figure 5.10), as, amid the permissive planning environment fostered by central government, developers sought to challenge LPA control. The effect of trying to streamline the planning process in the 1980s, has therefore been, perversely, to increase the number of appeals and slow down the appeals procedure as planners sought to control rapid development (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). Within conservation areas, developers have increasingly challenged key aspects of LPA policies, which are usually non-statutory, and are seen to be based on subjective criteria and therefore less secure at appeal (Davies, 1988), particularly on matters relating to the style and massing of major developments. As Scrase (1988) notes the key issue in the 1980s was the presumption in favour of permission, unless it could be argued that the development did "demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance" (Circular 1/85, DoE, 1985). At appeal the fundamental issue is who acknowledges the importance of the interest, and often conflict arises between local and national interests. During the 1980s increasing weight was given to government policy circulars over development plans and non-statutory policies (Scrase, 1988).

Within the Birmingham study area the number of appeals did not increase significantly between the 1970s and 1980s, with 21 and 25 in each decade respectively. However, there was an important change in the nature of the appeals from minor to major developments (table 5.3), reflecting the increasing importance of the appeals process to major policy issues in the 1980s. In the 1970s, the only major appeal was associated with the demolition of Queens College Chambers, which was withdrawn as a result of negotiation.

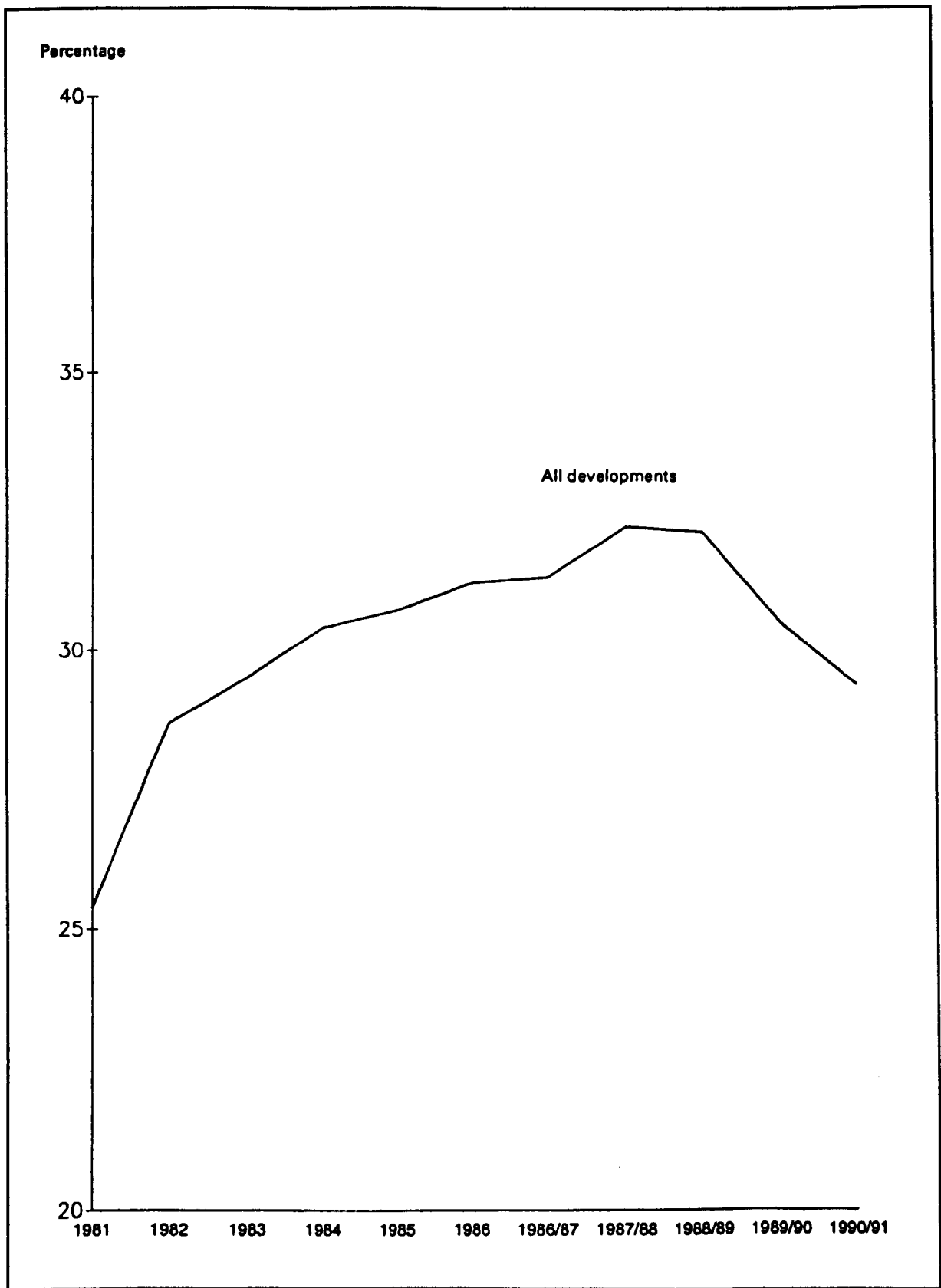


Figure 5.10; Percentage of refusals coming to appeal in England and Wales, 1981 to 1990/91 (source, DoE 1991).

Table 5.3; Birmingham Appeals.

	1970s GRANT	REFUSE	WITH	1980s GRANT	REFUSE	WITH
ADD	1					
COU		1	2	1	2	4
DEM			1	2		3
FAC				2		
INT				1		
MAJ				2	1	
NEW						3
SIG	5	5	6	2	1	1

By the 1980s the range of developments challenged had increased, to include specifically more demolition, new building, major rebuilding. Of significance is the number of withdrawn appeals, reflecting the use by developers of the threat of appeal to pressurise LPAs to negotiate more rapidly, a practice with important implications for negotiation on conservation issues. Also of note is the granting of appeals for major rebuilding and demolition. These appeal decisions had important implications for the development of conservation policy relating to the maintenance of area character (Hargreaves, pers. comm.). Following these decisions, the LPA were reluctant to refuse developments and go to appeal, because of the awarding of costs against the LPA. During these appeals tensions have emerged between the application of local conservation policies, and the domination of national conservation criteria over these locally expressed concerns and definitions of historic value.

Table 5.4; Bristol Appeals.

	1970s GRANT	REFUSE	WITH	1980s GRANT	REFUSE	WITH
ADD				1		2
COU				4	3	
DEM		1	1			2
MAJ		1				
MIN				1		
MIS				5		
NEW	2	1	2		1	3
REF	1					1
SIG		1		2	1	

In the Bristol area, the number of appeals increased by more than half between the 1970s and 1980s, with 10 and 26 in each decade respectively. This reflects the development of strong control policies in the mid-1970s, which

came under increasing pressure in the 1980s. The policy strength obtained during the 1970s was reflected in the change in the nature of appeals in the 1980s to encompass mainly minor changes, such as change of use, signs and miscellaneous change. The strength of policy was primarily reflected in the fact that only two new building appeals, and no demolition or major rebuilding appeals, went against the LPA (table 5.4). Refusals and withdrawals of appeals in the 1970s had a major impact in shaping policy in the area, particularly the refusal of demolition and major rebuilding, which effectively stifled pressure for this type of redevelopment in the area. Also, the withdrawal of the appeal concerning the demolition of a warehouse in the 1970s reflected the increasing recognition of the importance of these buildings to the character of the conservation area. Both these decisions had a key impact on the subsequent style of new development in the Bristol study area in the 1970s and 1980s.

#### **National changes in architectural style in the post-war period**

In the post-war period, changing architectural fashions had a significant impact on the nature of new building in city centres. In the early-1950s, many of the new buildings developed continued the neo-Georgian style that had characterised commercial developments in the inter-war period (Punter, 1985; Whitehand, 1984; Freeman, 1988). Often, these were completions of schemes postponed due to the start of the Second World War. This style was used on buildings both of a "domestic" scale and also at the larger "City of London" scale (Punter, 1990; p.355). However, in tandem with this continuation of neo-Georgian styling, Modern styling began to be increasingly used for new commercial building. Buildings classified as Modern should be seen as part of the International style which utilised some of the ideas and methods of the *avant garde* Modern movement for commercial buildings in the post-war period (Jencks, 1985). Innovation in terms of Modern styling was carried out in many cities in the immediate post-war period by national retail and service chains, many of whom adopted this as a 'house style' (Freeman, 1988; Larkham, 1988a; Vilgrassa and Larkham, 1995). These national firms were of primary importance in disseminating this style on a country-wide basis, with these then taken up by local firms. However, the widespread adoption of

the Modern style for new building was principally due to the speculative office boom of the 1960s, when it became the preferred style of large commercial organisations, who came to dominate development in city cores (Bentley, 1983; Freeman, 1988).

The Modern style in architecture and planning prevailed into the 1970s. However, during the 1970s there was a reaction to Modernism and a decline in the popularity of Modern architecture, coinciding with greater renovation of valued historic buildings allied to an increasing engagement with 'heritage' generally (Vilgrassa and Larkham, 1995). In analysing changes in architectural style, the coincidence between the changes evident in the 1970s and 1980s and the depression of the building cycle in the early 1970s is viewed as significant. Many writers have viewed 1973-4 as a crucial moment when the Modern movement gave way to what has been termed the post-Modern age in architecture (Dear, 1986; Jencks, 1987; Punter, 1990). Post-Modern styles were evident as early as 1960, when the British *avant garde* abandoned Modernism (Jencks, 1987), although commercial patronage of the Modern style perpetuated its dominance in new building. Whilst post-Modernism developed out of Modernism, it can be seen as a reaction to it, albeit a very superficial one (Dear, 1986). Post-Modernism is a rather ambiguous term that describes a markedly heterogeneous collection of buildings constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Jencks (1987) a post-Modern building is doubly coded, part Modern and part something else: vernacular, revivalist, local, commercial, metaphorical or contextual. In its widest sense, post-Modern architecture eclectically utilises classical or vernacular architectural elements, together with modern ones, without being a simple reproduction of any historical style.

Detailed studies of new building in commercial centres have noted differences in the timing of the supplanting of Modern buildings by post-Modern styles (Whitehand, 1984; Freeman, 1988; Larkham, 1988a; Larkham and Vilgrassa, 1995). These variations have been variously attributed to the presence of an active amenity society (Freeman, 1988), differences in the size of settlement and its position in the urban hierarchy, and particularly nature of the existing morphological frame in affecting redevelopment (Whitehand, 1984; Freeman, 1988). In some cities isolated examples of post-Modern styling

were evident prior to extensive conservation control, as for example in Northampton (Whitehand, 1984), Aylesbury (Freeman, 1988) and Worcester (Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995). However, the designation of conservation areas has led to these national stylistic innovations being adopted with some rapidity. It has been argued that the designation of conservation areas in the 1970s was instrumental in changing the style of buildings in many urban cores through a necessity to satisfy legal requirements to preserve and enhance character and appearance of these areas (Adam, 1981; Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995). A number of detailed studies have shown that the style of new building in conservation areas moved to utilise neo-vernacular or replication styles (particularly Georgian), pastiche and historicist styles, rehabilitation or façadism (Larkham, 1988a; Punter, 1990; Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995). These stylistic trends have been viewed in both a positive light, for promoting buildings in tune with their surroundings in contrast to strident Modern designs, and in a negative light, for stifling architectural innovation and ushering in a new "banality" associated with aesthetic control (Punter, 1990; p.355). It has been argued that these post-Modern buildings frequently resort to styles that are universal rather than sensitive to the local environment, promoting a bland style of 'conservation-area-architecture' (Rock, 1974), or utilising a superficial historicism that often results in a loss of originality and further erosion of the character of the conservation area (Newby, 1994).

From examination of detailed studies of recent changes in architectural fashion in city centres, it is clear that the exact nature and degree of adoption of these vernacular, pastiche and historicist styles has been far from uniform. In particular the impact of these stylistic changes on new building within predominantly Victorian townscapes has not been extensively considered. Of key concern is the impact of the pressure for façadist schemes within these townscapes (Barrett and Larkham, 1994). Further to this, the trends in new building design in conservation areas can be defined not only in terms of those styles present, but also in terms of those styles absent. The degree to which post-Modern building styles have come to dominate new building in conservation areas is evident in the absence of late-Modern building styles within these areas. Late-Modernism, like post-Modernism, developed out of Modernism. However, it takes the ideas of Modernism to an

extreme, exaggerating the technological nature and image of a building (Jencks, 1987). While there has been a seeming decline in the popularity of Modernism, the 'high-tech' and sheet glass typical of late-Modern remained quite common in commercial development in the 1980s (Larkham, 1988a).

### Neo-vernacular styles

The new direction in the style of new building after the 1974 property crash was influenced by calls for a return to traditional forms of urban organisation, historical continuity and contextuality in design. These concerns were articulated both at a national level, through the discussion and dissemination of ideas contained within design guides, particularly the Essex Design Guide (Essex CC, 1973), and at the local level by public amenity society criticism of Modern building design. The introduction of vernacular elements in new building can be seen as the initial response of architects to the challenge of conservationist pressure groups and legislation. The use of vernacular elements in new building became so widely adopted that a separate movement within post-Modernism emerged, labelled 'neo-vernacular' (Jencks, 1987). Neo-vernacular styles sought to introduce elements or materials that harmonised with adjacent buildings, utilising façade details to give the appearance of traditional scale frontages, and using variable building heights to correspond with that of adjacent buildings (Whitehand, 1984; Freeman, 1988). This styling is also usually associated with new buildings that use brick as the main building material, and that contain elements such as dormers, gables, bay windows, mansard and pitched roofs. However, the seemingly indiscriminate use and universal application of particular vernacular details, or 'conservitECTure elements' (Adams, 1975, p.280), has led to the labelling of the style as 'pseudo-vernacular' indicating a style as insensitive to the local vernacular as the Modern style it replaced (Larkham, 1986).

### Replication and pastiche styles

Replication and pastiche designs have become commonplace new building styles in conservation areas (Larkham, 1995a). Pastiche and replication can be seen as part of the 'double-coding' that characterises post-Modern



architecture (Jencks, 1987). Yet, within conservation areas most speculative buildings adopt these styles in order to 'fit' new buildings into a particular urban context. However, these replication buildings are rarely straight revivals, as they do not reproduce all architectural details of the original buildings. More correctly they are termed 'neo'. The distinction between 'neo' buildings and revivals is a fine one, but of importance when considering the character and appearance of the streetscape (Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995). Also, there is some confusion as to what constitutes pastiche (Punter, 1990).

Buildings categorised as 'neo' in style seek reasonably faithful reproductions of the main characteristics of façades from earlier periods. They seek to continue some of the main characteristics of this architecture, principally the use of brick as the main building material, fenestration patterns, building elevations and moderate building volumes. Within historic county towns and smaller cities, the survival of many Georgian buildings has produced a trend towards the development of new buildings in a revivalist neo-Georgian style (Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995). Finally, pastiche is often confused between buildings using a disparate mix of styles and architectural features and poor facsimiles (Punter, 1990). Many of the new post-Modern buildings developed in the mid-to late-1980s did not utilise historical references in order to fit the building into a context in a 'neo' or revivalist style. These post-Modern styles adopted a stylistic individualism, eclectically utilising a number of historical references and periods, particularly Tudor, Georgian and Victorian, in a 'playful' way through parody.

### Facadism

Another consequence of the desire to 'fit' new development into the existing townscape of conservation areas has been the rise in what is termed 'façadism' as a redevelopment option. Façadism has been an approach to redevelopment of buildings in historic towns in Europe and North America for about 20 years, and more recently it has become popular in the centres of larger cities, associated with an increased concern for building preservation in these commercial cores (DeMuth, 1988; Barrett and Larkham, 1994). Façadism was recognised in the 1970s as an important option for conservation, in the

face of corporate power and pressure to develop (Dobby, 1978). Today, the term is in common usage in both academic and conservationist writing (Smith, 1975; Yarwood, 1975; Saunders, 1986; Larkham, 1992b). It has also slipped into popular usage, frequently a subject of newspaper coverage concerning conservation issues (Beard, 1982). The wider meaning of façadism is usually seen to have its origins in the architectural practice of refronting, common in the 18th Century (Saunders, 1986; Larkham, 1992b; Barrett and Larkham, 1994). Today, at its broadest sweep, façadism is the deliberate disguise of a building's exterior to give a particular desired appearance. Generally it consists of redevelopment in which an entirely new building is constructed behind a retained front wall. The more recent change in conservation practices from the sole consideration of single building preservation, to consider the streetscape and the inclusion of many 'ordinary' buildings in statutory lists, has encouraged the development of façadism, as it is the image of the building and its contribution to the streetscene, rather than the building itself, that is of importance. However, it has become overused as an option in some areas, leading to poor examples of façades incorporated into developments with greatly increased floor ratios. In the USA, this style of redevelopment has been termed 'façodomý' (Knox, 1991), a term of abuse reflecting its lack of consideration for architecture, streetscape and scale. While it is primarily used as a redevelopment option for offices, there are examples of façades being used to screen other developments, such as shopping centres, car parks and civic developments (DeMuth, 1988; Barrett and Larkham, 1994).

While façadism is usually seen as development behind a retained front wall, many different forms of development can, and have been, considered under this heading. However, limits have to be considered, otherwise the term becomes meaningless, and overused; there is a fine line to be drawn between façadism and refurbishment. The line between façadism and refurbishment can be set up between those outer walls that remain unsupported (refurbishment), and those that need to be shored up using scaffolding (façadism). Saunders (1986) has identified three main types 'façadist' development; demolition of all but the façade, rebuilding of the façade, and pastiche. With the first, and most common form of redevelopment, the front wall alone is retained, and a new building in scale with the front is constructed. This type varies with

the inclusion of one or more side walls in the development, culminating in the gutting of the building, but retaining the shell. However, the new building behind the façade is not always in scale with the original façade, and can be architecturally at odds. This is especially true of early façadist schemes, where the façade was retained as a novelty, rather than as an element of townscape and a guide to the scale of new building. This approach to preservation reduces the façade to the role of a free standing sculpture or architectural remnant, and is prevalent in office areas where the development of large skyscrapers is more common (Fitch, 1986; Seilder, 1991).

Also within façadist development, a number of variations can be included, which involve the retention of more of the original building, such as the front rooms, and other important internal features such as stairs, hallways or banking halls. This type of development is usually the result of negotiation between the LPA and the developer, in order to retain important interior features of listed buildings. The extreme of this process is where the front building is retained and the rear buildings demolished and a new structure added. While this development can be termed façadism, as the front building becomes a remnant of the larger building, removed from its broader context, this may be stretching the definition of façadism too far. The second type in Saunder's classification, are developments where the façade is dismantled, and then rebuilt on the new building. This may involve the movement of the front from its original position, and the building behind may, or may not, relate to this façade, as in the case of the retained and supported façade. A variant on this theme of façadism are developments where only part of the façade is retained in the new building, although out of its original context. At the extreme end of this classification is the retention of architectural remnants within new buildings; here only small parts of the building are retained, such as doorways (DeMuth, 1988).

## **MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT AND CHANGING AREA CHARACTER: THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**

### **New building in the study areas prior to 1970**

Within the study areas, clear differences exist in the architectural

styling adopted for new building in the immediate post-war period. Within the Bristol area, the continuation of the neo-Georgian style of building, at both the 'domestic' scale and the larger 'City of London' scale, was evident in the late-1950s and early-1960s. The continuation of this style, particularly around Queen Square, was clearly aided by the large legacy of listed Georgian fabric, much of it listed from 1955 onwards, and the designation of the Areas of Special Control in 1964. While in many cases this type of development reflected architectural conservatism, it can also be seen as an early attempt to relate buildings to context, particularly in the architectural set piece of Queen Square. However, in the 1960s, new building within the Bristol study area exhibited increasing duality with the growing use of Modern styling for new commercial building in those parts of the area zoned for comprehensive redevelopment (see Chapter Four). The development of Olivetti House, Prince Street (1959) in the Modern style (plate 5.1) set the pattern for much of the redevelopment, along Colston Avenue, around the Quays and around Baldwin Street (Punter, 1990). The work of Alec French and Partners in the post-war period is illustrative of this duality of style. While this architectural practice was influential in the development of the Modern style, for example in the design of the Bristol and West Building, Broad Quay (1967) (plate 5.1), it was also instrumental in perpetuating the neo-Georgian style, for example the design of the TSB, High Street (1956), 33-35 Queen Square (1961), Pearl Assurance House, Queen Square (1963), and 31-32 Queen Square (1968) (plate 5.2). Yet, while there was evidence of protection of the Georgian style, important Victorian commercial buildings were still being replaced by Modern buildings, with little listing of this fabric until the late-1970s (Brook, pers. comm.).

Within the Birmingham study area, while there had been some development of neo-Georgian buildings at the larger scale in the inter-war period, this was limited by the small amount of lease renewal during this period (see Chapter Four). In the post-war period, there was little incentive to develop in the neo-Georgian style, given the limited survival of buildings from the Georgian period. Further to this, ambivalence towards the Victorian townscape legacy led to plans for its widespread demolition and replacement (Birmingham CC, 1989). The completion of the city centre's first post-war office block, Shell-Mex House (now Grosvenor House) in 1953 (plate 5.3), heralded the

Plate 5.1



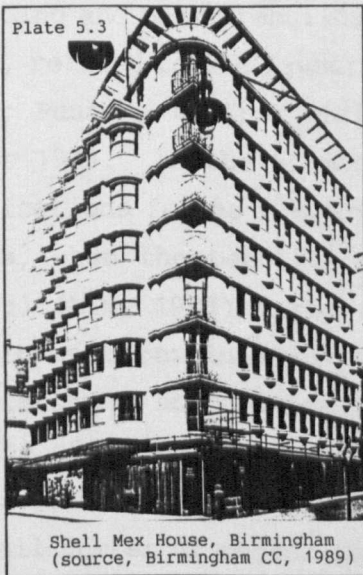
Bristol and West Building, Bristol

Plate 5.2



31-32 Queen Square, Bristol

Plate 5.3



Shell Mex House, Birmingham  
(source, Birmingham CC, 1989)

Plate 5.4



C&A Corporation Street, Birmingham

transition to a more Modern style that would come to dominate redevelopment in the core in the 1960s (Birmingham CC, 1989). The transition to Modern styles of development within the Birmingham area was aided by substantial retail redevelopment, with an influx of national retail and service chains who had adopted Modernism as a 'house style', particularly along Corporation Street (plate 5.4).

### **From Modernism to contextualism: the development of conservation character concerns in the 1970s**

#### The general temporal and spatial patterns of major development activity

In terms of overall major development activity, the 1970s can be divided into two key periods by the property crash of 1974, with higher levels of major development activity before this date than after it. Examining the changing temporal pattern in the amount of major townscape development applied for in the two study areas in the 1970s (see figure 5.4, p203.) it is apparent that both areas underwent major fluctuations in activity during this period, related to trends in the development market. In the period until 1974, both conservation areas continued to attract new development, as a legacy of the speculative office boom of the late-1960s. However, they also began to attract an increasing amount of major rebuilding as conservation controls began to come into force. Overall, there were higher levels of both new building and major rebuilding activity in the Bristol area in the period 1970-1974, related to its favourable position as a regional office centre (Bateman, 1985; Punter, 1990). Differences in the two areas are particularly marked after 1974. In the Birmingham area, the crash after 1974 was severe, with applications for major development remaining small in number until the late-1970s, when the benefits of campaigns such as 'Birmingham Means Business' (1976) (Lim, 1993) began to become visible. In contrast, levels of major development remained high in the Bristol area until the imposition of a moratorium on speculative office development in 1977, in response to criticism of the effects of this type of development on the city centre in the early 1970s (Punter, 1990). Between 1977 and 1979, major development was driven by a small number of custom-built schemes and developments undertaken as part of the first five year conservation plan. This differential experience post-1974

is significant in understanding differences in the adoption of contextual styles in the late-1970s, and in efforts to protect and enhance local character.

The spatial pattern of major building in the 1970s in both study areas reflected both the legacy of the office development trends of the late-1960s, and the new directions in piecemeal conservation led development (figures 5.11 to 5.14). In the Bristol area, the legacy of the speculative office boom of the late 1960s is particularly evident with the continuation of new building in those areas zoned for road widening and comprehensive redevelopment (figure 5.12b). In particular, the Victorian character of the Baldwin Street and Welsh Back areas continued to be altered by the addition of large office developments in the Modern style. However, in addition to these developments, new building and major rebuilding was also present along King Street and around Queen Square (figure 5.12). The rise in major development along King Street and around Queen Square reflects the development potential released in these areas following the closure of the City Docks in the late-1960s. Major development schemes occurring within these tightly controlled parts of the conservation area were important in the 1970s in the introduction of contextual styles of redevelopment into the study area, including the use of vernacular styling and façadism.

In the Birmingham study area, the continuation of trends from the office boom of the late-1960s is less noticeable, given the low level of new building throughout the 1970s. The reluctance to develop new buildings in the 1970s is evident in the number of applications for floorspace additions, where applicants sought to add to existing office buildings, rather than incur the greater expense of new building (figure 5.13a). This practice was evenly distributed between areas of Victorian office buildings and Modern office buildings. Yet, a degree of continuity in post-war building patterns was evident in new building activity (figure 5.14b), with continued piecemeal redevelopment of the Colmore Estate, and the encroachment of new building around the edge of the conservation area and around St. Philips Square. In addition to the incidence of new building, the occurrence of major rebuilding is of note in highlighting the parts of the study area where façadist schemes were being introduced with the development of conservation controls,

Scaling indicates number of changes per plot. This scaling will be used for subsequent figures in chapters five and six detailing the location of different types of change, either approved or refused, in the two study areas.

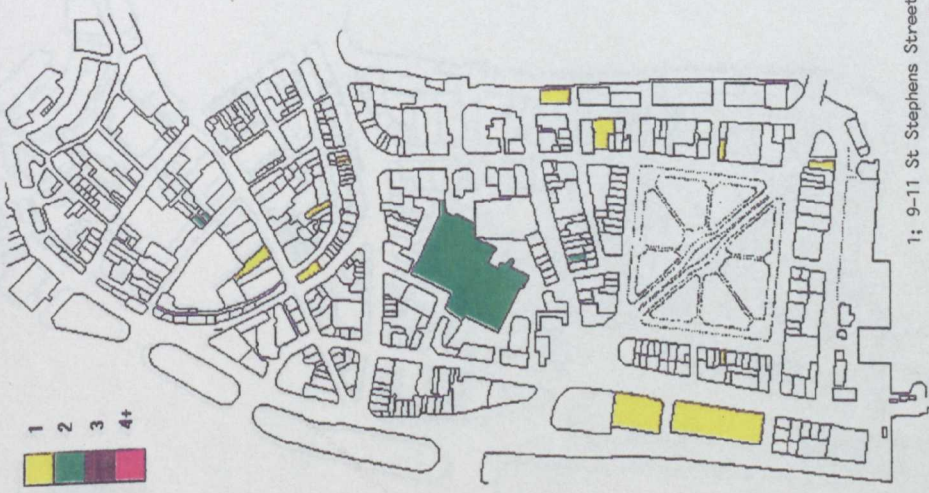
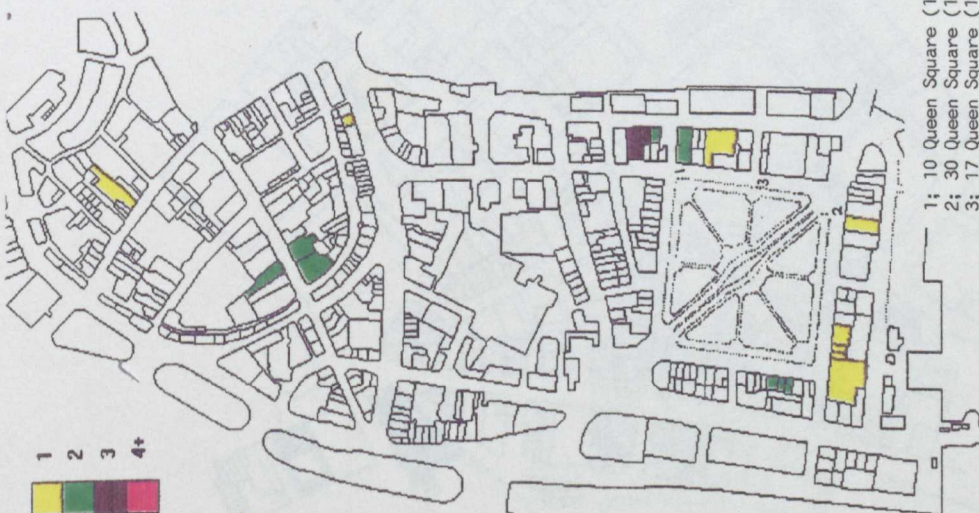


Figure 5.11a; Floorspace additions approved in the Bristol study area in the 1970s.



Figure 5.11b; Demolition approved in the Bristol study area in the 1970s.





- 1; 10 Queen Square (1 refused)
- 2; 30 Queen Square (1 refused)
- 3; 17 Queen Square (1 withdrawn)

Figure 5.12a; Major rebuilding approved in the Bristol study area in the 1970s.



- 1; 3-7 The Grove (2 refused)
- 2; CMS Narrow Quay (1 refused)
- 3; 13-21 Baldwin St. (1 refused)
- 4; 28-40 Baldwin St. (1 ref/1 with)
- 5; 19-23 Broad Quay (1 ref/1 with)
- 6; 32-36 Corn St. (1 refused)
- 7; 9-12 King St. (1 ref/1 with)
- 8; 11 Marsh St. (1 refused)
- 9; 53 Prince St. (2 refused)
- 10; 10-11 Small St. (1 refused)
- 11; 36 St Stephens St. (1 refused)
- 12; Fish Market Baldwin St. (1 with)
- 13; 65 Baldwin St. (2 withdrawn)

Figure 5.12b; New building approved in the Bristol study area in the 1970s.

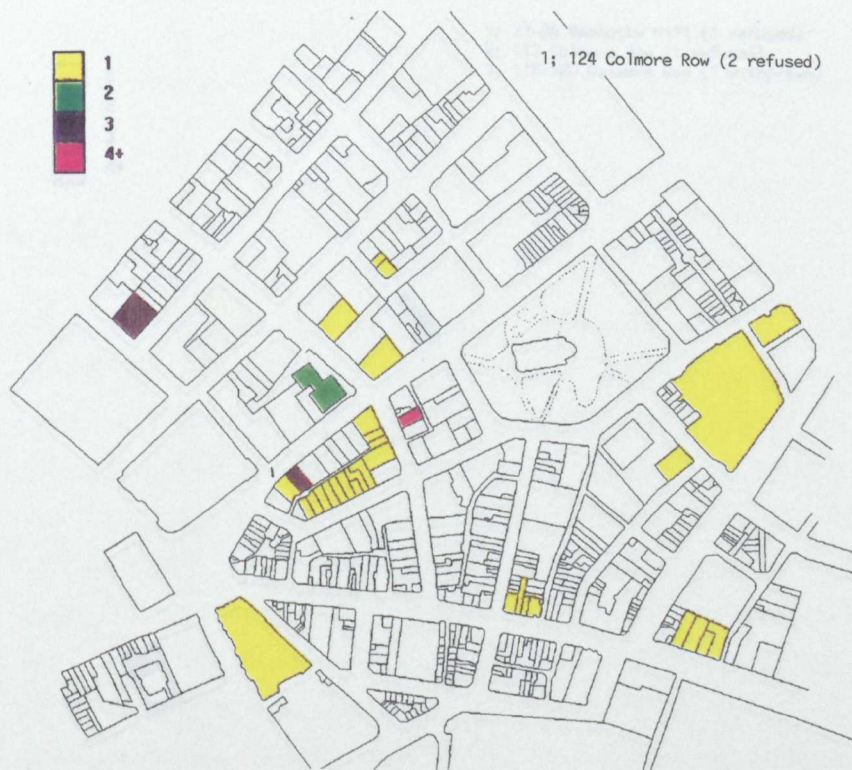


Figure 5.13a; Floorspace additions approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.

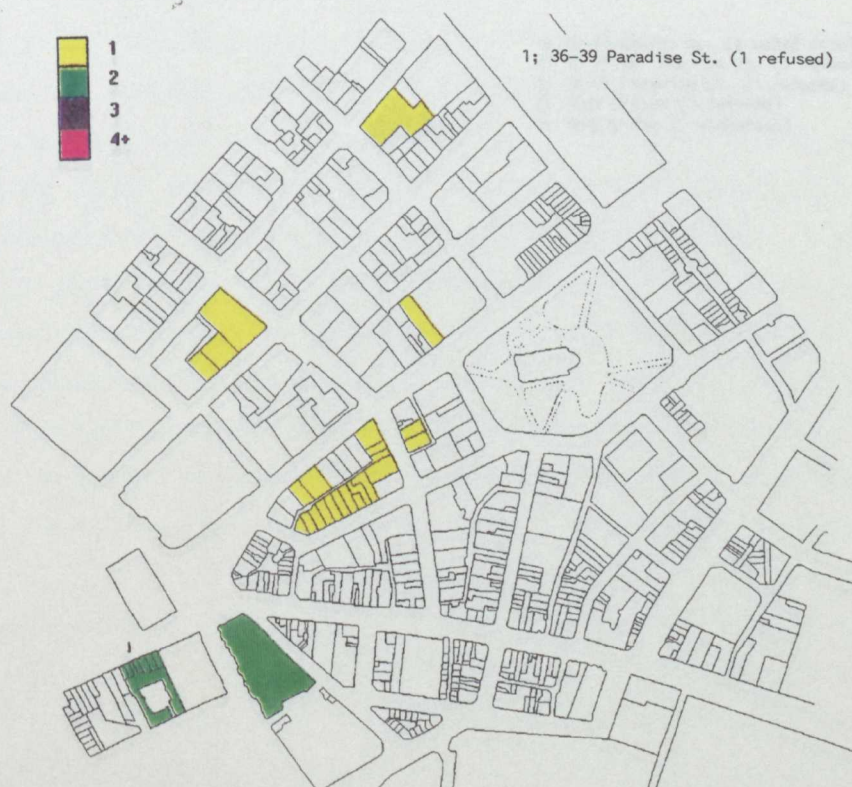


Figure 5.13b; Demolition approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.

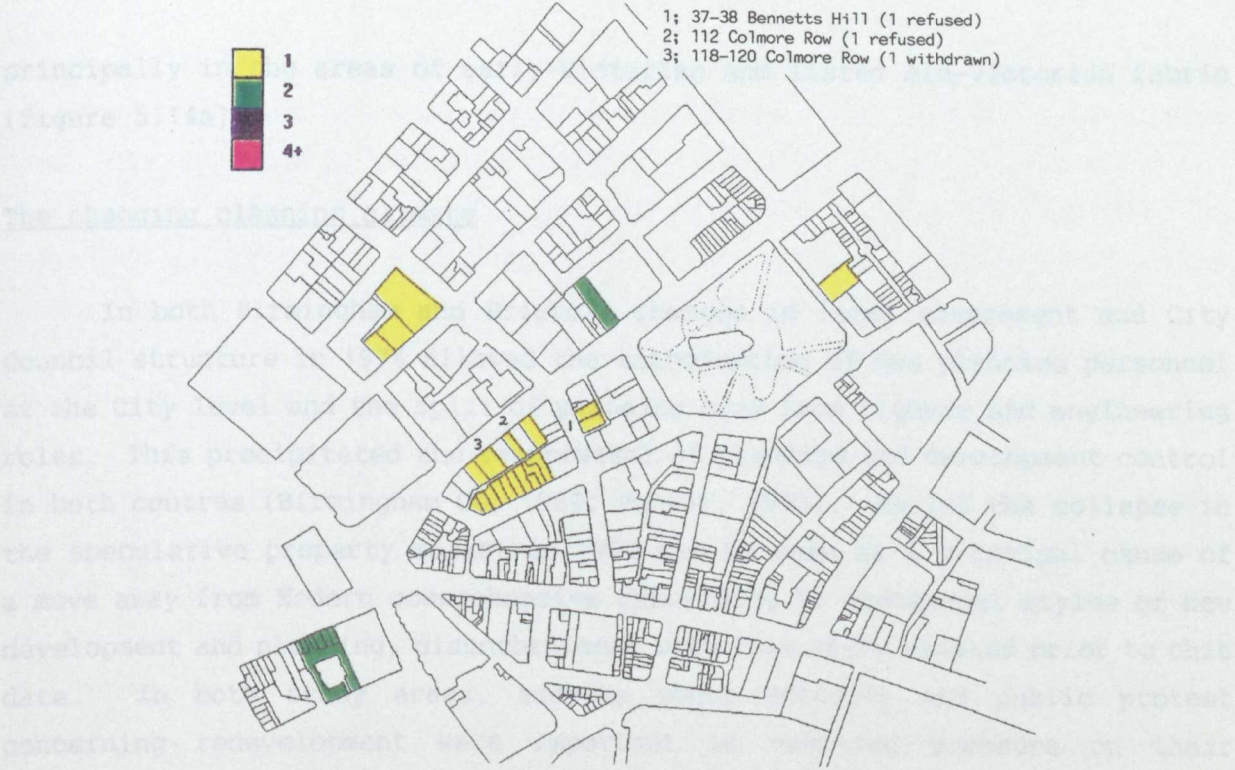


Figure 5.14a; Major rebuilding approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.

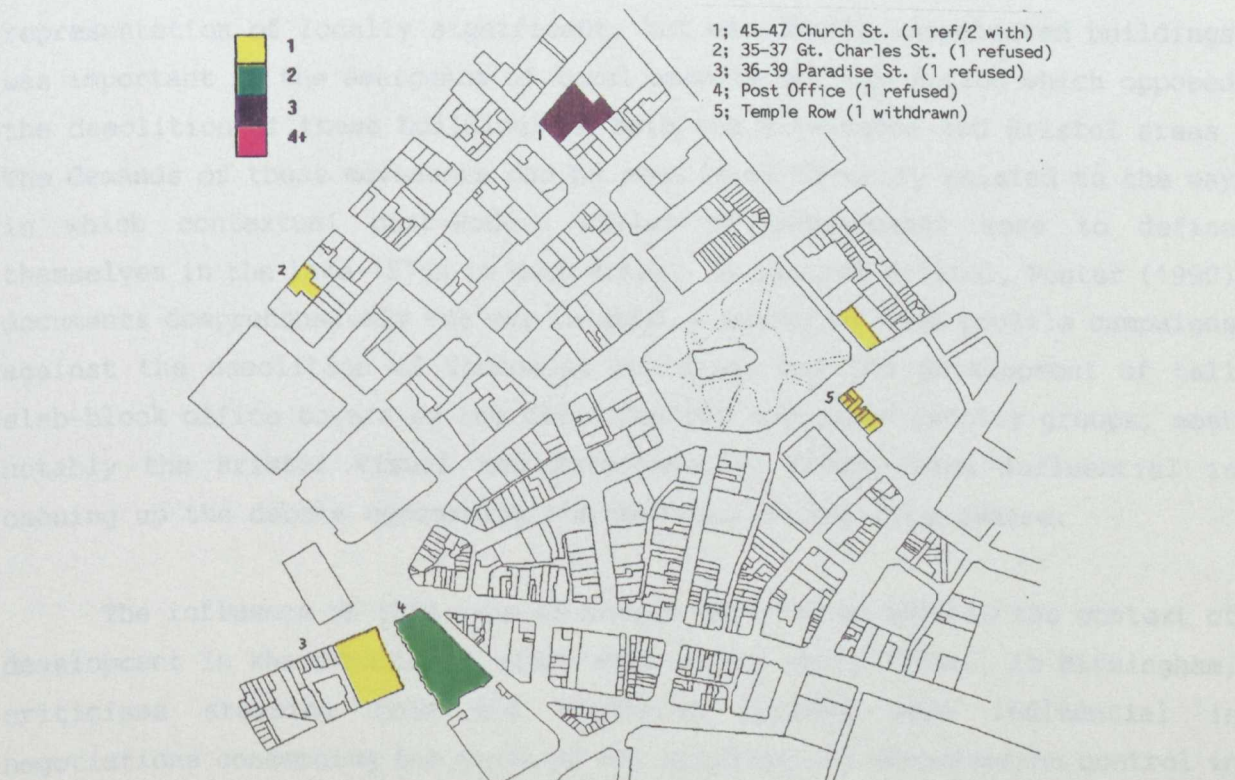


Figure 5.14b; New building approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s.

principally in the areas of early-Victorian and listed mid-Victorian fabric (figure 5.14a).

### The changing planning climate

In both Birmingham and Bristol, changes in local government and City Council structure in 1974 allowed the introduction of new planning personnel at the City level and the split of planning away from highway and engineering roles. This precipitated the reappraisal of planning and development control in both centres (Birmingham CC, 1989; Punter, 1990). Whilst the collapse in the speculative property market in 1974 can be seen as a principal cause of a move away from Modern comprehensive rebuilding to contextual styles of new development and planning, disenchantment with this style existed prior to this date. In both study areas, amenity group activity and public protest concerning redevelopment were important in exerting pressure on their respective planning regimes to alter development priorities and abandon comprehensive redevelopment plans in the early-1970s. The under-representation of locally significant, but nationally unprotected buildings was important in the emergence of local amenity society action which opposed the demolition of these buildings in both the Birmingham and Bristol areas. The demands of these movements can be seen to be directly related to the way in which contextual post-Modern styles of development were to define themselves in the late-1970s in both areas. In central Bristol, Punter (1990) documents comprehensively the way in which a number of high profile campaigns against the demolition of Victorian buildings and the development of tall slab-block office towers by the Civic Society and other amenity groups, most notably the Bristol Visual and Environmental Group, were influential in opening up the debate concerning the planning of the city centre.

The influence of this type of action can also be seen in the context of development in the Birmingham study area in the early 1970s. In Birmingham, criticisms stemming from the Victorian Society were influential in negotiations concerning the style of new building and conservation control in the core. Victorian Society and public opposition against demolition of the Victorian fabric, and against large scale comprehensive redevelopment, came together in respect of the plans for the redevelopment of the Post Office on

Victoria Square, building upon opposition generated by the demolition of the public library and the comprehensive redevelopment of the Paradise Circus area. In 1972, public and amenity society opposition was influential in the decision to refuse a comprehensive redevelopment scheme for the site by R.Siefert and Partners, incorporating a 30 storey tower. Following this, the primary effect of amenity group and public pressure was to delay the process of application consideration, through constant lobbying, submission and support of applications to list buildings covered by the scheme (The Post Office, The Sorting Office and Queens College Chambers) and the use of the press to question the action of both the planners and the developers. This was sufficient to delay the scheme until the property crash of 1974, when many schemes were either abandoned or put on hold. When plans for the post office and sorting office emerged again in the late-1970s, they incorporated many of the ideas put forward by the Victorian Society, including incremental development of the area, retention of more of the listed fabric, and the strict control of building height. In the Birmingham area, as in Bristol, these principles were influential in guiding the direction of major development in the study areas, as planners sought to build a positive relationship with their respective amenity groups.

### Protecting and enhancing character : the introduction of neo-vernacular and contextual styles

#### *Limited transition to neo-vernacular styles : Birmingham*

With the designation of the conservation area, the LPA sought to end Modern styles of development, where buildings appeared "arbitrarily placed with no relationship to their surroundings" (Birmingham CC, 1980). In particular they sought to end the development of tall office podiums set in landscaped space, which were seen to have eroded the Victorian character of St Philips Square and the Colmore Estate, such as the Nat West Building and the Bank House Building approved just prior to area designation (plate 5.5). The stated aims of the LPA contained within the original area designation document were to:

"ensure that the future development of streets and their frontages would be in sympathy with the existing **scale** and character of the area" (Birmingham CC, 1971).

Plate 5.5



Bank House, Birmingham

Plate 5.6



35-39 Gt. Charles St., Birmingham

Plate 5.7



Scottish Equitable House, Birmingham

In relation to these stated aims, policy concerning new building and the protection of conservation area character revolved around the control of height and cladding materials, rather than style per se.

On first inspection the stylistic transition in new building in the Birmingham area in the 1970s was dramatic, associated with the clear break with past planning policy in the centre heralded by the designation of the conservation area. However, the initial transition from Modernism to contextual styles of new development that incorporated vernacular elements was gradual and partial. The transition away from Modernism was muted due to the depressed property market in Birmingham in the 1970s. With the low level of new building in the 1970s, the Birmingham LPA was keen not to deflect development away from the core of Birmingham within this stagnant economic context through the imposition of stringent conservation and design controls (Birmingham CC, 1989). Planners therefore had little incentive to formulate policies in relation to new building or to renegotiate schemes that conformed to minimum height and materials standards. Of the new building schemes that were developed, many were schemes carried over from the early-1970s into the late-1970s, which served to limit the degree of architectural innovation in the area. Further to this, the move away from Modern forms of development was not as dramatic as in more historically diverse centres, as there was no tradition of contextual development prior to the designation of the conservation area on which to draw.

Whilst in the 1970s, buildings in a Modern style continued to be proposed in the conservation area, control of height and materials by the LPA began to alter the style of new building to include neo-vernacular references. Although the scale of development and the nature of the townscape in the Birmingham area precluded the explicit adoption of the 'domestic' form of the neo-vernacular style, certain vernacular elements were adopted for new building. In accord with the observations of Freeman (1988), in relation to Aylesbury and Wembley, in its early stages the departure from Modernism in building design was slight in the Birmingham area. While many buildings used plate glass and frontage styles consistent with the Modern idiom, the use of mansard roofs and dormer windows in many of the buildings provided an eclecticism that marked them out as post-Modern. In particular, new office

developments began to use mansard roofs, as a means to gain increased floorspace in a building without contravening LPA height restrictions and policies to protect rooflines:

"It is also important to remember...that the roofspace of buildings can have a dominant effect on our appreciation of the area." (Birmingham CC, 1980; p14).

Mansard roofs were also popular in the study area in office refurbishment schemes in which new floor space was added to existing buildings. Therefore, in the Birmingham area, new buildings developed in the late-1970s had the appearance of Modern buildings with minor neo-vernacular detailing being used to partially cloak their Modernism and hide the scale of the new building in order to gain approval, rather than being part of a wider change in development style.

The influence of LPA policy in producing subtle stylistic changes was first evident in a new building developed at 35-37 Great Charles Street (S. Elder Minns and Partners, 1971). The initial application for a split 8 and 11 storey office block was refused in an early use of height controls to protect the visual amenity of the area around the Stock Exchange. Although an appeal was submitted by the developer, growing awareness of conservation concerns precipitated its withdrawal, and the submission of a new application for an 8 storey block (plate 5.6). While the style of the building was still ostensibly Modern, it demonstrated a sensitivity to area context unlike the tall office developments of the 1960s. One of the last clearly Modern buildings within the conservation area was the Scottish Equitable House development (J A Roberts, 1977), which replaced a set of late-Victorian commercial buildings demolished in 1972 prior to the granting of wider demolition control powers in conservation areas. The first scheme by Rackhams for a store extension and offices by London architects T.P.Bennett and Son, granted permission in 1974, replicated the Modern style of the existing Rackhams store, although it was not implemented due to the development crash. Another application was made for a similar scheme in 1976, although this time more resistance was evident, with opposition from the Victorian Society and City Councillors, who had begun to turn against speculative office building (Birmingham CC, 1989), both considering this "commercial development by the back door". This scheme was withdrawn amid intense debate over the style of the building, and in 1976 Rackhams abandoned its plans to expand, Scottish



Equitable taking over the site. While the Modern style of development survived the change of owner and architect, the detail of the building was renegotiated with the new architect, J A Roberts of Birmingham in 1977. Amid pressure from the CAAC and the Victorian Society to obtain a scheme more in keeping with the Square, the height was lowered to 7 storeys and marble cladding was employed (plate 5.7). However, without demolition control to act as a lever in negotiation, the ability of the LPA to seek more fundamental stylistic changes was curtailed by the desire not to deflect new development and to fill a vacant site in the area.

One of the most significant moves in providing positive direction in developing protection and enhancement of the area came from outside the LPA, through direct action by the Victorian Society. Their innovative 'alternative' proposal for the redevelopment of the post office site in 1977, was important in challenging the Modernist R.Seifert and Partners scheme approved in 1975 (figure 5.15). They were able to develop alternatives, unlike the LPA, whose position was more difficult; they had negotiated on the scheme since the 1960s, and were fearful of claims for compensation if the nature of the permission was altered. While the design was Modern in its styling, the proposal was important in championing height control and listed building retention within the scheme. The form of the alternative proposal was significant in defining the way in which the LPA subsequently moved in attempting to re-negotiate the scheme. These proposals, combined with direct action in the form of industrial action by building workers and site occupation by opposition groups, were important in both halting Seifert's comprehensive scheme, and in opening up the stylistic debate surrounding the site. In particular it was instrumental in the decision to redevelop the sorting office and the post office sites separately (see 1 Victoria Square below).

Further to the external influence of amenity groups in developing conservation concerns, it was the influence of an external architectural practice that was perhaps most instrumental in pushing the style of new building towards contextualism. The Bristol and West Building, 26 Temple Row (Alec French and Partners, 1971), developed on the site of the old Georgian Bank of England, was one of the first buildings to be clearly influenced by

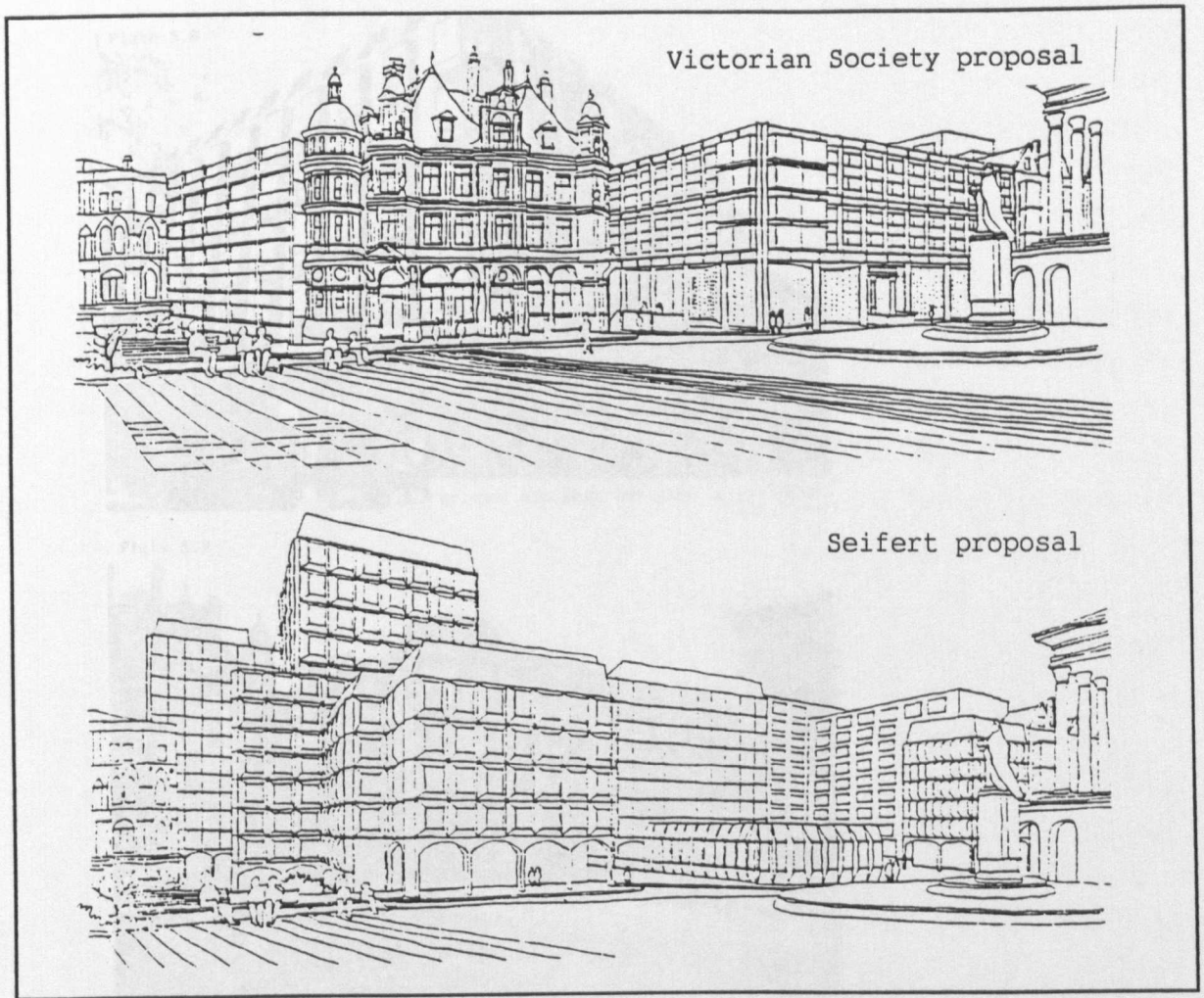


Figure 5.15; Victorian Society proposals for the development of the post office site, Birmingham (source Built Environment Quarterly 1977, p.88.)

a neo-vernacular tradition (plate 5.8). While still arguably of the Modern era, with its use of glass, its utilisation of stylistic devices, including a mansard roof, modelled elevations including bays, and a dark 'brick look' cladding material marked it out as post-Modern within a neo-vernacular tradition. At 7 storeys, it also respected the height of the older buildings surrounding St Philips Square. Of key importance was the involvement of Alec French and Partners, the principal architects for the Bristol and West Building Society and influential architects in the promotion of neo-Georgian and neo-vernacular traditions in Bristol. Its difference to the 'boxy' Modern style of developments such as Scottish Equitable House is clear. It is a key building in the introduction of external ideas concerning neo-vernacular design into the Birmingham study area. It provided the LPA with an important example from which to develop detailed design guidance for enhancing the

Plate 5.8



Bristol and West Building, Birmingham

Plate 5.9



1 Victoria Square, Birmingham

Plate 5.10



45-47 Church St., Birmingham

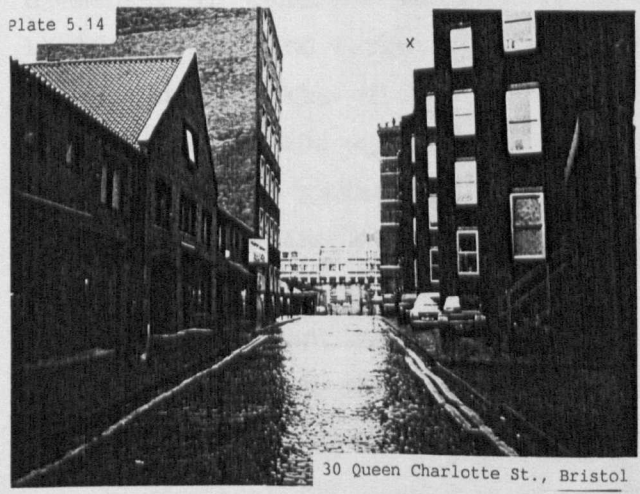
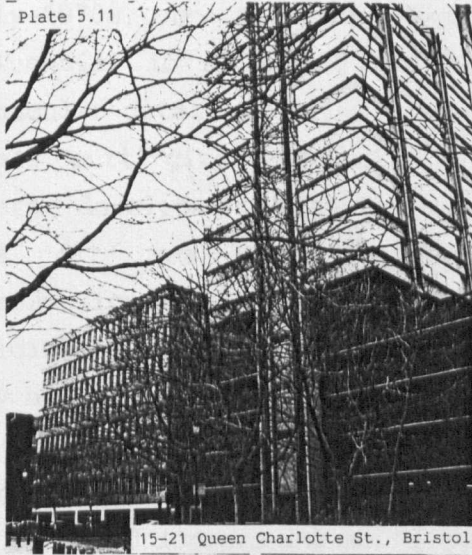
character of the area. However, with the low level of new building in the study area in the late-1970s, this 'stripped' vernacular style did not become widely adopted. The 1 Victoria Square development (Watkins, Gray, Woodgate International Group, 1979) was the only other clear example of this genre (plate 5.9). Again it used vernacular references on a mainly 'Modern' building, namely mansard roof, a modelled corner and façade including arches and a combination of dark and stone effect cladding materials to replicate the stone and brick style of Victorian buildings in the area. The influence of an external architectural practice is again significant. While the development was generally welcomed by the LPA and amenity societies (although they objected to the demolition of the unlisted sorting office), its use of a double mansard roof, in order to gain maximum office space, proved controversial. The use of double mansards in developments continued to be a source of controversy throughout the 1980s, as developers increasingly sought to maximise floor space, in defiance of LPA policy to control roof lines (Birmingham CC, 1980).

The influence of conservation area designation in shifting the style of new development proposed in the Birmingham area, towards the protection and enhancement of character, is clear when considering new development that took place just outside the boundary of the conservation area. The complex boundary definition in the north of the study area on the Colmore Estate left part of the Victorian townscape outside of the conservation area. In a continuation of the development trends of the 1960s, these buildings remained vulnerable to piecemeal redevelopment. What emerged in the late-1970s was a polarisation of style between new building within the conservation area, with limited height and more neo-vernacular references, and new building occurring just outside the boundary, which maintained a more dominant Modern style. The development at 45-47 Church Street (Couch, Butler, Savage, 1977; plate 5.10), just outside the area boundary, exemplifies the continuation of this style. While the building adopted a set back podium design in an attempt to relate to the context of the surrounding 3-4 storey Victorian townscape, moving away from the slab block designs of earlier 1960s office buildings in the area, the choice of materials and the overall massing of the building marked it out as discordant in relation to the surrounding townscape. Being outside the conservation area, the LPA had no control over the demolition of the Victorian

printworks on the site or the height of the development. However, the LPA considered the printworks of little architectural merit, despite objections against demolition by amenity groups. This ambivalence towards 'industrial' forms of Victorian building, compounded by a lack of listing recognition and demolition control exemplified by the boundary designation decision, is important in understanding the lack of commitment within the LPA to the development of neo-vernacular 'warehouse styles' for new building in the 1970s. They were not considered a component of the character of the Colmore Row area to be protected and enhanced.

*Total transition to neo-vernacular styles : Bristol*

As in the Birmingham area, the initial departure from Modernism for new development was slight in the Bristol area. However, after 1974, the formation of a development plan for the Docks and the evolution of design guidelines under the first five year conservation programme (1977-1981) encouraged the widespread adoption of neo-vernacular styling in the conservation area. As noted, the pattern of major building in the Bristol study area in the 1970s was split between continued comprehensive rebuilding around Baldwin Street, and smaller scale contextual development in the core and around Queen Square. Many developments in the Modern style completed in the early-1970s were schemes first initiated in the late-1960s, such as 15-21 Queen Charlotte Street (Turner, Lansdown, Holt and Partners, 1969) (plate 5.11), "Brygstowe" Welsh Back (Beardsworth Gallenbaugh, 1969) (plate 5.12), and the Sun Alliance Building (Wakeford, Jerram and Harris, 1968). However, with the incorporation of these former redevelopment zones into the conservation area in 1972 new development began to show increasing concession to considerations of areal character and design control, initially through the control of building scale rather than style. For the 28 Baldwin Street scheme (Power, Clark, Hiscocks and Partners, 1972), floorspace indices were cut following the refusal of a more intensive scheme, although the style remained Modern. Also, a proposed 20 storey slab block on a podium at 11 Marsh Street (Whicheloe Macfarlane Partnership, 1973) was refused for having an excessive floorspace index, incompatible with conservation area status. This can be seen as a clear rejection of the style of development allowed in Marsh Street in the 1960s.



The continuation of building at the domestic scale in the areas of Special Control and the survival of pre-Victorian townscape, provided a clearer framework for the introduction of contextual building styles. In the early-1970s, new buildings designed by the Alec French Partnership were influential in extending the use of contextual building styles and neo-vernacular detailing within the conservation area. Within the old core, St John's Court, given permission in 1969 and completed in 1972, attempted to fit a large development into the medieval street plan of part of the old core. This 'fit' was achieved through the control of building height, the introduction of elements such as arches, and the incorporation of the existing buildings on the site into the development (plate 5.13). However, the use of grey brick and concrete cladding undermined its attempts at being contextual, as did the obliteration of the previous plot pattern. At 30-36 Queen Charlotte Street (Alec French and Partners, completed 1970) the new building incorporated dormers and differential building height, in an attempt to relate it to the 17th century almshouses in King Street. A new building at 50 Queen Charlotte Street (Alec French and Partners, 1972; plate 5.14) was significant in its use of brick as the main material, in an attempt to relate to the brick warehouse opposite and reflect the brick warehouse it replaced. This had been changed from an earlier scheme where a more Modern concrete, brick and glass design had been proposed. Height was also carefully controlled in this development, in comparison to earlier schemes along Queen Charlotte Street, again reflecting the impact of conservation policies on design in attempting to respect area character.

In addition to the Alec French Partnership, other local architectural practices began to design new buildings that incorporated neo-vernacular elements, in contrast to their work in the late-1960s. The firm Turner, Lansdown, Holt and Partners, architects of 15-21 Queen Charlotte Street were also active in the development of contextual styles. In 1971, their new building at 22-23a King Street (plate 5.15), replacing a Victorian brick warehouse, used controlled height, the addition of a mansard roof, and bay windows in an attempt to fit into the historic townscape. The development of a small office building at 8-10 The Grove (Beecroft, Bidmead and Partners, 1972) was important in the changing style of development around the Floating Harbour through its maintenance of a traditional building height, although its

style was still fundamentally Modern. It seems that local architects, while responding to the demands of developers, were clearly influenced by the changing fashions in architecture and by policy changes within Bristol at this time. With the designation of the conservation area in 1972, these developing ideas became formalised in the designation document for the area which remained the main statement of policy until the mid-1980s (Brook, pers. comm.):

"It is unnecessary and undesirable to put an embargo on new development, but where it is permitted it must be carefully designed within the **principal existing characteristics of the area.**" (Bristol CC, 1972; p3)

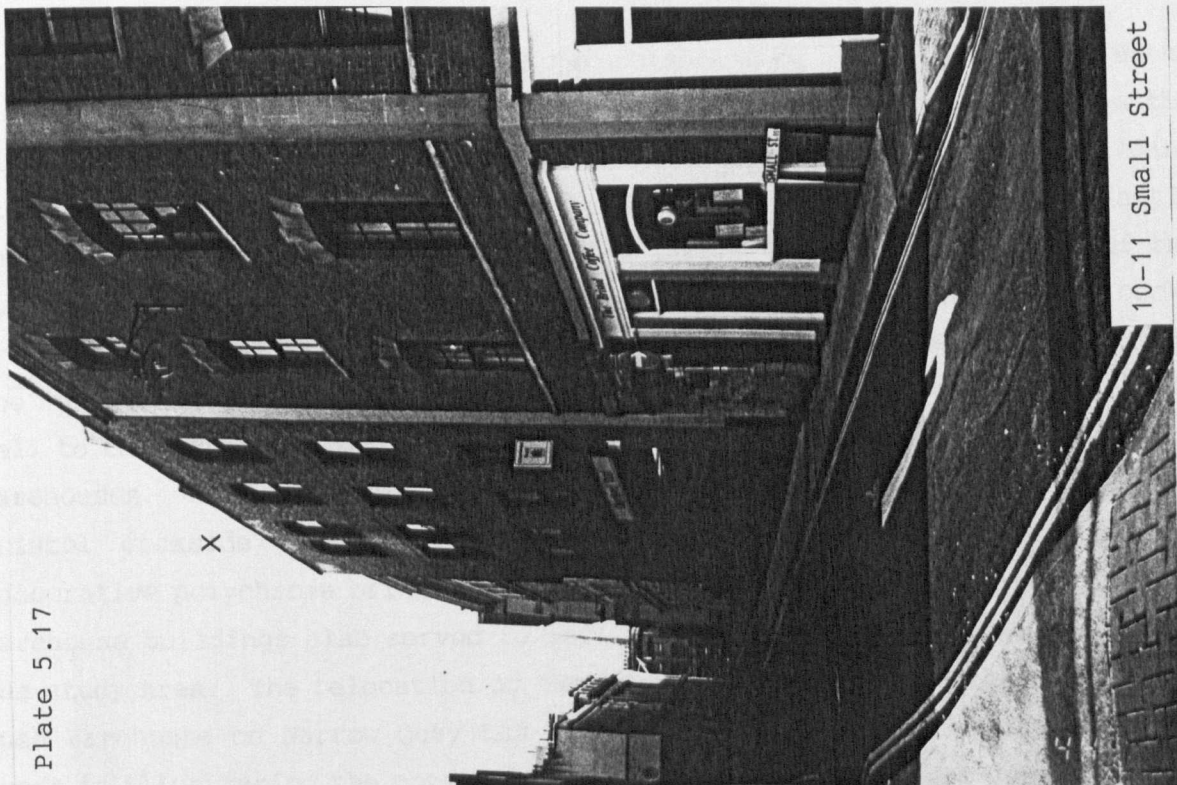
Further emphasis on the importance of height, elevation designs that were in keeping with adjoining buildings, and materials of high quality in new development in the document served to formalise the use of neo-vernacular styling as the basis for character protection and enhancement in the area in the 1970s.

In the Bristol area the transformation of the planning and development climate, through the adoption of explicit conservation concerns, was more pronounced post-1974. While isolated examples of contextual development existed prior to this, changes in the office development market, and the development of design guidance for the Docks Local Plan (1979), significantly advanced the use of neo-vernacular styling for new building in the conservation area, and heralded a full transition to more contextual designs. Modern designs were less evident post-1974 principally due to the failure of a number of office development schemes given approval prior to the 1974 property crash, which had utilised this style, to endure the economic slump and be implemented. This included 65 Baldwin Street (1973), 6-12 St Stephen Street (Bruges Tozer Partnership, 1973), the Grand Hotel Annex (Watkins, Gray, Woodgate International, 1972), and a number of schemes proposed for 1-7 The Grove. However, while there was a decline in major development after 1975, activity was sustained during the late-1970s by conservation programmes initiated by the LPA, backed by money from the Historic Buildings Council (HBC) (Punter, 1990). Conservation became more central to planning in the mid-1970s, with the appointment of a new City Planning Officer in 1975 and the strengthening of the Urban Design Section, increasing it's role in policy formation (Brook, pers. comm.).



Office schemes that did survive the slump were subject to renegotiation by the LPA, who sought to impose more rigorous design standards based on the preservation of conservation area character. Further to this, the hostility towards uncontrolled speculative office development resulted in an embargo on these developments between 1977 and 1979. During this time new building was confined to custom build schemes, allowing the LPA greater control in design negotiation. The LPA sought to direct new development towards backland development or the infill of gap sites in the conservation area, which did not involve the demolition of buildings, in order to protect character. The office development policy developed in 1976 sought to allow schemes only if they made a "positive contribution to the enhancement of the physical environment of the Central Area". (Bristol CC, 1976b); the "conservation-gain" clause. This conservation focus is evident in the fact that few applications were made for demolition in the study area between 1977 and 1979, reflecting the paramount importance of the retention of listed buildings. The LPA's stance against the demolition of buildings was evident in the refusal of a speculative retail and office scheme at 35-45 St Nicholas Street (Bruges Tozer Partnership, 1975) involving the demolition of a number of Victorian buildings (see figure 5.12b). The strength obtained by the formalisation of policies seeking to safeguard the retention of buildings and small office space, used as the grounds for objection, was important in the applicant's decision to withdraw an appeal to the DoE. Greater scrutiny of demolition applications was also evident in the refusal of permission for a new building at 10-11 Small Street (Alec French and Partners, 1975), with the discovery that the buildings were 18th rather than 19th century, and subsequently spot listed (see figure 5.11b). New buildings that were approved within the core conformed closely to stated LPA policies, involving new building on minor backland sites. These schemes also exclusively utilised contextual styles, with the architects Alec French and Partners becoming increasingly influential in new building, developing a neo-vernacular 'area style'. The firm were involved in the restyling of a development for 3-4 Tailors Court (1975; plate 5.16), previously proposed in 1973 and designed by Watkins, Gray, Woodgate International, and the restyling of the 10-11 Small Street scheme from a concrete and glass style (1972) to a neo-vernacular brick building (plate 5.17). They also designed a new office building for a site in Exchange Avenue (1974), in a brick 'Georgian' style to fit in with the Georgian buildings in

Plate 5.17



10-11 Small Street

Plate 5.16



3-4 Tailor's Court, Bristol

the area, although this was not built.

The conservation focus on the refurbishment of the blighted City Docks area was perhaps most influential in promoting contextual development in the conservation area, with a large proportion of new and major rebuilding occurring in this area (see figure 5.12). The 'Dockside warehouse' style emerged from the detailed critique of the Casson Report on the future of the Docks (1972) in the alternative strategy proposed by the Bristol City Docks Group which emphasised a 'traditional' physical form for new development in the Docks (Punter, 1990). The style of building around the Docks leant itself well to the neo-vernacular tradition, given the context of the existing brick warehouses. The plans for the Docks actively sought to build on the local Bristol dockside vernacular, of pennant stone and "Bristol Byzantine" (decorative polychrome brick) warehouses. The greater retention of Victorian warehouse buildings also served to influence the style of new development in the study area. The relocation of the Arnolfini Gallery into the refurbished Bush Warehouse on Narrow Quay has been viewed as the single most important event in illustrating the potential for the rejuvenation of the Docks (Punter, 1990). This conversion paved the way for the retention of this building type in the conservation area, and set the standard for all subsequent conversions. The battle to save the seed warehouse 1 The Grove, involving amenity society pressure, spot listing and a DoE call in, in 1973 was also significant. Subsequent to this, applications involving the demolition of Victorian warehouses were more closely screened, and in some cases previous decisions were reversed. In 1977, an application to renew a 1974 permission for a new office development (architects Alec French and Partners) at 9-12 King Street was refused, with the LPA objecting to the demolition of the Victorian warehouse at 9-10 King Street.

Through negotiation the LPA were able to impose this "Dockside aesthetic" (Punter, 1990; p359) on a number of developments around the Floating Harbour, achieving considered contextual solutions. The local development context, in terms of control and opportunity, can be seen as critical, when considering the dominance of this type of development in the Bristol area in comparison to the style of new development in the Birmingham area, where a Victorian commercial context also existed. The first site brief

incorporating the use of the 'docks vernacular' was that produced for the development of 4-7 The Grove in 1972. Initially this advice was not incorporated into the design of elevations to The Grove with a Modern concrete honeycomb style proposed. Opposition to these proposals prompted further negotiations on the style of the building, until the property crash led to the abandonment of the scheme until the 1980s. However, on the neighbouring development at 2-3 The Grove (with 43-45 Queen Square) designed by Alec French and Partners (1976) the LPA successfully renegotiated an earlier (1972) comprehensive redevelopment scheme which included the site of 1 The Grove in concrete and glass, to a vernacular brick style. Another example of successful renegotiation was on the custom-built Scottish Life building, 10 Queen Square (Burnett, Tait, Powell and Partners, 1974; plates 5.18 a & b). Here the Queen Anne building fronting Queen Square was restored and a warehouse style extension built to the rear along Welsh Back, following the rejection of an earlier scheme in 1972. This building contrasted with the earlier attempts at brick contextual building, such as the rear of 53-55 Queen Charlotte Street which was still Modern in form (Alec French and Partners, 1972; plate 5.19), exemplifying the first full transition to the docks vernacular style. The building became an important standard for new building around the Floating Harbour in protecting and enhancing character, by which subsequent dockside development was judged.

The increasing dominance of LPA conservation concerns was also clearly evident at the larger scale, in the LPA's position in the renegotiation of the Broad Quay House and Bristol and West Extension schemes. These schemes were among the few speculative projects planned prior to the 1973 crash to be completed in the late-1970s, and illustrated the rethinking on the design of new buildings. Originally these had been approved prior to the recession as large scale concrete slab and tower blocks. Through negotiation the LPA sought to reduce the scale of development and seek the use of more traditional materials. The Broad Quay House development became a symbol for the demise of the Modernist planning regime and the rise of conservation based control. In 1973, following the abandonment of the pedestrian deck scheme, a revised scheme for the CWS site was given permission. The scheme continued the Modern style, proposing a 9 storey building with individual bays of gold reflective glass (figure 5.16). In 1977, when the scheme resurfaced under new developers

Plate 5.18a



10 Queen Square, Bristol

Plate 5.18b



10 Queen Square, Bristol

Plate 5.19



53 Queen Charlotte St., Bristol

Plate 5.20



Broad Quay House, Bristol

Plate 5.21



Bristol and West Extension, Bristol

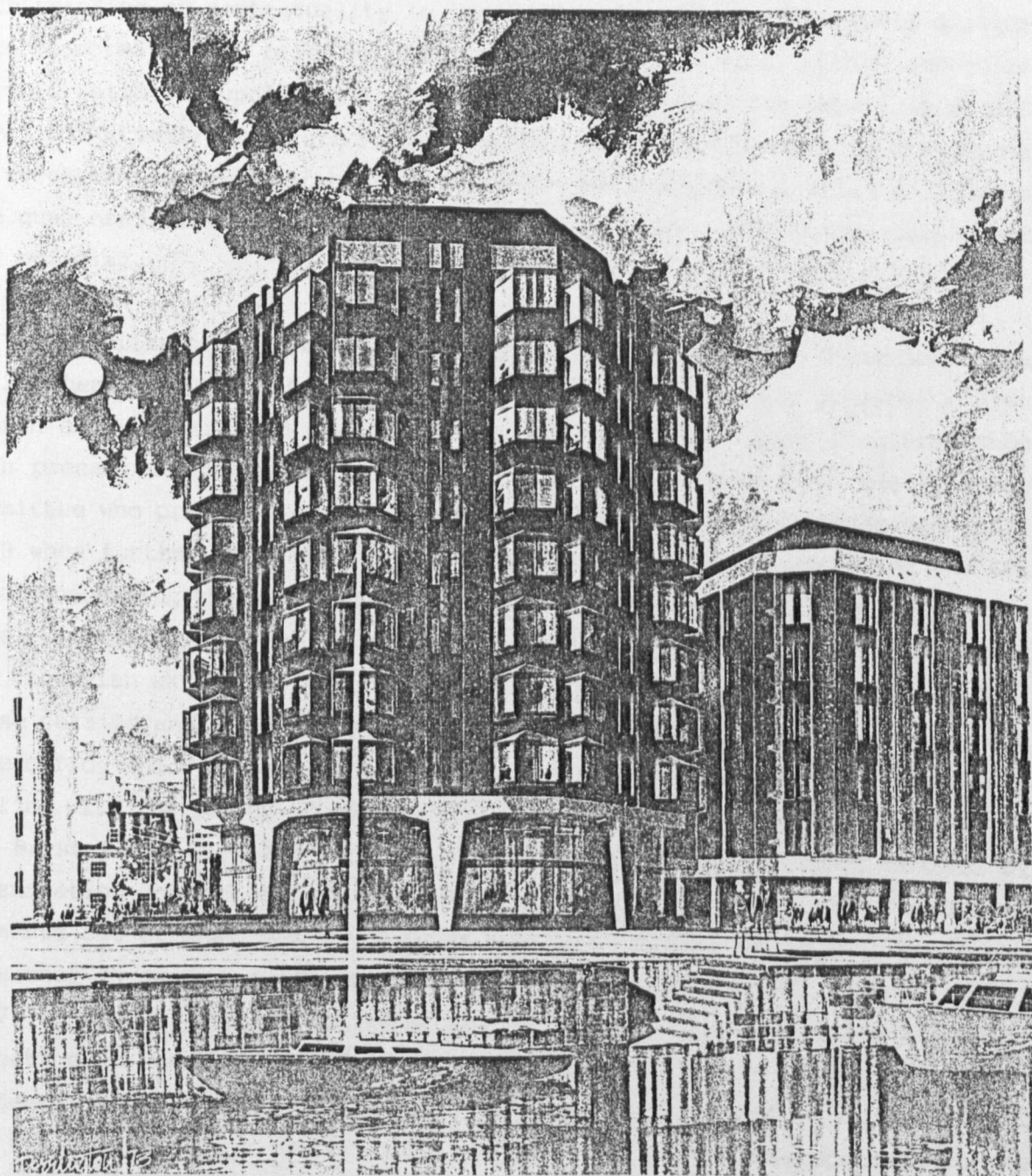


Figure 5.16; Artists impression of the proposed CWS redevelopment, 1973 (source Bristol CC planning files).

Standard Life, this out-dated stylistic leftover from the early-1970s required considerable negotiation with the architects Alec French and Partners in order to meet the new design standards pertaining to Dockside locations. In line with thinking on contextuality in the conservation area, futuristic designs were rejected and the brief proposed a large brick building, with a high solid to void ratio, a cupola style mansard roof, and decorative panels at ground level to add interest (plate 5.20). The fenestration reflected the elevations of Victorian dockside warehousing in shape and positioning, while a clock on the quay head elevation replaced the landmark clock tower of the demolished CWS building.

A similar process was followed on the Bristol and West Extension. The 1973 scheme, proposed following renegotiation between the architects Alec French and Partners and the LPA, consisted of a four storey chamfered cube with precast concrete panels. This did not find favour with the Planning Committee who preferred a rotunda shape. Detailing was left undecided until 1978 when further extensive negotiations between the architects and the LPA began concerning the cladding and brick colour, shape and roof treatment. The final proposal reflected the planners preference for a building that evoked the Victorian warehouse style, and provided interesting details (plate 5.21). These details and other landscaping improvements were obtained in return for more office space in the development and a reduction in the retail component, in line with the policy of conservation gain. For some, Broad Quay House and the Bristol and West Extension represent the negative pressures exerted by conservation control and LPA dockside design policies, containing vernacular elements out of character on buildings of such scale. Broad Quay House was dismissed by many purists as "an overgrown Georgian house" (Punter, 1990; p147). However, its colour, massing, use of traditional building elements, evocation of the CWS building and relationship to the quayside provide evidence of townscape continuity. The evidence for continuity in the Bristol and West Extension is less clear, as it provides a jarring contrast to the 1960s Bristol and West Tower. It is more clearly a product of the pursuit of a particular design policy, rather than as a quest for townscape continuity. It is perhaps this building that is most representative of the problems generated by townscape redevelopment philosophies of the late 1960s, and the problems of compromise in the late-1970s. While the building aped the

Victorian warehouse style, it did little to restore the Victorian townscape grain removed, with its poor relationship to the street line a legacy from its Modern origins.

### Protecting area character : the use of façadism

#### *Controlled use : Bristol*

In the Bristol area redevelopment behind a retained façade was the other contextual style that emerged in the 1970s, in conjunction with neo-vernacular, used to fit new buildings into the townscape in the 1970s. Façade retention was in early evidence in the study area in the St John's Court scheme in Broad Street (granted permission in 1969), although in this development it was used to retain the craft skills embodied in the front of Everards print works, rather than to cloak the development (see plate 5.13). Despite the relatively young age the 1920s façade, the quality of the tile work, and its rarity as an example of Art Nouveau work, led to its retention in the scheme. Generally, only in exceptional circumstances is there a strong case to retain the façades of post-Edwardian buildings in city centres.

In the original designation document for the conservation area, the wider use of façadism was seemingly officially sanctioned as a redevelopment option:

"There are also buildings of quality which are not on the full list at the present time, as well as those that are, and it is essential that efforts should be made in many cases to secure the retention of at least the façade, as has been achieved in Broad Street, Queen Square and elsewhere...Generally emphasis should be laid on the preservation of existing façades, and it is important to the character of the area that preservation wherever feasible should include relatively modest façades as well as the grander architectural ones." (Bristol CC, 1972; pp3-4)

In the early 1970s, façadism became increasingly employed in development proposals around Queen Square, used to guide the scale of development and 'cloak' new development, as the buildings became increasingly valued and complete redevelopment in the neo-Georgian style ceased to be an option (see figure 5.12a). However, as these proposals emerged, the LPA began to develop a strong position against this development, seeking to limit its use and the amount of building demolition involved in schemes, in order to protect area character. Negotiation on the redevelopment of 10 Queen Square (Burnett,



Tait, Powell and Partners, 1974) was important in the development of the LPA's stance in relation to façadism. The initial scheme, proposed in 1972, sought to retain only the façade of the Queen Anne building, with a new development at an increased scale behind. This was refused by the LPA, with an appeal against the decision being dismissed in 1973. The appeal endorsed the LPA's view on the importance of the building fronting Queen Square and the excessive height of the proposed new structure. Increased LPA negotiating strength after this decision allowed the renegotiation of the amended submission. The further LPA amendment proposed the retention and restoration of the Queen Anne building, with only minor internal alterations, and a new building at a reduced height in the docks vernacular to the rear (see plate 5.18 a & b). This scheme was clearly influential in curtailing the use of the front-wall only façadist option in development around Queen Square. Following the success of the appeal decision in 1973, the LPA used their stronger negotiating position to refuse or seek amendments on a number of similar schemes around the square. Applications for redevelopment behind façades at 17 Queen Square (Alec French and Partners, 1972), 69-73 Queen Square (Turner, Lansdown, Holt and Partners, 1974), and 49-51 Queen Square (Alec French and Partners, 1976) were all renegotiated to refurbishment schemes, effectively defining the limits to façadism through emphasis on its inappropriateness for Georgian buildings.

The appeal decision upholding the LPAs stance regarding the importance of retaining Georgian buildings, therefore limiting façadism, reflected wider views concerning the value of Georgian townscapes. However, in the 1970s the Bristol LPA also sought to curtail the use of façadism in relation to important Victorian buildings, which enjoyed an uncertain value at the national level. In the 1970s, Victorian office buildings in the old core also began to become vulnerable to redevelopment pressures due to their comparatively low floor-space concentrations, and limited suitability for modern office needs. While many of these buildings, in Corn Street in particular, were considered important to the character of the conservation area (Bristol CC, 1972), many were not listed. Being valued for their appearance rather than their intrinsic merit at this time made them prone to façadism. Redevelopment proposals for 32-36 Corn Street in the mid-1970s were important in defining these wider limits to façadism. In 1971 the LPA refused

an application to demolish the Victorian banking buildings and their replacement by a Modern building at an increased scale. The strength of the LPA's arguments concerning the importance of the buildings and the inappropriateness of the new building in an Area of Special Control were instrumental in the withdrawal of an appeal to the DoE and the listing of the buildings. In 1974 a scheme to redevelop behind retained façades was submitted (Kenneth Nealon, Tanner and Partners). While this was approved in 1974, further negotiation by the LPA, lobbied by the amenity societies, led to further revisions in 1976 ensuring the full retention of numbers 32 and 34 and retention of the façade and some internal features of 36. Whilst the LPA were not able to limit façadism in Victorian buildings totally, they were able to define the importance of interior retention in many key bank buildings. The impact of this decision was evident in the limiting of the demolition and rebuilding of Victorian buildings at 37-39 Corn Street in 1976 to backyard buildings only. Significantly, the historical diversity of the fabric within the core, and its legacy of special control status, seemingly added value to unlisted Victorian buildings, and reinforced the LPA's stance, ensuring the limited use of façadism in the core (see figure 5.12a). Of other schemes submitted in the 1970s, one was associated with the rebuilding of a burnt out restaurant (49-50 Broad Street, 1974), and one with the redevelopment of a derelict building (65 Baldwin Street, 1974). The decision on 32-36 Corn Street and the wider listing of the Victorian fabric in the core in the late-1970s ensured the protection of many Victorian commercial buildings in the core during the development upturn in the early-1980s.

Beyond these key buildings, the LPA continued to sanction the use of façadism in the redevelopment of modest buildings, in line with its stated policy, particularly unlisted Victorian warehouses in Queen Charlotte Street and around Queen Square and the Docks. Whilst irregular floor heights in these warehouses made their refurbishment as offices difficult, the LPA sought to preserve part of this heritage through façade retention. This was part of wider moves to increase appreciation and valuing of this industrial architecture. In an early scheme at 53-55 Queen Charlotte Street (Alec French and Partners, 1971; plate 5.22) the warehouse façade was retained, with a new building with a modern glazed façade to Welsh Back. However, in 1973 the LPA approved a scheme at 13 Queen Square (K. Wakeford Jerram and Harris),

Plate 5.22



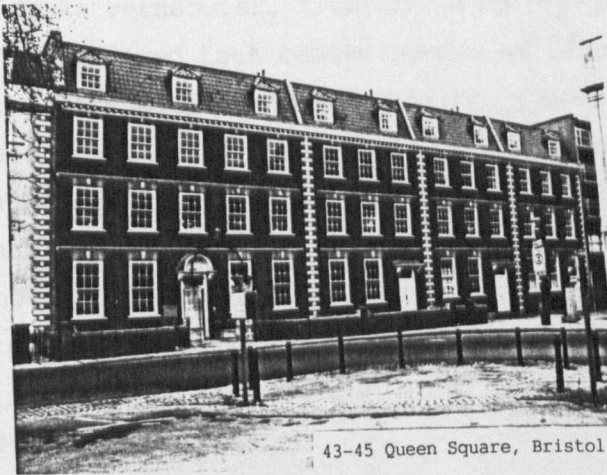
53-55 Queen Charlotte St., Bristol

Plate 5.23a



43-45 Queen Square, Bristol; Victorian warehouses (source, Punter, 1990)

Plate 5.23b



43-45 Queen Square, Bristol

Plate 5.23c



43-45 Queen Square, Bristol (elevation to The Grove)

involving the demolition of the 19th Century warehouse building, and its replacement by a replica Georgian façade to recover the square's unity. However, following the property slump the scheme was subject to renegotiation, with a revised scheme being submitted in 1976 which retained the 19th Century warehouse façade (plate 5.22). With the growing importance of the Victorian warehouses, the LPA argued that an important part of the square's history would be lost if the new building had a replica front. However, in Queen Square a tension continued to exist between the retention of these buildings and a desire to restore the stylistic unity of the square lost during the phase of Victorian rebuilding, despite growing appreciation of the Victorian warehouse architecture. In contrast to its other decision, the LPA allowed the demolition of a brick warehouse at 43-45 Queen Square in 1976, and the construction of a replica Georgian building on Queen Square with a brick building, in the docks vernacular, fronting onto The Grove (plates 5.23 a, b, c). Here the LPA considered that redevelopment of this important corner site should provide some re-enclosure for the square, a decision taken in 1972 when scheme in a Modern style had been proposed. While this decision served to weaken the LPAs stance concerning warehouse buildings, in less architecturally formal areas, such as King Street, Prince Street, The Grove and Welsh Back, Victorian warehouses and façades became increasingly refurbished or incorporated into developments in the late-1970s and early 1980s.

*Encouraged use : Birmingham*

In Birmingham, the emergence of façadist redevelopment was seen as an important indicator of a break with past planning policy, ushering in an era of conservation. The limited adoption of neo-vernacular styling in the Birmingham area, coupled with the absence of clear design guidance for new building, meant that the desire for character protection and enhancement was most easily satisfied by façadism, setting a precedent for the use of this style within the area. In Birmingham, as in other industrial cities such as Manchester (Thame, 1991), façadism became a common occurrence due to the legacy of 19th and early 20th century buildings in these cities, which had only recently begun to be considered worthy of conservation in the 1970s. The enthusiastic adoption of façadism by both developers and the LPA in the Birmingham area was also related to its perceived benefits in boosting office

development within the depressed development market in the 1970s. For developers, façade retention provided a novel feature, that could be marketed to attract high rent, reliable tenants where demand for offices was low and competition for tenants high (Bateman, 1985; DeMuth, 1988). For the LPA it provided an attractive, yet functionally efficient townscape for 'civic boosterism', important in the marketing of the city to attract footloose businesses (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990).

The introduction of façadism in the Birmingham area was not, however, without contention. There were amenity society protests against the demolition of valued Victorian buildings. The debate surrounding the development of Queens College Chambers, an early-Victorian college building, was important in defining the acceptability of, and limits to, façadism in the 1970s. Amid increasing amenity society pressure to acknowledge the value of the area's Victorian heritage, the LPA refused permission for the demolition of the building and the erection of a 14 storey office block in the Modern style (Birch Caulfield Architects, 1971). The dismissal of the subsequent appeal to the DoE was significant in strengthening the LPA's conservation stance, with the inspector agreeing that retention of the listed building was important. In 1972, a new scheme was submitted, by a new developer and architect, involving the retention of the front building and the construction of a new 10 storey linked block in the Modern style to the rear (Watkins, Gray, Woodgate International, 1972). While the Victorian Society objected to the scheme, preferring total retention of the building, demolition permission was granted, and an amended scheme with reduced height approved in 1973 (plate 5.24 a & b). Victorian Society objections highlighted one of the key problems of these façadist solutions. In the Queens College scheme, the front building saved was an early 1900s front put onto a building originally built in the 1830s, which was lost. Although the development was significant in moving the style of development in the area away from Modernism towards contextual solutions, it tended to reinforce the superficial backcloth status of much of the Victorian commercial architecture in the area, despite listed status. Equally it served to concentrate conservation effort into the front of listed structures, at the expense of the totality of historical meaning.

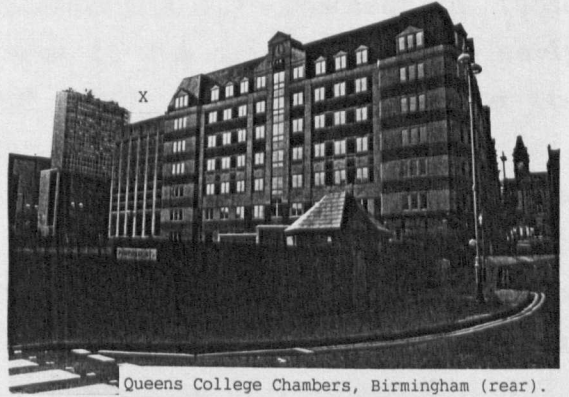
Beyond controversial schemes such as the Queens College redevelopment,

Plate 5.24a



Queens College Chambers, Birmingham (front)

Plate 5.24b



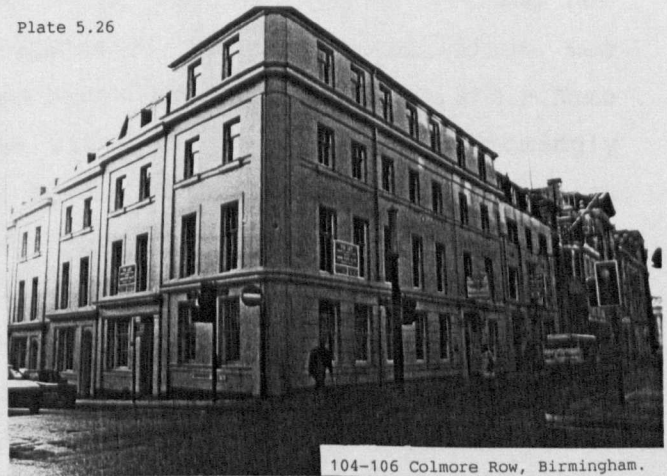
Queens College Chambers, Birmingham (rear).

Plate 5.25



27-37 Waterloo Street, Birmingham.

Plate 5.26



104-106 Colmore Row, Birmingham.

Plate 5.27



118-120 Colmore Row, Birmingham

Plate 5.28



Louisa Ryland House, Birmingham.

façadism gained a tacit acceptance by the LPA and the Victorian Society, who were rarely overtly critical and were, in some cases, praiseworthy of such schemes in the early-1970s. In the 1970s, Colmore Row became the focus for façadist redevelopment schemes, exemplifying changing attitudes to redevelopment and the value of the mid-19th century palazzo commercial buildings. The LPA were keen to encourage the refurbishment of these buildings, as they formed the key component of the character of the newly created conservation area (Birmingham CC, 1970). Rebuilding behind the retained façade of 71-73 Colmore Row (Barclay's Bank, West Midlands Property Division, 1971) was praised by both the LPA and the Victorian Society, who viewed it as a step forward from the total demolition of Victorian buildings and tower block redevelopment. Victorian office buildings in a block bounded by Waterloo Street and Colmore Row, blighted by road widening proposals in the late-1960s which would have involved their demolition (Birmingham CC, 1989), became a particular focus for redevelopment schemes in the early 1970s. The redevelopment of 27-37 Waterloo Street (J.A. Roberts, 1973), fitting new offices to the scale of the retained façades of the Georgian buildings, was the first of a number of façadist schemes here (plate 5.25). Again the scheme was praised by both the LPA and the Victorian Society, both seemingly unconcerned by the loss of interiors, merely wishing to see the Victorian image retained in the area as a backcloth to the key listed civic buildings. This stance was reinforced in negotiation on a façadist scheme at 104-106 Colmore Row (J.A. Roberts, 1974; plate 5.26), where the LPA stated that the 19th century buildings were of little merit, again supporting the façadist solution. These schemes, and the stance of the LPA and the Victorian Society, were influential in shaping the direction of redevelopment under conservation control, as developers sought acceptable contextual solutions. In particular their passive stance represented a lost opportunity to enhance the value of the local Victorian commercial heritage in the face of national ambivalence, and increase the protection of the area's buildings. This image proved difficult to challenge when the LPA sought to strengthen its stance against the demolition of buildings in the conservation area in the early-1980s.

With the transition to façadism, limiting the scale of development and adding refurbishment costs, developers sought to maximise the amount of new floorspace obtained in these schemes through the addition of extra office

space within double mansard roofs. The LPA moved to curtail this trend by refusing a number of schemes and seeking height reductions in others. In the early 1970s two façadist schemes with double mansards were refused by the LPA, one at 112 Colmore Row (Peter Hing and Jones, 1973) and one at 37-38 Bennetts Hill (R.Seifert and Partners, 1974). Both schemes were renegotiated to single mansard schemes and approved, although both were not carried out due to the property downturn in 1974. However, the LPA failed to formalise these decisions and shape them into a coherent policy during the property development downturn of the mid-1970s, again hampered by the general desire not to deflect development from the centre through the imposition of control. Consequently, the actions of the LPA in the early-1970s were ineffective in halting the submission of double mansard applications when the development market picked up in the late-1970s. Policy remained loosely defined, and set by negotiation on individual developments with mixed results. In Colmore Row, the LPA were successful in restricting the use of double mansard schemes, renegotiating a scheme at 118-120 Colmore Row (Rolfe Judd Group Practice, 1979; plate 5.27) to reduce its height to four storeys, and refusing an application for a double mansard development at 112 Colmore Row (R.Barker, 1980). However, in a façadist scheme at 3 St Philips Place (Temple Cox Duncan Associates, 1979) a large dominant mansard roof was given permission, leading to inconsistencies in the LPA's policy position regarding façadism and mansard roofs.

This inconsistency continued with the submission of a scheme, involving building behind retained façades and a double mansard roof, for 96-102 Edmund Street (Louisa Ryland House) (Birmingham City Architect, 1979), a group of mid-19th century buildings owned by the Council. The LPA endorsed the scheme with little adverse comment, despite amenity society resistance, a stance which continued even after the listing of the buildings in 1982. The LPA recommended acceptance of the scheme, arguing that as the buildings were neglected, partial demolition was acceptable in order to reuse the buildings, with redevelopment finally taking place in the mid-1980s (plate 5.28). However, tension surrounding these developments increased, with growing opposition from the Victorian Society, and other amenity societies represented on the CAAC, to this loss of interior building features as a result of façadist development, particularly in the case of listed buildings. Similar



concern was also voiced in comments by the CAAC and the Victorian Society on a scheme to build a new service wing on the GI listed 122-124 Colmore Row (Nicol Thomas Viner Barnwell, 1979). These comments from the amenity societies stemmed from a recognition of the increasing pressure Victorian buildings were coming under as development activity increased in the 1980s, an issue then disregarded by the LPA. There was an increasing concern that conservation efforts were being undermined by developers standard recourse to these schemes. The confused stance of the LPA, and its procrastination in developing a coherent policy on façadism and double mansard roofs in the late-1970s, are important in explaining why the LPA attempted to move quickly in the 1980s to tighten controls on these types of development. However, the existence of schemes, endorsed by the LPA, seeming to satisfy conservation objectives weakened the arguments of the LPA for this greater control.

### **Growing tensions between conservation and redevelopment: development in the 1980s**

#### The general temporal and spatial patterns of major development activity

The 1980s was, overall, a period of higher levels of major development activity in both areas in comparison to the late-1970s, linked to the buoyant property market of the mid-1980s (figure 5.4, p.203.). However, the level of major activity in the Bristol area continued to exceed that for the Birmingham area for every year in the 1980s, except for 1985. Differences were particularly evident in the early-1980s. In the Bristol area high levels of major development activity were present from 1980 onwards, associated with the office demand from the expanding insurance sector (Bateman, 1985) and the promotion of leisure uses around the dockside (Punter, 1990). In contrast, major development in the Birmingham area was lower in relation to activity in the late-1970s, associated with the deep recession in the West Midlands economy at this time which affected its desirability as a regional office location (Bateman, 1985). These differing economic circumstances, in conjunction with the differing policy stance of the two LPAs at the beginning of the 1980s, produced clear differences in the composition of the major development activity in the two areas in the 1980s. Whilst in the Bristol area major development was mainly in the form of new building, with little

major rebuilding (façadist) activity, this position was reversed in the Birmingham area with most major redevelopment in the form of façadist schemes, with limited new building. It is this differential experience in the 1980s that underpinned key differences in the direction of policy and the control of character change between the two areas.

The spatial pattern of major building in the 1980s in both study areas continued the trends evident in the late-1970s (figures 5.17 to 5.21). In the Bristol area, new building became increasingly concentrated around the dockside, as demolition controls were tightened in the core and Queen Square areas (figure 5.19a). In the core, new building was limited to two backland developments, while in Queen Square new building was limited to one scheme carried over from the 1970s and the replacement of a post-war office building. Around the dockside, redevelopment opportunities also became more limited, and development was concentrated on gap sites, sites where post-war temporary warehousing remained, semi-derelict Victorian warehousing, and the Victorian transit sheds on the dockside. Following on from the firm controls in the 1970s, major rebuilding almost ceased in the Bristol area in the 1980s with tighter controls on demolition (figure 5.18). Façadist developments were confined to a controversial office development in Queen Square, the Law Courts development in Small Street, the proposed Prince's Chapel development on Prince Street, and a couple of small schemes involving the retention of minor, mainly warehouse façades.

In the Birmingham study area, major development activity continued to be concentrated along Colmore Row, and in the office area to the north of this, continuing the pattern of development evident in the late-1970s (figures 5.20 and 5.21). Within the retail area to the south there was little major development activity, although the City Plaza development in Cannon Street was a major addition to the townscape. Within the office area, complete new building was limited to a few developments around the edges of the conservation area. Conservation area status produced a deflection effect, fuelled by the continued availability of development sites just outside the area boundary south of Great Charles Street, which limited the amount of new building within the area. However, the main feature of major development activity in the 1980s was the continuation of major rebuilding (façadism) as

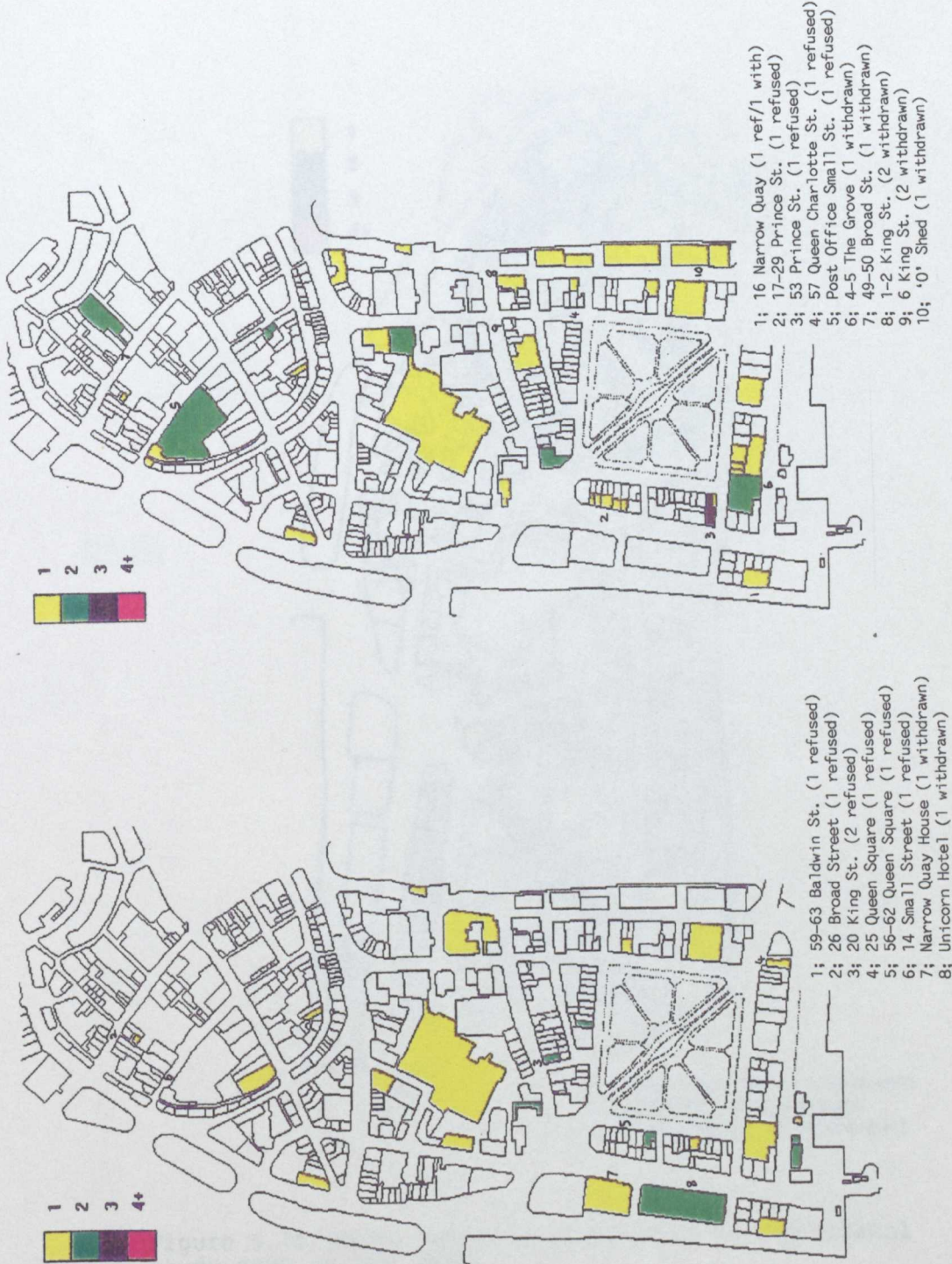


Figure 5.17a; Floorspace additions approved in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.

Figure 5.17b; Demolition approved in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.

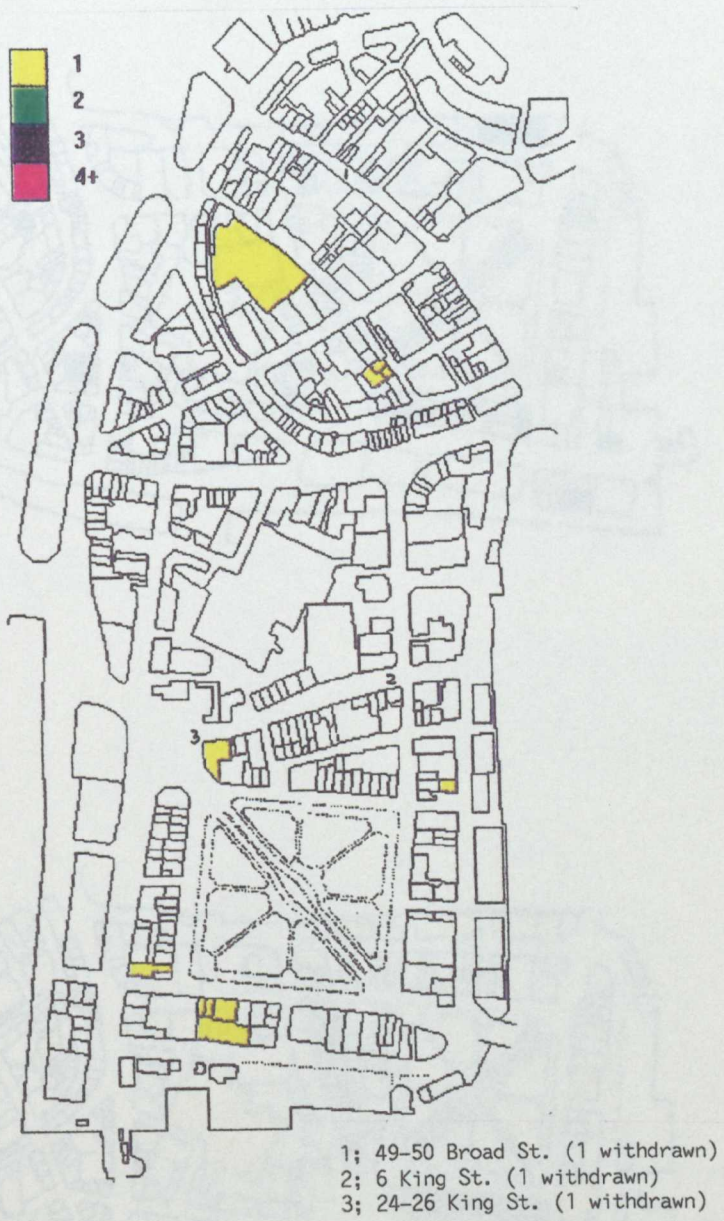


Figure 5.18; Major rebuilding approved in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.



Figure 5.19a; New building approved in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.

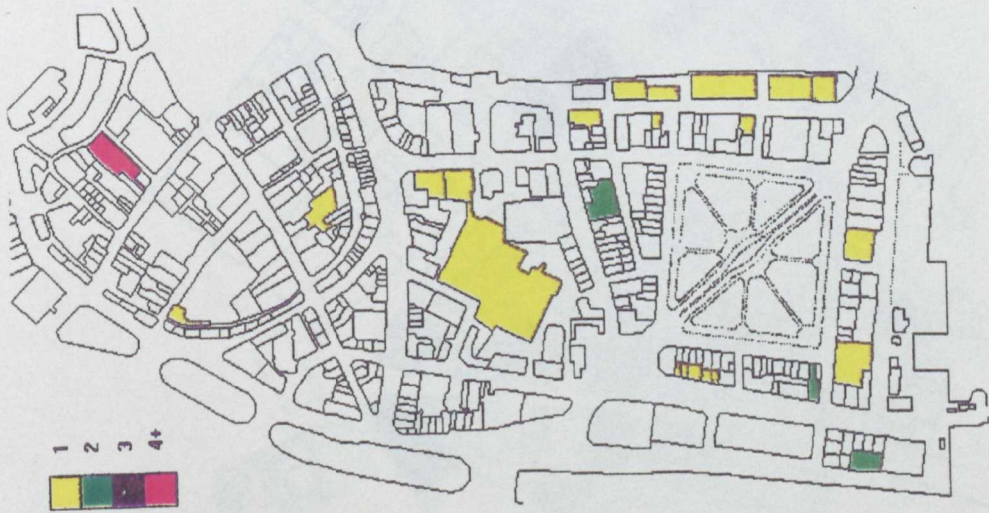


Figure 5.19b; New building refused or withdrawn in the Bristol study area in the 1980s.

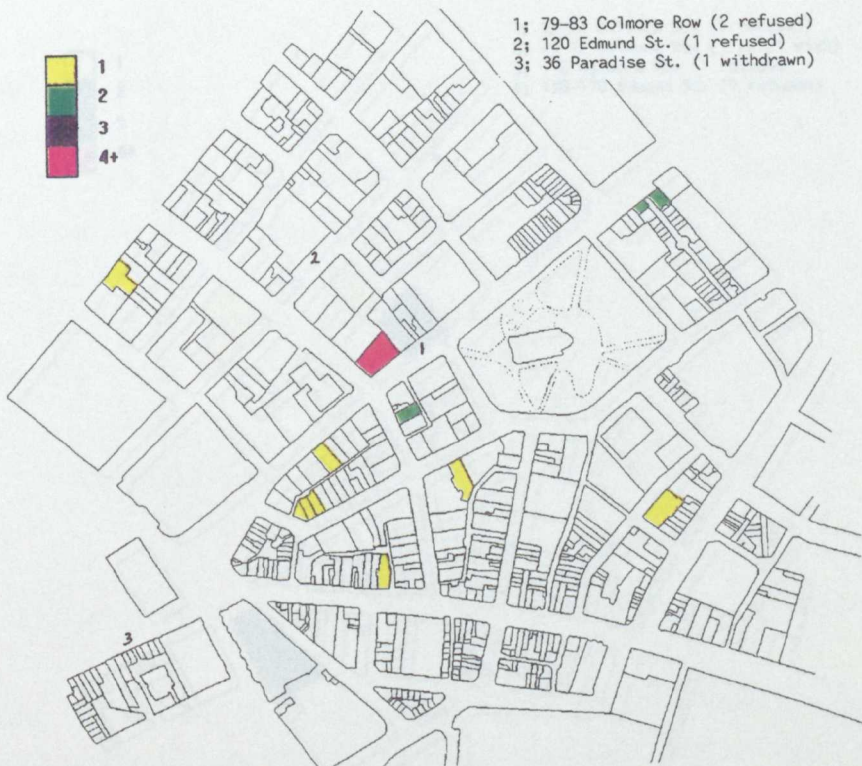


Figure 5.20a; Floorspace additions approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.



Figure 5.20b; Demolition approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.

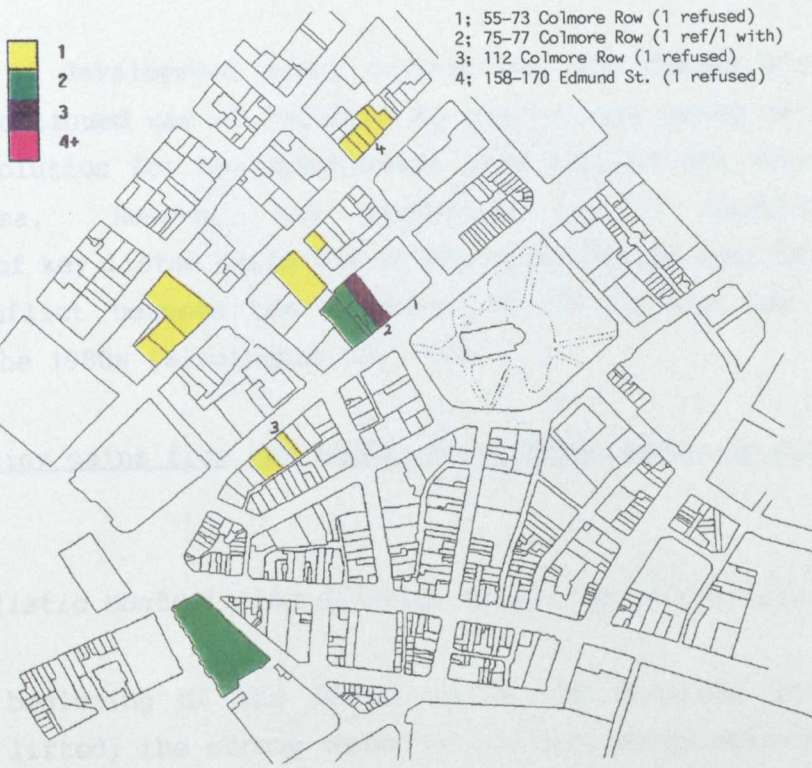


Figure 5.21a; Major rebuilding approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.

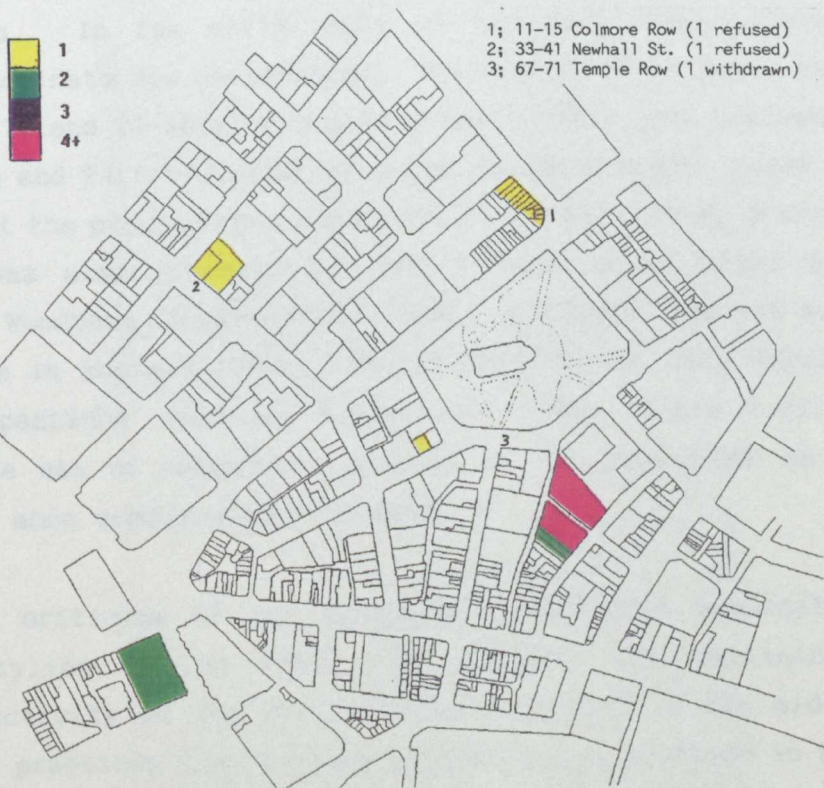


Figure 5.21b; New building approved in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.

the main form of development along Colmore Row and Edmund Street (figure 5.21a). The continued use of façadism as the primary means of obtaining a 'contextual' solution for new development also limited new building in the Birmingham area. However, the persistent use of façadism for the redevelopment of key listed buildings in the conservation area began to cause increasing conflict between LPA conservation initiatives and development interests in the 1980s (Birmingham CC, 1984).

### Protecting policy gains from the 1970s: major development in Bristol in the 1980s

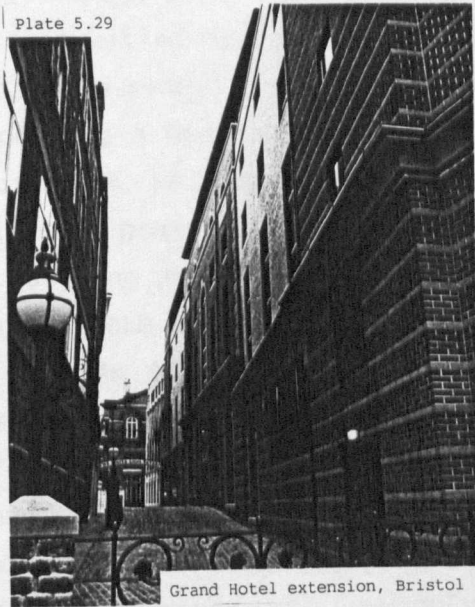
#### *Declining stylistic control; the dilution of the neo-vernacular style*

At the beginning of the 1980s, while the controls on speculative building were lifted, the strong conservation and design controls developed during the late-1970s initially ensured that this new building reflected the standards of the schemes negotiated during the speculative office embargo of the late-1970s. In the early-1980s in the core, neo-vernacular styles continued to dominate new development. Schemes at 10-11 Small Street (1980) (see plate 5.17) and 22-28 St Nicholas Street (1983) (not implemented), both by Alec French and Partners, continued the domestic scale, brick and pitched roof style that the practice had pioneered in the mid-1970s. A neo-vernacular brick style was also proposed for the revised Grand Hotel Annex scheme (Watkins Gray Woodgate International, 1981), although this was superseded by another scheme in the mid-1980s. The redesigning of this development as a neo-Georgian pastiche (Hamilton Associates, 1986) (plate 5.29) marked the decline in the use of vernacular styling in the late-1980s as historicist styles became more commercially favoured.

Growing criticism of the universal, uncritical application of neo-vernacular styling in the 1980s also explains its declining use. As development activity in the Bristol area increased in the mid-1980s, more architectural practices from outside Bristol became involved in the design of new buildings in the study area. Unlike the informed contextual work of local architects such as Alec French and Partners, their use of contextual vernacular styles reflected a universal conservation area 'pseudo' vernacular



Plate 5.29



Grand Hotel extension, Bristol

Plate 5.30



11-12 King Street, Bristol

Plate 5.31



3-5 & 6-8 The Grove, Bristol

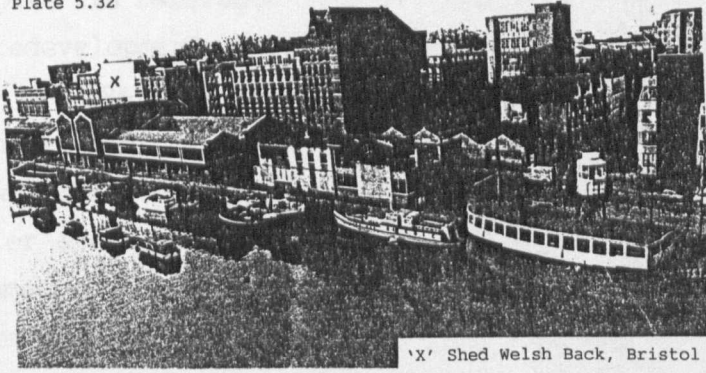
(Larkham, 1986), producing buildings out of context with their surroundings. The development of office buildings at 11-12 King Street (Penrose Associates, Exeter, 1986; plate 5.30) exemplified this problem. Although it attempted to replicate the warehouse style to King Street, it did not follow this through to Little King Street, adopting a domestic scale and style out of context within this former warehouse area, which was criticised by amenity societies. Generally outside of particular contexts, increasing criticism of the bland nature of neo-vernacular styling by the LPA served to limit its use in commercial schemes, as architects responded to LPA demands for increased detailing and developer demands for increasing individualism through the application of historicist styles.

Despite declining use in the core, neo-vernacular styles remained in evidence as the preferred style of the LPA around the Docks in the 1980s. Through the production of design briefs, the LPA continued to be pro-active in their control of building style in this part of the conservation area in an attempt to preserve and enhance the docks character. However, with increasing commercial pressure for new development, and increasing constraints on the ability of the LPA to engage in detailed negotiation, the styling of developments around the Floating Harbour began to show greater eclecticism in the 1980s. Many of the developments around the docks began to dilute the 'docks vernacular', utilising either a 'stripped' modernised brick façade, or by adding varied historical detailing transforming it into a post-Modern eclectic style (see historical eclecticism below). Developments along The Grove in the early-1980s exemplified this transition. The development at 2-3 The Grove (Alec French and Partners, 1980; plate 5.31) (first negotiated in 1976) exemplified the earlier more considered negotiated style of development, drawing more explicitly on the local Bristol docks warehouse style. However, in the development next to it, 4-7 The Grove (Whicheloe Macfarlane Partnership, 1980; plate 5.31), the transition to a more universal post-Modern pastiche style was evident, with the use of brick patterning and non-specific dockside/nautical references (in the use of porthole windows). While the form was disliked by amenity bodies commenting on the application, its acceptance by the LPA highlighted a growing awareness of the limits to design control in the area in the face of increasing commercial pressure in an increasingly pro-business planning climate.

In the mid-1980s, commercial pressures increasingly pushed styles of new building beyond the guidelines set out in design briefs. Despite evidence indicating a relaxation in their standards in the early-1980s, the LPA acted to protect the essence of the 'docks vernacular' from dissolving too far into post-Modern eclecticism. This stance led to a number of protracted negotiations on new developments around the Docks. In 1987, a brief was produced for the 16-20 Narrow Quay site which proposed the retention of the 18th century council owned warehouse at 16, together with a new 3 storey building for the cleared site of 18-20. The options for this were either an "accurate reconstruction" of the dutch-gabled elevation of the buildings demolished or a "modern sympathetic infill" with rendered walls and stone dressings, although no actual design was given (Bristol CC, 1987). The LPA sought to 'enforce' the docks vernacular following the refusal of an application for a "Georgian building in stone" for the site (JT Design and Build, 1985), and the refusal of two subsequent schemes (JT Design and Build, 1986). These, although in a "docks style", had poor cladding and glazing, required the demolition of number 16, and included too many storeys and a double mansard roof, which was unacceptable to the LPA. Crucially, the LPA was able to uphold its stance, and appeals against the refusal of demolition consent and new building consent were withdrawn, allowing the LPA to negotiate with new developers for their preferred scheme. This negotiation was still in progress at the end of 1989, when the downturn in the development market curtailed further consideration of the scheme. Here the combination of a well argued case for the retention of 16, in terms of its historical importance and suitability for refurbishment, and a clear design brief was critical in the LPA upholding its stated conservation objectives.

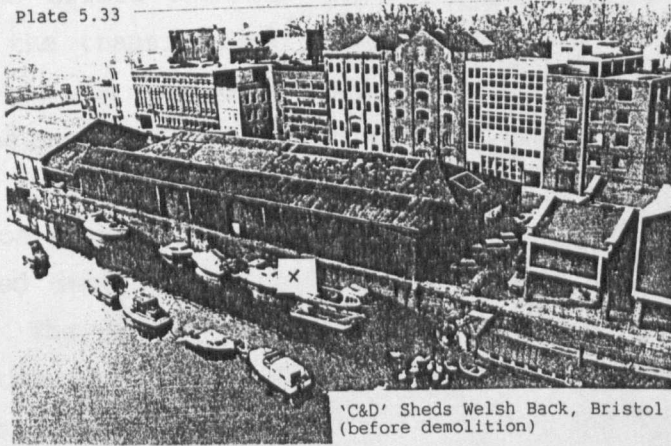
The LPA also adopted a tough negotiating stance with regard to the style of new building to replace the transit sheds along Welsh Back. The restoration and conversion of the City owned "E" and "W" Sheds on St Augustines Reach into the Watershed arts complex in the 1970s had demonstrated the potential of these buildings for conversion. In the 1980s, as the availability of development sites became more limited, developers moved to exploit the potential of the sheds along Welsh Back. The first redevelopment of one of the sheds, the demolition of the "X" Shed and its replacement by a Squash Court development (Northcott Huthwaite and Batterson, 1980; plate 5.32)

Plate 5.32



'X' Shed Welsh Back, Bristol

Plate 5.33



'C&D' Sheds Welsh Back, Bristol  
(before demolition)

Plate 5.34



'C&D' Sheds Welsh Back, Bristol  
(new development)

was criticised by the CAP as being a poor design due to its cladding materials and size, despite its reference to a dockside warehouse style. Consequently, for the next redevelopment, involving the demolition of the "C" and "D" Sheds (plate 5.33), the LPA applied more stringent design controls in relation to height and materials, also seeking to continue its policy of ensuring waterside access for pedestrians. However, the final mixed use scheme (Atkins Sheppard Fidler and Associates, 1985; plate 5.34), with its gable ends and stepped, asymmetric height between the quayside and Welsh Back represented a post-Modern amalgam of dockside residential schemes rather than a serious attempt to reflect the transit shed style.

While the briefs for the transit shed developments emphasised the importance of the transit shed style to the dockside area, the principal criterion adopted was that buildings needed to be "sympathetic to the scale and style of the surrounding dockside historic buildings" (Bristol CC, 1990b). In particular, the use of gable ends to the waterfront and Welsh Back was a clear superimposition of a more general docks style over the traditional style of transit shed design with gable ends at right angles to the waterfront (plate 5.33). The use of this general gable end style was evident in the outline brief drawing produced for the sensitive site occupied by the council owned low-rise Modern Dock Workers Social Club (Bristol CC, 1990b; figure 5.22). Only in the outline brief, and withdrawn proposals (Moxley Jenner and Partners, 1986; figure 5.23), for the redevelopment of the "O" Shed did the style reflect that of the existing transit shed, as a result of the LPA requirement to retain the brick gable end of the warehouse. The "O" Shed development was to be "a sympathetic modern building" guided by the massing and profile of the existing shed and incorporating the Redcliffe façade (Bristol CC, 1990c). However, disagreement between the LPA and the architects concerning the walkways and the height of the development led to the withdrawal of the application. With the slump in the development market in 1989 dockside development ceased, as the brief's requirement for mixed uses made these sites less attractive for development. Clearly in the transit shed developments a tension existed between reference to the existing townscape context and the pursuit of wider urban design objectives, with policy being driven increasingly by design criteria rather than by consideration for historical continuity. The redevelopment proposals for the transit sheds,

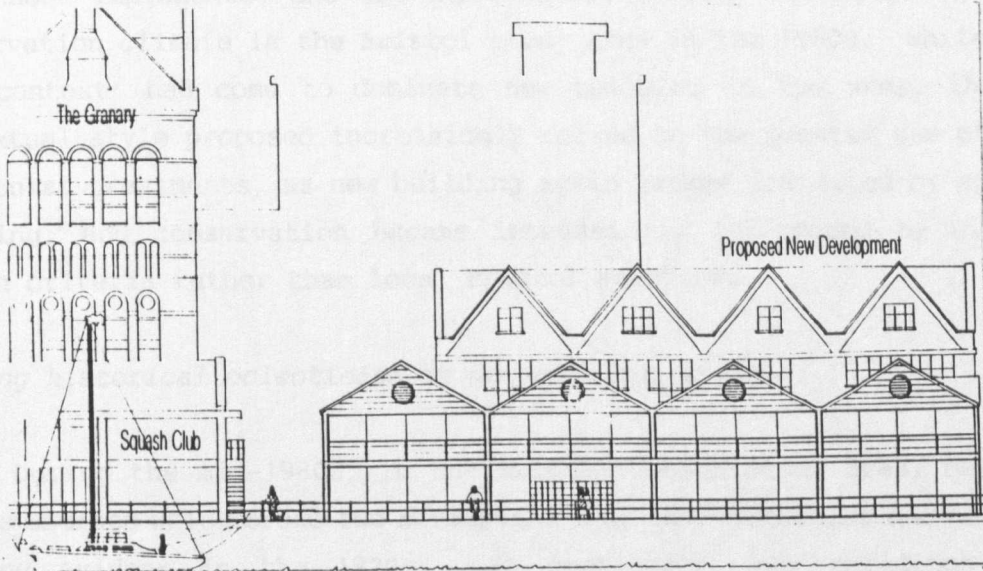


Figure 5.22 Dock Workers Social Club design brief  
(Bristol CC, 1991)

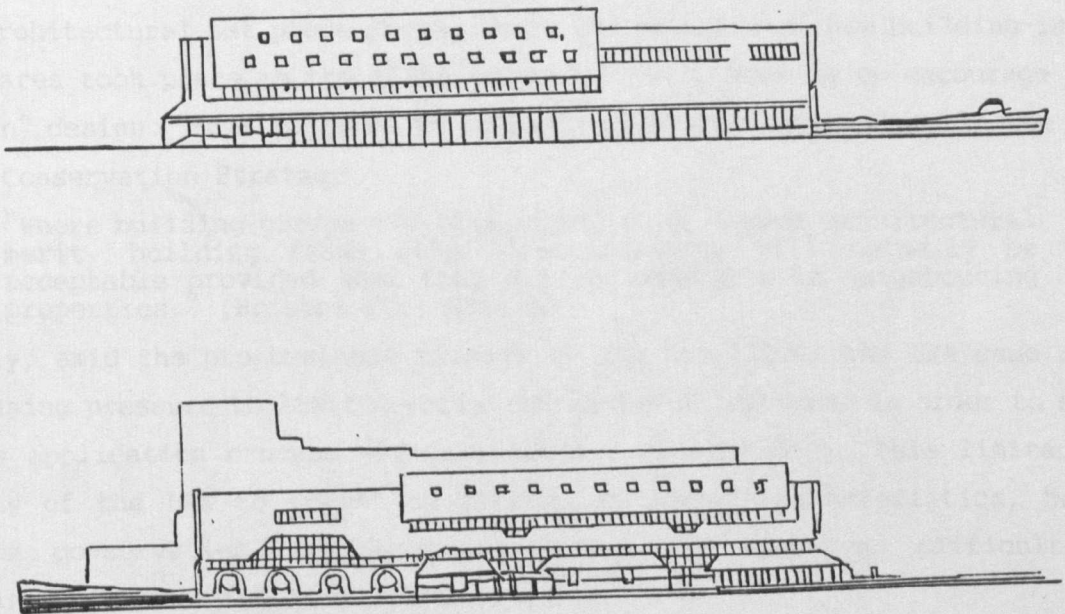


Figure 5.23 Proposals for the redevelopment of the 'O' Shed,  
Bristol (redrawn from planning files)

both those implemented and non-implemented, clearly reflected the changing conservation climate in the Bristol study area in the 1980s. While concerns for 'context' had come to dominate new building in the area, the form of contextual style proposed increasingly relied on the greater use of 'pseudo' vernacular treatments, as new building again became dominated by speculative building, and conservation became increasingly influenced by wider urban design criteria rather than local Bristol solutions.

### *Growing historical eclecticism in new building style*

During the mid-1980s, in the Bristol conservation area, new building styles emerged which broke the stranglehold of neo-vernacular and neo-Georgian styling evident in the 1970s. In particular, new buildings began to incorporate the pastiche and parody elements of post-Modern styling. Three key factors contributed to the introduction of these post-Modern styles of new building. Firstly, as the amount of new building increased in the mid-1980s, different architectural practices, such as Bristol architects JT Design and Build and Domus Design and Build, became involved in the design of new buildings, introducing new stylistic influences into the area and ending the domination of firms such as Alec French and Partners evident in the 1970s. Secondly, the LPA adopted more open design guidance for sites outside of the main architectural set piece areas, where the majority of new building in the study area took place in the 1980s (figure 5.19a), seeking to encourage good "modern" design. This approach to stylistic control was outlined in the 1984 draft Conservation Strategy:

"Where building groups are less formal or of lesser architectural merit, building forms other than replicas will normally be acceptable provided that they are in keeping with neighbouring properties." (Bristol CC, 1984; p7)

Finally, amid the pro-business climate of the mid-1980s, the LPA came under increasing pressure to limit negotiation on design matters, in order to speed up the application process (Punter, 1990). Consequently, this limited the ability of the LPA to insist on particular design characteristics, beyond minimum conservation considerations, through a perceived difficulty in sustaining such decisions at appeal.

Changes in the style of development proposed for the Princes Hall, Prince Street exemplified the transition from vernacular detailing to post-

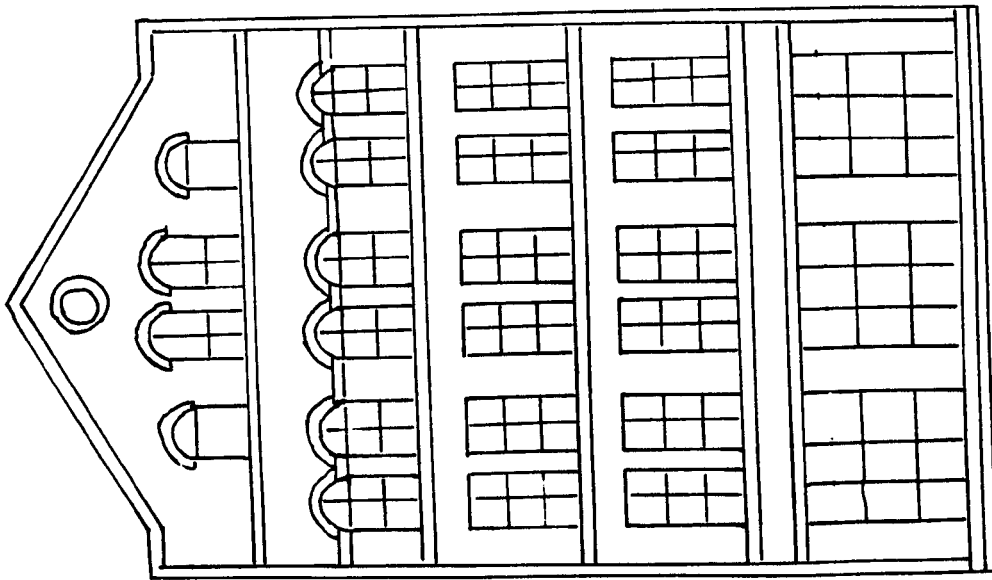


Figure 5.24a

Proposals for the redevelopment of Princes Hall,  
Bristol 1982 (redrawn from planning files)

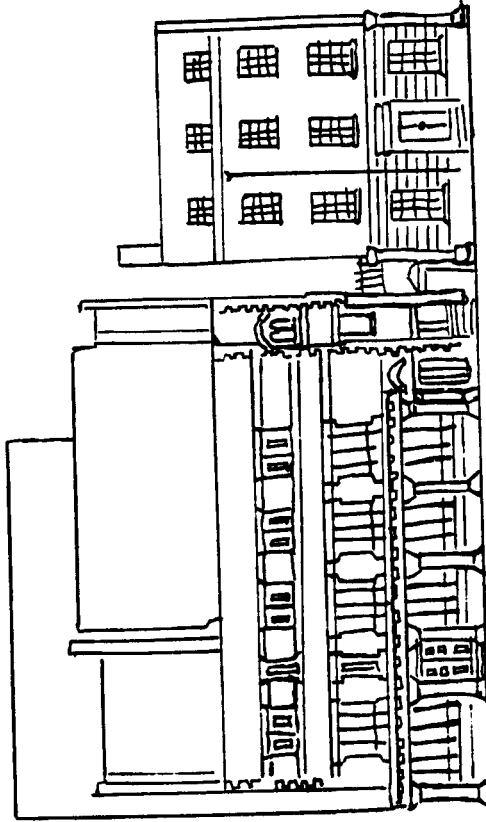


Figure 5.24b

Proposals for the redevelopment of Princes Hall,  
Bristol 1988 (redrawn from planning files)



Modern historicist forms, precipitated by a relaxation of controls away from the harbour itself. In the late-1970s and early 1980s, new build and major rebuilding proposals conformed to the 'docks vernacular' style (Atkins Sheppard Fidler, 1982; figure 5.24a). Yet, when redevelopment interest re-emerged in the late-1980s, the two main options submitted used historicist references. The new build scheme approved to transform the chapel into a pub by Samuel Smith Breweries (Brian Jones Design Ltd, 1988; figure 5.24b), used a parody of the chapel architecture to produce a historicist, 'themed' design that reflected general trends in pub design in the late-1980s. However, with the onset of recession in the leisure industry, Samuel Smith proposed a new-build office scheme to supersede the 1988 scheme (Broadway Maylon, 1989). This scheme, in what was termed by conservation officers "fairground Georgian", was refused by the LPA, as it offered no conservation gain for the loss of the chapel, which they wished to retain. The scheme proposed by non-Bristol architects Broadway Maylon (Reading) utilised the pastiche Georgian style of architecture that became the 'conservation-area-architecture' of the 1980s. Ironically, as a 'heritage element' became an important component used by developers to increase the commercial appeal of new buildings, external notions of historicity became increasingly adopted, at the expense of the 'docks vernacular' that had been more sensitive to the local historical context.

As the influence of local contextual styling diminished in the 1980s, a new post-Modern pastiche 'warehouse style' was introduced on a number of small infill office schemes around the quays. Rather than being specific to Bristol, this pastiche style owed more to general trends in speculative building and architectural fashion. Developments in this style utilised a variety of architectural references in their façade treatments, including stone rustication, chamfered corners, coloured patterned brick, and coloured steel and glass. This 'new' style was first evident in the redevelopment of 24-26 King Street (JT Design and Build, 1983; plate 5.35), a building that provided a contrast to the neo-vernacular Broad Quay House opposite it. While the building was sanctioned by the LPA, in return for a conservation gain in the retention of a Victorian warehouse façade, it was condemned by the amenity bodies. They were concerned at its deviation from the 'docks vernacular', and saw it as evidence of a return to the problems of the loss of local character

Plate 5.35



Plate 5.36

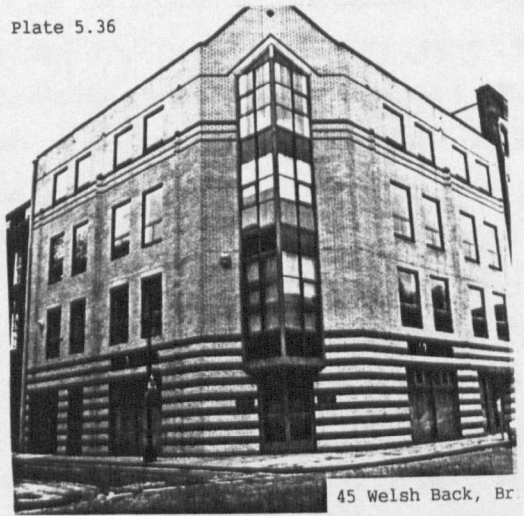


Plate 5.37

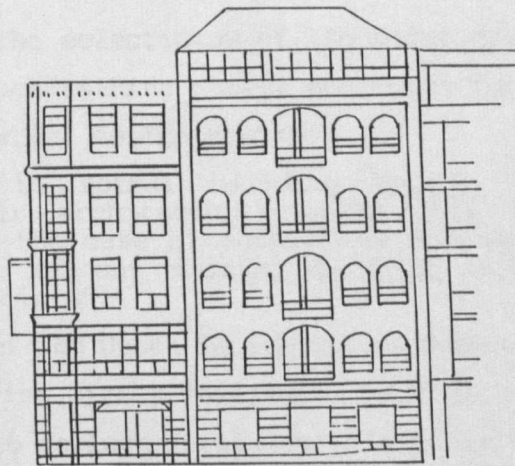


Figure 5.25

Proposals for the redevelopment of 37 Welsh Back, Bristol (redrawn from planning files)

through speculative office development that had prompted conservation action in the early-1970s. This style was replicated on a development at 45 Welsh Back (Domus Design and Build, 1986; plate 5.36), which pushed the post-Modern variation from the docks theme further by using light coloured brick in contrast to the red brick vernacular style. The architectural firm Domus Design and Build extended this post-Modern warehouse pastiche still further in their design for a new building at 17-29 Prince Street (1987; plate 5.37). As Punter (1990; p256) notes there "was surprisingly little comment on the Prince Street façade except for the Panel to welcome its use of granite in a rusticated ground floor with brick above". Here conservation benefits, in obtaining revisions on a 1986 refused scheme including reduced height and the retention and refurbishment of all buildings fronting Queen Square, outweighed its use of post-Modern warehouse parody which reworked a number of warehouse themes in its gabled atrium, eaved pantile roof and glazed top storey behind a parapet wall. Following the 'success' of this scheme, Domus Design and Build repeated this eclectic applique style for a proposed new building at 36-37 Welsh Back (1989; figure 5.25), replacing a semi-derelict Victorian warehouse, superseding a façadist scheme. The lack of controversy surrounding this submission clearly highlights the extent to which historical universality rather than locally sensitive contextual styling had become accepted in building around the docks in the late-1980s. In the 1980s, the docks became a victim of its own achievements in environmental improvement, as its local character became increasingly threatened by redevelopment driven by commercial considerations.

In contrast to the eclecticism of the Docks area, where architectural set pieces existed, such as King Street and Queen Square, the LPA sought to continue strong contextual design control:

"With respect to formal building groups of importance... preserving their architectural unity will be of paramount importance...In the case of outstanding groups of buildings an exact facsimile of any missing building will be required."  
(Bristol CC, 1984; p6)

However, in King Street and Queen Square fierce debate emerged concerning the relative merits of using either replica or well designed contrast buildings to fill gap sites or to replace infill buildings that had broken the unity of these architectural set pieces. Within Queen Square a tradition of replica building had been sustained throughout the post-war period, with both

modern/neo-Georgian styles (31-2 Queen Square and 33-35 Queen Square), and facsimile styles (14-16 Queen Square and 11-12 Queen Square) in evidence. As demolition control of the Georgian buildings increased, replica development was curtailed, and the few replica schemes that were undertaken in the late-1970s and 1980s proved controversial. The demolition of Victorian warehouses, and their replacement by a replica Georgian building, at 43-45 Queen Square (Alec French Partnership, 1980; plate 5.38) was supported by the LPA for providing re-enclosure for the square. However, it was dismissed by amenity groups as architectural puritanism which had destroyed the historical stratification of the square. Further to this, the superficial styling of the new buildings proved controversial, with poorly aligned roof pitches and window proportions, in relation to the original buildings, doing little to convince those against replica schemes of their worth. Around the same time, the final application was submitted for a combination scheme at 39-42 Queen Square (Whicheloe Macfarlane Partnership, 1982; plate 5.39), involving the rebuilding of the façades of 39-41, and the construction of a replica building at 42. Rebuilding was proposed when an earlier refurbishment scheme threw up structural problems. Again demolition proved controversial, and the new building was condemned by architectural professionals as "cheap fakery" (Root quoted in Punter, 1990; p252), and by amenity groups and the CAP as having a "sham feel", as the façade had been rebuilt in stretcher rather than Flemish bond. The Conservation Officer dismissed criticisms of this type of scheme as being academically purist, ignoring the true focus of conservation effort (Brook, pers. comm.). However, for others it represented the negative, stagnating face of conservation control.

Wary of the controversy surrounding these earlier schemes, for the proposed redevelopment of 33-35 Queen Square, a 1961 neo-Georgian office block, a brief was produced by the LPA stating a preference for a good sensitive modern building. In this case the LPA felt it would be poor conservation practice to insist on a replica Georgian development, as it was not an original Georgian building or façade that was being replaced, seeking to avoid the design cliches of poor facsimile or pastiche solutions. The scheme (Alec French Partnership, 1987; plate 5.40), whilst sympathetic to the surrounding buildings managed to avoid the stylistic pitfalls of a more explicit replica development. Yet, while its side and rear elevations were

Plate 5.38



Plate 5.39



Plate 5.40

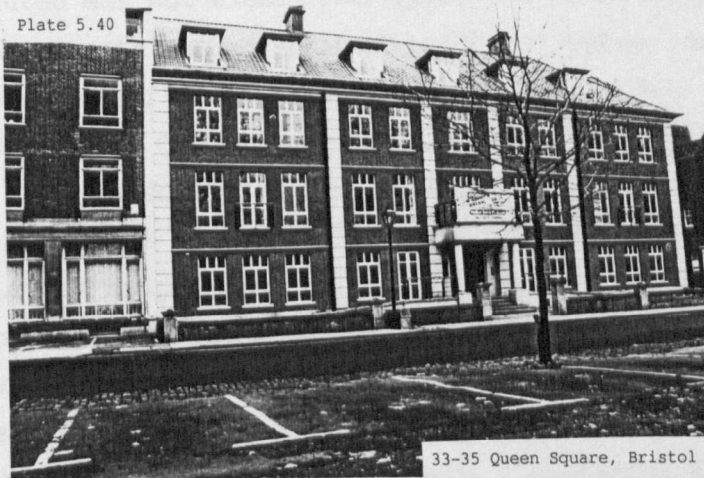


Figure 5.26

Proposals for the redevelopment of 1-2 King Street, Bristol (redrawn from planning files)

more modern, the front still offered a safe solution to fitting a building into the square. This reflected a combination of commercial pragmatism on the one hand, and stated conservation objectives to maintain the unity of architectural set pieces on the other.

Debates concerning replica and pastiche building were also intense in the negotiations surrounding proposed redevelopment the of important site next to the GII\* listed Llandogger Trow public house, replacing post-war warehouse buildings erected following the destruction of the original 17th century buildings by bombing in 1940. While 4-6 King Street forms an important group of three 17th century buildings, the use of a replica style building was considered a weak solution in this context, given the degree of fragmentation of the 17th century townscape as a result of three centuries of redevelopment activity and the loss of the original buildings at 1-2 King Street. The LPA again stated their preference for a good sensitive modern building, although what this constituted was not clear, and again the final approved negotiated scheme reflected a safe solution utilising a Tudor/Jacobean pastiche historicism (Moxley Jenner Ltd, 1987; figure 5.26). This development was roundly criticised by the CAP and amenity bodies as being "too bulky" and a "poor pastiche". They also criticised the historical inauthenticity of the Welsh Back elevation, and the poor detailing of the post-Modern warehouse style façade to Little King Street. Clearly, whilst a mood against pastiche existed both within the LPA and the amenity bodies, commercial pressures for an acceptable development and a reluctance and/or inability to outline "suitable contrasting" alternatives on the part of planners and amenity bodies tended to continue to push development towards historicist contextual styles in the Bristol area.

Clearly, the principle of visual, rather than historical, context or 'fit' governed new building design guidance in the Bristol area, fuelling continued accusations of promoting architectural banality. In the context of 1-2 King Street, had a new building been proposed that followed the original 1972 brief for a building that "respected the docks style" and was at a "domestic scale of 2-5 storeys", a more acceptable solution than a pastiche/replica could have been produced. This would have provided a contrasting development with historical precedent in the replacement of the 17th century

buildings by brick warehouses in the Victorian period (see Chapter Four). A similar alternative would also have been applicable in the Queen Square context, retaining the historical stratification in this area. However, in the 1980s increasing commercialisation of heritage, and the growing standardisation of conservation area urban design guidance and historicist building styles served to limit the promotion of local solutions underpinned by a deeper consideration of area character.

### *Restyling of modern buildings*

The refronting of buildings in order to update them in the light of changing architectural fashion is not a new phenomenon, and during the 18th century refronting of Tudor residential buildings was popular in many UK towns, especially in settlements that enjoyed a period of growth at this time (Conzen, 1969; 1988; Lloyd, 1979). In the early 20th Century the fashion for refronting was revived, particularly associated with commercial buildings. Fashionable refronting then had economic implications, with the need to ensure continued economic success of commercial developments (Larkham and Freeman, 1988). After a lull in commercial refronting in the mid-20th Century, associated with the rise of the Modern movement in architecture, many office developments built in the 1950s and 1960s are now being re-clad, revamping Modern buildings in post-Modern style. While the motivation behind this refurbishment or replacement can be functional, due to structural problems, it is more commonly motivated by a desire by investors to obtain higher floorspace rents. While rapidly changing office demands have rendered some 1950s and 1960s office buildings inefficient, it is more often the poor aesthetic image of these Modern buildings that has made them difficult to rent.

In the Bristol area recladding was initiated by the Broad Quay extension scheme, in which recladding of Narrow Quay House, with brick elevations to Narrow Quay, was undertaken as part of the scheme to harmonise with the neo-vernacular styling of the new development. Following this a number of 1950s and 1960s office buildings were refurbished during the development upturn in the 1980s, involving the internal refitting of buildings, and the remodelling of façades to varying degrees. A number of minor remodelling schemes involved

the replacement of fenestration, for example on Royal London House, Queen Charlotte Street and Bridge House, Baldwin Street, or the refurbishment of part of a building, for example the side entrance of St Lawrence House, Broad Street. While the majority of these refurbishments were initiated by property owners, the LPA was also active in using the pressure for increases in office floorspace as a lever to control façade changes and to obtain improvements to the appearance of many of the post-war office buildings that had been developed prior to the operation of conservation controls. In the refurbishment of 23-29 Marsh Street in 1986, a minor addition of floorspace involving the enclosure of a walkway provided the design team with enough leverage to insist on the better design of cladding and new fenestration for the building. Also, in 1987 the same principle was used to control the refurbishment of 11-12 Queen Square, where an increase in floorspace to a Modern rear extension provided leverage to obtain the refurbishment of the Georgian front building and the recladding in the brick 'docks vernacular' of the glass front Welsh Back elevation.

More significantly, in the 1980s, the growing antipathy towards Modern architecture was highlighted by the total 'cloaking' of a number of office buildings from the 1960s in pastiche post-Modern styles, and in some instances the demolition of Modern buildings and their replacement by buildings in historicist post-Modern styles. The redevelopment of these Modern buildings was aided by the increasingly limited availability of development sites in the study area that did not involve the demolition of listed buildings. These schemes were influential in introducing post-Modern styles that eclectically utilised mixed historical references onto large buildings in the study area. In Prince Street, recladding was used to transform Kent House, a Modern office 'cube' into a post-Modern building in brick and marble (Domus Design and Build, 1988; figure 5.27), echoing the style of the adjacent development at 17-29 Prince Street. In Queen Charlotte Street, a number of proposals were put forward to remodel office buildings in a post-Modern parody of neo-Georgian styling. The first of these developments involved the recladding of Royal London House, a post-war office building, in a neo-Georgian pastiche style (Richard Hemmingway and Partners, 1987; plate 5.41). Next to this restyled building, an inter-war office building was demolished to accommodate a new building by the same architectural practice in a similar parody



Plate 5.41



Royal London House, Bristol  
1st on Queens, Bristol

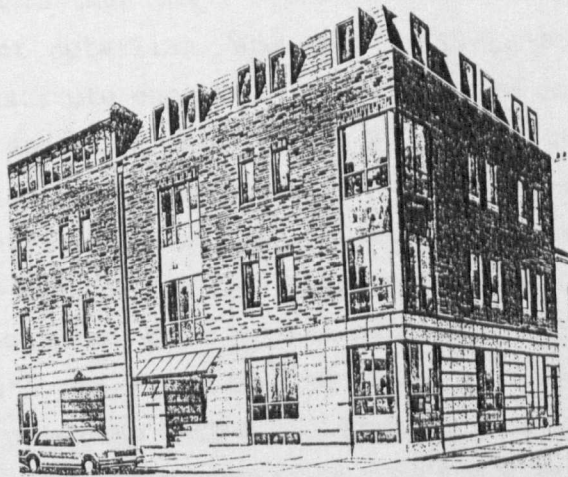


Figure 5.27 Refronting of Kent House Prince St., Bristol  
(source, Bristol CC planning files)

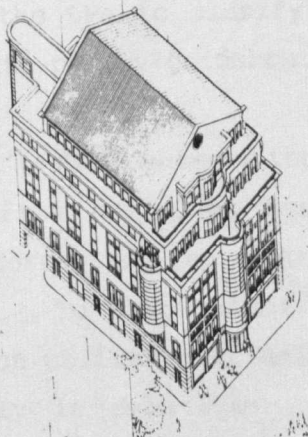


Figure 5.28 Proposals for the redevelopment of the 'Rackhay',  
Bristol (source, Punter, 1990)

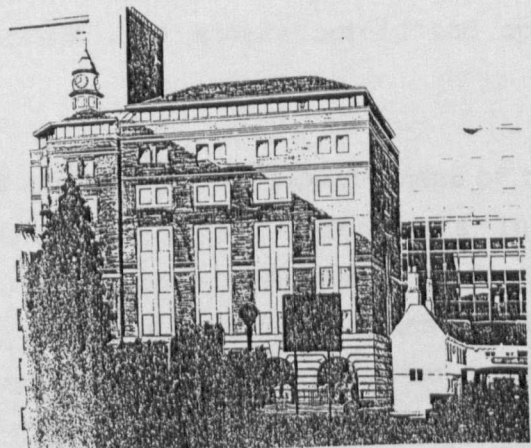


Figure 5.29 Proposals for the redevelopment of Venturers House,  
Bristol (source, Bristol CC planning files)

historicist style, utilising stone rustication and mouldings and brick (Richard Hemmingway and Partners, 1988; plate 5.41). A proposal to redevelop the 1968 office building "The Rackhay" in a similar style (Alec French Partnership, 1988; figure 5.28) fell victim to the early 1990s property downturn and the financial problems of the developers Rosehaugh Estates plc.

While there was support for these recladding and redevelopment schemes in Queen Charlotte Street from the LPA, the CAP considered the detailing of these schemes poor, and their style "overbearing". Criticism of the use of these historicist styles on large buildings became focused on proposals to redevelop Venturers House, the first Modern style post-war office block in the city centre, in a neo-Georgian parody style (JT Design and Build, 1988; figure 5.29). The LPA, with the support of amenity societies and the CAP, rejected the scheme on the grounds that the 7 storey building was too high, that the façade had insufficient detailing, and that refurbishment of the adjacent almshouses did not constitute enough of a conservation gain for extra office space. The developers appeal, contesting all these criticisms, was dismissed, allowing further negotiation on the size and style of the scheme. The style of this scheme, on a sensitive site looking into Queen Square, exemplified the problems of the mis-application of historicist neo-Georgian detailing, expanding its use onto large scale buildings beyond the 'domestic' context usually associated with neo-Georgian architecture. These criticisms echo those levelled at its neighbour Broad Quay House in the 1970s, where its neo-vernacular styling was deemed unsuitable by some for a large office building. Clearly, the architectural treatment of large office buildings in commercial conservation areas remained a key concern. As in the 1970s, there was clearly a need for the LPA to clarify its position, and codify briefs and appeal decisions into policy guidance.

Punter (1990) contends that the refurbishment and redevelopment of these post-war office buildings has contributed to major improvements in the townscape, correcting the mistakes of the past where the context of the site was ignored. To what extent buildings, such as those in Queen Charlotte Street, which utilise post-modern pastiche and parody are more in 'context' stylistically is debatable. Whilst their external styling may be more acceptable in the current architectural climate, they certainly do little to

restore other townscape elements, such as plots, lost in the post-war redevelopment of these sites. The change is often simply stylistic, again providing simplistic solutions to the problem of fitting large buildings into the townscape. Increasingly these 'contextual' solutions owe more to external views of historicity rather than to specific local solutions based on a detailed assessment of the area's character.

### *Façadism*

One of the key indicators of the continued strength of conservation control in the Bristol area in the 1980s was the ability of the LPA to limit the demolition of buildings in the area in the face of rising commercial pressure. In the 1980s, demolition was mainly limited to minor demolition of rear and backland buildings, semi-derelict Victorian warehouses, the transit sheds, and post-war warehouse and office buildings (see figure 5.17b). This control was aided by the high number of listed buildings within the area. However, what was particularly significant was the ability of the LPA to limit the incidence of façadism, protecting both listed and unlisted pre-20th century buildings in the area. Façadism was limited in the 1980s to two high profile schemes, 39-42 Queen Square (Whicheloe Macfarlane Partnership, 1980) and the Law Courts, Small Street (Property Services Agency, 1987), and four schemes involving the retention of minor façades.

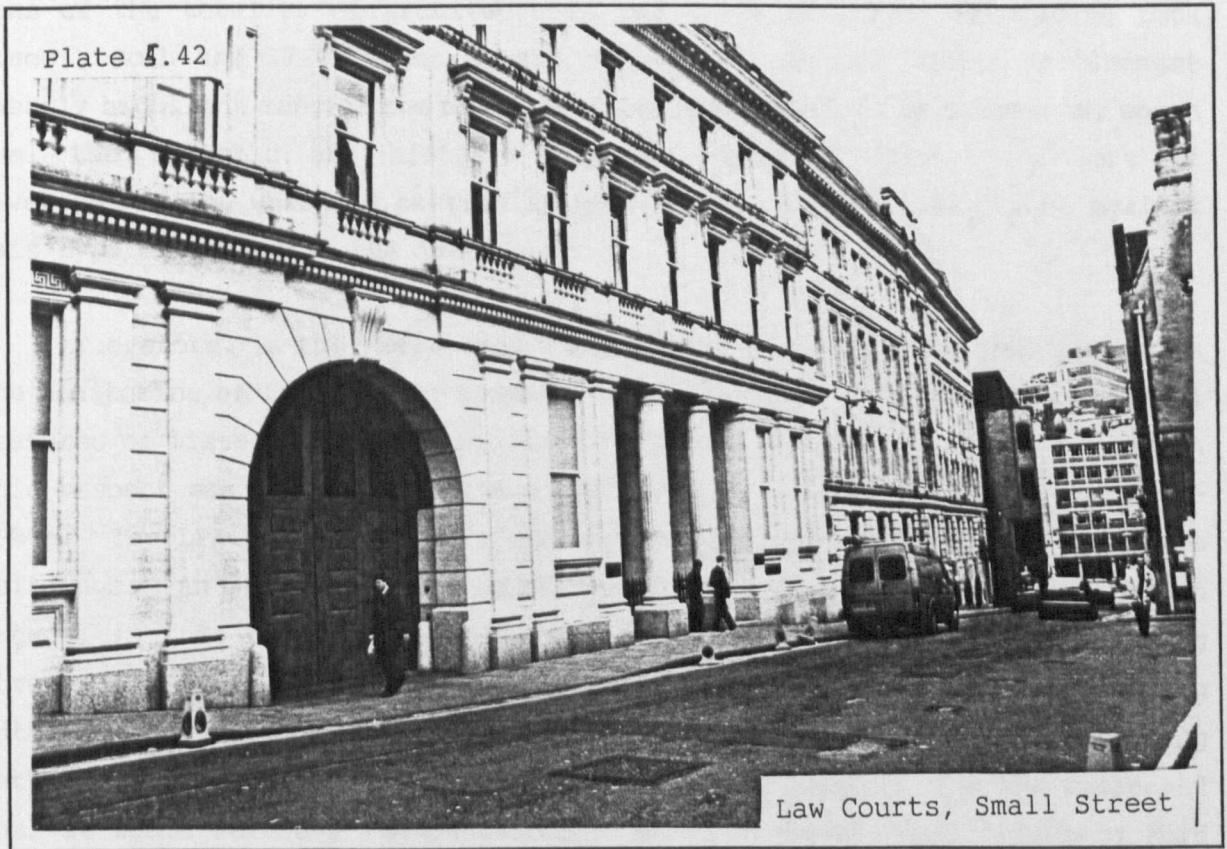
In line with its stated policy from the 1970s, the LPA sought to limit façadism to the retention of minor façades within new developments. Throughout the 1980s, the LPA battled to retain minor Victorian buildings and façades, evident in the protracted negotiations concerning the fate of the Princes Hall, Prince Street. However, the granting on appeal of approval to demolish the building in 1981, applying national standards of historic worth, limited the LPA's negotiating position. Pressure also continued in the Bristol area for the demolition of unlisted Victorian warehouses, due to the unsuitability for modern office purposes. The LPA was, however, successful in pressing for the retention of façades in two developments that involved the demolition of semi-derelict warehouses. Redevelopment of 24-26 King Street (JT Design and Build, 1983; see plate 5.35) was guided by a brief requiring the retention of the pennant stone warehouse façade of number 24. However the

conservation benefits of this approach in the final scheme are questionable; in this instance, the façade was not used to guide the scale and style of the new development, but can be viewed as an architectural remnant attached discordantly to a new building. At 36 Welsh Back (Domus Design and Build, 1988), a proposal for redevelopment behind the retained façade was submitted, with poor floor heights again cited by the developers as the reason for proposing partial demolition of the warehouse. In 1989, a revised scheme was submitted for total redevelopment in a neo-Georgian style, which the LPA approved. Within both schemes the minimum of conservation effort was in evidence, with the Welsh Back scheme highlighting the limits to the LPA's attempts to preserve the Victorian warehouse heritage in the face of rising commercial pressure in the late-1980s. All these schemes demonstrate the conflict between conservation criteria based on relative architectural merit, and the application of wider criteria considering the historical significance of these minor buildings. In contrast to these schemes, the LPA were confidently able to insist on the retention of the façade of a minor Georgian ancillary building in Exchange Avenue in preference to a new build scheme which was refused, clearly displaying the differential historic worth accorded to Georgian and Victorian townscape.

Major redevelopment schemes involving façadism were therefore limited to two developments carried over from the 1970s. Proposals for the redevelopment of 39-42 Queen Square had been first discussed in 1972. The initial application for the total demolition of the buildings had been resisted by the LPA, and in 1973 a scheme was submitted for rebuilding behind the façades of 41-42 Queen Square. The final scheme (Whicheloe Macfarlane Partnership, 1982; see plate 5.39) involved the rebuilding of the façades of 39-41, and the construction of a replica building at 42. Amenity groups were concerned at the decision to rebuild the façades, expressing the view that proposals for façadism behind a retained front wall were a means to obtain total rebuilding by the back door, as a result of the inadequate support given to these unstable wall structures. Also, the Civic Society expressed concern in both 1973 and 1980 that this style of development led to the loss of important interior features and building skills, and were active in trying to stop this form of development. Theirs' was a philosophical objection to façadism, in that these schemes were seen as having little regard for the

historic totality of the building, leading to the loss of important interior features and the 'grain' of the townscape, via plot amalgamation. In the view of the amenity societies, façadism gave a mis-represented view of the townscape, limiting deeper historic consideration.

The other major façadist scheme was the incorporation of the old post office façades in the development of the Law Courts in Small Street (Property



Services Agency, 1987; plate 5.42). In 1974, a brief had been produced stipulating the retention of the remaining Victorian and Edwardian façades of the bombed building, given their local significance in the social and economic history of Bristol, and in 1975, an application was submitted for a brick vernacular office development incorporating the façades (Whicheloe Macfarlane Partnership, 1975). While this was approved, with consent renewed in 1978, development was delayed by petitions to use the site for the new County Courts. When permission came up for renewal again in 1983, the mixed use scheme was refused by the LPA. They deemed that use of the site as the County Courts was critical in conservation terms, in retaining the use of Georgian

and Victorian small legal offices traditionally associated with the area. When a scheme for the Courts was submitted, the Victorian Society and the CAP were again concerned at the possible loss of the remaining interior features of the buildings in the haste to develop the Courts. Also, controversy again surrounded the application by the developers to demolish and rebuild the Victorian façade which it was claimed was unstable. Again the issue of the authenticity of these rebuilt façades was raised by the Victorian Society, who pointed to the under-evaluation of building and construction skills and the loss of the totality of architectural and craft skills if rebuilding took place. Both the 39-42 Queen Square scheme and the Law Courts development clearly highlight many of the negative aspects to façadist developments, which fuel the artistic and historic arguments against this as a form of development, and which in particular hardened the Bristol LPA stance against this type of scheme in the 1980s.

Therefore, in the late-1980s a key consideration for the Bristol LPA in the monitoring of façadist development was the desire to protect the internal features of listed buildings (Bristol CC, 1984). The vigilance of the LPA in this respect was reflected in two withdrawals of office schemes in the late-1980s. The LPA took a strong stand against façadist schemes for refronted buildings. An application to build new offices behind a retained Georgian façade, in this case a 'new' front on an Elizabethan structure, at 6 King Street (Ferguson Mann Architects, 1988) was withdrawn after the planning authority indicated that it would refuse the application, as the building rather than the façade was more important. Further to this, the LPA indicated that it would refuse a façadist scheme at 49-50 Broad Street (Hubbard Ford Partnership, 1989), leading to its withdrawal. Again the LPA stressed the importance of retaining internal features in the 18th century building, and also the surviving medieval remains under the structure; it was deemed that the scheme provided no 'conservation gain' for the increase in office space. Success in upholding these decisions was important in the LPAs moves to stem façadist pressures and maintain interior features within the conservation area in the late-1980s.

Developing clearer conservation objectives: major development in Birmingham in the 1980s

*Growing historical eclecticism in new building style*

In line with the general trends in architectural styling evident in the Bristol area, new building in the Birmingham area moved to adopt the eclectic historicist tradition of post-Modernism. Through a direct adoption of this style in the 1980s, the Birmingham area bypassed the development of a neo-vernacular tradition, evident in other conservation areas. This transition was welcomed by the LPA and amenity societies, as it seemed to offer the prospect of moving beyond the limited contextual styling evident on the Modern/neo-vernacular building hybrids of the early-1980s. In particular, the move to historical eclecticism seemed to offer the opportunity to develop new buildings that would reflect the stylistic variety of the Victorian architecture evident in the conservation area. The main change initiated by these developments was the widespread re-adoption of brick as the main building material in the conservation area, as developers sought to relate to the brick and terracotta Victorian building context more explicitly. However, the transition to this historicist style was far from smooth, and it owed much to the firmer negotiating stance of the LPA in seeking the amendment of unacceptable schemes that continued to propose Modern styling. As the level of new building was low in the Birmingham area, design considerations on those buildings proposed assumed considerable importance in the development of conservation control. The LPA attempted to use negotiation on these buildings as a foundation for the development of detailed conservation and design control guidelines relating to demolition and new building, given the limited guidance produced in the 1970s. However, the move towards this proved difficult, tempered by the general anti-design control climate generated in the mid-1980s (Punter, 1986) and the continued pro-business stance of the Birmingham local authority, seeking to "welcome" and "promote" activity in the city centre (Birmingham CC, 1987a).

While Modern styling continued in popularity in central Birmingham, in its late-Modern form, throughout the 1980s, the LPA sought to control its use in the conservation area. In the mid-1980s, a number of new building

proposals in the conservation area, were either refused or substantially revised following negotiation with the LPA, due to their initial adoption of late-Modern styling. The scheme that best exemplified the stylistic transition and the eclecticism of new building in the Birmingham area in the 1980s was the City Plaza development in Cannon Street. The City Plaza scheme involved the development of a shopping mall with offices on a prominent vacant site between Cannon Street and the Cathedral Square owned by the City Council, the site having been used as a car park throughout the 1970s. The design of this prominent building was the subject of considerable debate in the mid-1980s. The first outline design brief in 1982 emphasised the need for a "high quality scheme" which related both to Cannon Street and the Cathedral Square in height and detailing, stressing the need for a split level height between the two areas. A greater height than the surrounding Victorian fabric was allowed, due to the proximity of larger office buildings around the Cathedral Square. Following the acquisition by the City of the site on the other side of Cannon Passage in a land-swap deal with the private property firm owners, a new brief was prepared and the scheme put out to private tender. The tender was given to WA Blackburn Ltd, a Coventry based developer, and a new scheme prepared (Hitchman Stone Partnership, 1982; figure 5.30). This glass scheme, with its external lifts, in the late-Modern style did little to conform to the stylistic considerations, particularly height and elevation concerns, of the brief, attempting to maximise office space. The scheme was heavily criticised by the CAAC, who disliked the poor relationship of the building to Cannon Street and the internal orientation of the mall scheme, with a blank glass wall to the Cathedral, and lack of a pedestrian through route. Despite the non-conformity of the scheme to the original brief, realisation by the LPA of the limits placed on negotiation on stylistic considerations by Circular 22/80 (DoE, 1980), led to their approval of the outline scheme. However, continued ownership of the freehold of the site by the City allowed pressure to be applied to the developers to conform to the stylistic demands of the brief, through a warning to remarket the scheme if agreement was not reached. Subsequent failure to reach an agreement, and the withdrawal of WA Blackburn, allowed the LPA to build on its experience and develop a new brief demanding more detailed design considerations, including the alignment of a main entrance with Fore Street, a prominent corner feature to the churchyard, and greater respect for the Victorian character of Cannon Street.



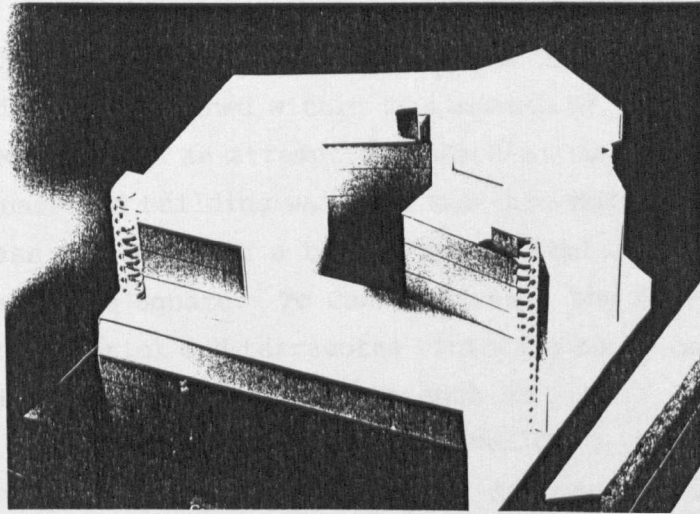
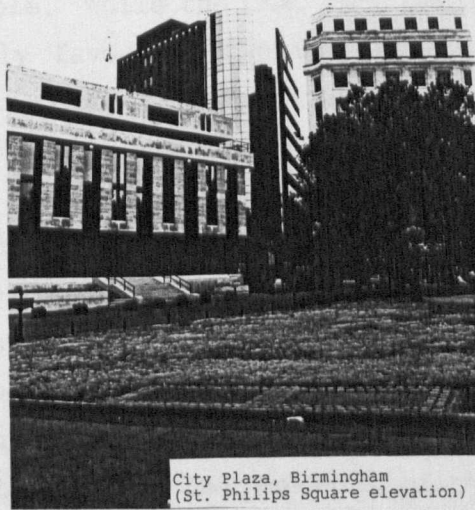


Figure 5.30 Initial scheme proposed for the City Plaza development, Birmingham (source, Birmingham CC planning files)

Plate 5.43a



City Plaza, Birmingham  
(St. Philips Square elevation)



Plate 5.43b

City Plaza, Birmingham  
(Cannon St. elevation)

The final scheme by London architects The Halpern Partnership (1984; figures 5.43 a & b), involved a development incorporating a fashionable atrium, more shops (reflecting the increasing profitability of retailing at this time), and different architectural treatments to Cannon Street and the Churchyard. The building contained within it elements of both late-Modernism and historical eclecticism in an attempt to relate to two separate contexts. To the Cathedral Square the building was tall and late-Modern in style, using both reflective glass and brick in a barrel corner feature, which linked it to Modern buildings in the Square. To Cannon Street, the building sought to relate to the 3-4 storey brick and terracotta Victorian buildings, through the use of coloured brick and heritage elements such as lamps, arches and false windows to achieve context. It is therefore a building that attempts to be a number of things, both a bold architectural statement and a contextual building, and can therefore be viewed as quintessentially post-Modern. However, the success of this scheme in slotting the development into the townscape is more debateable. While the CAAC were generally in favour of the final scheme, particularly favouring the use of 'heritage' lamps on the exterior, the conservation officer remained unconvinced that the fusion of architectural elements on the Cannon Street façade truly reflected and enhanced the character of the red brick Victorian buildings in Cannon Street. The officers comment that the façade looked "spindly" reflected a certain disappointment at the superficiality of this applique historical detail, which utilised a universal historical contextualism rather than reference to a specific Birmingham context. Further to this, it perpetuated the intrusion of large scale development into the Cathedral yard and the 'domestic' scale townscape of Cannon Street, altering the character of the area. Nevertheless, it exists as an important example of the LPA's early attempts to promote greater contextual consideration in the design of new building. However, the importance of City ownership of the site in allowing the LPA to adopt a tough negotiating position in relation to the developers should be emphasised, given the wider attacks on design control within the development control process at the time.

The adoption of the Central Area Local Plan (CALP) in 1984 was a key step in formalising LPA ideas, and in developing policy regarding redevelopment in conservation areas. The CALP outlined the factors that would

guide the LPA in negotiation on new development within conservation areas. In particular, the CALP stated that :

"All development proposals will be assessed to see how far they contribute to the maintenance or improvement of the character of the area...The presumption will be in favour of refurbishment and/or internal/rear redevelopment of existing buildings but any proposals for complete or nearly complete redevelopment will be treated on their merits." (Birmingham CC, 1984; p20)

This allied the development of design policy firmly to negotiation on individual schemes. In the development up-turn of the mid-1980s, negotiations on developments at 33-41 Newhall Street, 15 Colmore Row and 158-166 Edmund Street in 1984 proved particularly significant. In the absence of a definitive statement of area character covering the stylistically eclectic Primary Office Area, these individual developments proved critical in defining acceptable styles in the area. Further to this, the outcomes of these negotiations were important in defining the direction of LPA conservation policy, and the limits to LPA power in controlling building design in private developments. In particular these developments were important in testing the LPA's ability to sustain refusals of applications for new development on the basis of style and their alleged detriment to the character of the conservation area.

Proposals to redevelop 33-41 Newhall Street, a post-war infill office building (33-39) and an unlisted late-Victorian remnant corner office building (41), highlighted the difficulties faced by the LPA in attempting to develop a more contextual 'Birmingham style' for new building in the area. In this development, the LPA used its policy of resisting the demolition of Victorian buildings in the conservation area as a lever to obtain greater control over building design, against pressure from developers for limited design control. The original application proposed (Fletcher Ross and Hickling, 1984; figure 5.31) was refused by the LPA on the grounds that the demolition of the unlisted 41 would be detrimental to the character of the conservation, and that the style and massing of the proposed new building was poor, adding little in return for the demolition of the Victorian building. This building continued the Modern/neo-vernacular hybrid style of the early 1980s, and was described by design officers as being "reminiscent of Darth Vader", reflecting a reaction against the continued use of this style. In particular officers were critical of the double mansard roof, the Modern horizontal strip style of the windows, and the lack of detailing on the gables. Both the CAAC and

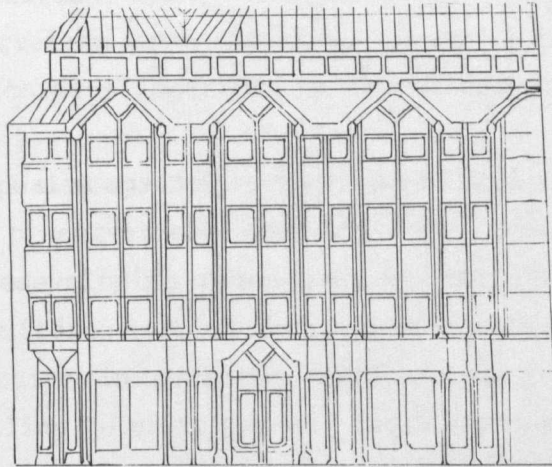


Figure 5.31 Proposals for the redevelopment of 33-41 Newhall St., Birmingham (redrawn from planning files)

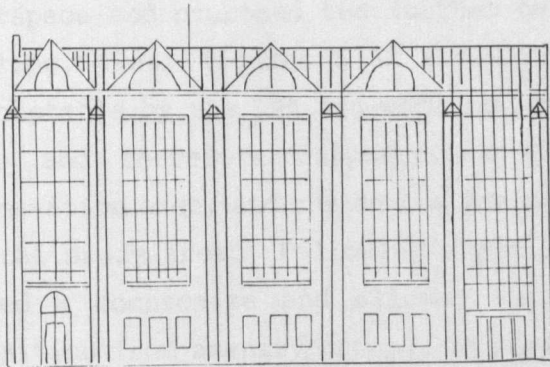


Figure 5.32a Proposals for the redevelopment of 33-41 Newhall St., Birmingham (redrawn from planning files)

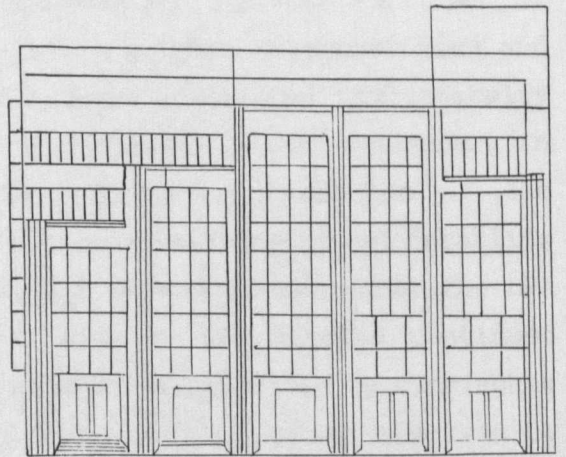


Figure 5.32b Proposals for the redevelopment of 33-41 Newhall St., Birmingham (redrawn from planning files)

Plate 5.44



33-41 Newhall St., Birmingham

the Victorian Society were also highly critical of the form of the development, although their opposition centred on the demolition of number 41. They argued that demolition would invalidate the rationale behind the designation of a conservation area which was designed to protect unlisted Victorian buildings which were important to the character of an area.

The developers appealed against refusal of the application, arguing that conservation was not preservation, and that the new building provided sufficient benefit in redeveloping a poor post-war building to compensate the loss of the Victorian building. Prior to the appeal hearing both the LPA and the architects were active in pursuing negotiations towards a compromise scheme, with both unwilling to go to appeal, and uncertain of the security of their position in relation to central government arbitration. Whilst the LPA and the CAAC argued for the retention of 41 within a new, stepped scheme, the developers argued that this would be uneconomical due to the loss of floorspace and proposed two further new building schemes (Fletcher Ross and Hickling, 1984; figures 5.32 a & b). Both were considered stylistically unacceptable by the LPA and were refused, the first for being late-Modern in style and therefore inappropriate for the Victorian character of the conservation area, and the second for using inappropriate historical detailing for the study area. Following a public enquiry on the development, the LPA agreed a compromise and allowed the demolition of 41, despite continued opposition from amenity groups. A revised scheme was submitted by Birmingham architects Percy Thomas Partnership (1985; plate 5.44), and was approved by the LPA. This was at a reduced height of 5 storeys and utilised brick, fenestration design and other façade detailing in order to relate to the late-Victorian office buildings around it, whilst avoiding being 'neo-Victorian' through the use of some late-Modern detailing.

A similar pattern to negotiation was pursued in relation to proposals to replace a row of late-Victorian buildings on the corner of Colmore Row and Livery Street (plate 5.45a) with a new building. The initial application (The Weedon Partnership, 1984) was refused on the grounds that demolition of the Victorian buildings would be detrimental to the character of the conservation area, and that the proposed building was bland in comparison to the Grand Hotel and the existing buildings. Again, the developers appealed against this

decision, although negotiations continued. These negotiations resulted in an amended application (The Weedon Partnership, 1985; plate 5.45b), at a reduced height, although with two storeys of accommodation in a double mansard roof, and with window spacing, alignment and design matching the Grand Hotel. Both the LPA and the Victorian Society had to concede that the internal subdivision of the existing Victorian building precluded its practical economic conversion to modern standards. Whilst the style of the building again represented a step forward in the development of local historicist styles, clearly sensitive to the existing Victorian buildings without resorting to replication or pastiche, this was again at the expense of the further erosion of the Victorian character of the area.

The significance of demolition control powers in providing the LPA with strength in negotiation of the design of new developments was apparent in the debate surrounding the plans to redevelop a block of Victorian buildings at 158-170 Edmund Street. When the development of 158-170 Edmund Street was first proposed (Inston Sellers Hickinbotham, 1984), the buildings lay outside the conservation area boundary. The original scheme proposed a façadist redevelopment with mansard roof for the listed 158, and the redevelopment of 160-170 as a tall office block comprising a three storey podium surmounted by a seven storey rectangular tower, a style that characterised development outside the conservation area in the late-1970s. The scheme was refused by the LPA, on the grounds that a tall tower would be detrimental to the Listed 158 Edmund Street and the adjacent conservation area. Aware of their lack of control over the demolition of the buildings, the LPA and the amenity societies sought the listing of the building group, although this was rejected by the DoE who did not consider the buildings of sufficient merit. The LPA then sought to use the locally determined option of extending the conservation area to include the Edmund Street buildings, in order to obtain control. This was approved by the planning committee on 25/7/85, despite objections against the localised imposition of control from the block's landowners Cregoe Colmore Estates, Bass M&B and Trafalgar House, who considered that the buildings on the site were of no architectural interest and that designation prejudiced future "economic" development. There was however considerable local amenity and business support for the move, these groups viewing the extension of the conservation area as a means "to protect Birmingham from the glass tower"

Plate 5.45a



15 Colmore Row, Birmingham (Victorian buildings before demolition)

Plate 5.45b



15 Colmore Row

Plate 5.46a



158-170 Edmund St., Birmingham

Plate 5.46b



158-170 Edmund St., Birmingham.

Plate 5.47



Windsor PH Cannon St., Birmingham

(Alexanders Estate Agents). With the extension of the conservation area, Trafalgar House acrimoniously withdrew from negotiations, disposing of the site to the Scottish Widows Fund.

Reflecting the changed circumstances surrounding the site, the LPA prepared a brief to guide development, in consultation with the local architectural firm the John Madin Design Group, noted for its conservation work. The brief stated the LPA's desire:

"..to see the retention and refurbishment of the Listed Buildings on this site, together with the retention of the "Old Contemptibles" public house and the buildings or their façades on Edmund Street." (Birmingham CC, 1985; p4)

The revised scheme for 158-170 Edmund Street (Bonham Seager Associates, 1985; plates 5.46 a & b) closely followed this design brief, proposing the refurbishment of 158, rebuilding behind the façade of 170 and the redevelopment in a classical pastiche style of 160-168. While this scheme was approved by the LPA, there was strong criticism by the Victorian Society of the 'replica' classical façades which replaced the Victorian façades demolished. This reflected the general dislike of universal 'pastiche' development by both the Victorian Society and the CAAC who preferred buildings in a "good modern style", with good usually implying sympathetic to the surrounding buildings. As the Victorian Society's reaction highlights, the case for the use of replica styles within Victorian townscapes can be less easily made, given their stylistic eclecticism, than for Georgian set pieces where such harmonisation is considered important. The only other 'replica' development in the study area during the 1980s was Bass/M&B's application to redevelop the 'Windsor' public house in Cannon Street (Bass/M&B, 1986; plate 5.47). In an effort to maintain the Victorian character of this street, the LPA accepted the application involving the construction of a facsimile façade of the one demolished due to its poor structural condition. In parallel to similar schemes in the Bristol area, the CAAC and the Victorian Society expressed concern over the rebuilding, condemning the loss of building skills and criticising the pseudo-authenticity of rebuilt façades, reflecting the increasingly oppositional stance adopted by the amenity group towards replica and façadist development in the 1980s.

Reflecting on the outcome of the negotiations on these three key developments in 1984, the LPA can be seen to have been successful in guiding



the style of new building further away from the Modern/neo-vernacular hybrids of the late-1970s towards the use of contextual historical styling drawing its influence from the local area in order to enhance conservation area character. However, in achieving an acceptable design solution the LPA had to compromise on its stated commitment to resist demolition of the Victorian fabric, highlighting a conflict in LPA attempts to protect and enhance character. In the face of continued undervaluation of this minor fabric, and a continued preeminence of economic arguments over conservation concerns in the core, the LPA remained unable to stem the erosion of the Victorian fabric around the edges of the conservation area, concentrating instead on using its limited ability to control demolition to influence stylistic considerations. Whilst this policy development sequence reflects that observable in Bristol in the 1970s, the task for the development of conservation policy in Birmingham in the 1980s was made more difficult by the aggressive business climate of the mid-1980s, and the lack of funds with which to encourage refurbishment and counter economic arguments for demolition. As an internal report to the CAAC into the attempts to encourage the refurbishment and reuse of the Victorian buildings in the area noted:

"...without substantial grant aid and the support in appropriate appeal cases of the Secretary of State, such a trend is unlikely to develop." (Birmingham CC, 1984)

This was clearly evident in the continued erosion of the Victorian fabric within the Primary Office Area throughout the late-1980s.

The effective promotion of localised historicist styles by the LPA in the developments in Newhall Street, Colmore Row and Edmund Street in 1984 had important repercussions for conservation policy in the Birmingham area. Negotiations on these developments were significant in strengthening the role of conservation and design considerations, in relation to commercial considerations, in major building projects throughout the area in the late-1980s. In particular they established benchmark standards for well designed contextual solutions in the Birmingham area, which the LPA sought to use in their negotiations with developers. As developers sought to conform to these more clearly focused LPA demands for contextual styles, they began to draw increasingly on the knowledge and experience of local architectural practices to produce acceptable schemes. This led to the further involvement of the local architectural firms responsible for the production of early historicist

schemes in developments in the conservation area, and the evolution of closer relationships between the LPA and these architectural practices. Consequently, in the Birmingham area, the development of historicist styling in the 1980s, became dominated almost exclusively by local architectural practices, as in the development of the neo-vernacular tradition in the Bristol area in the 1970s.

The advantage of this growing local tradition was reflected in the designs submitted for rear elevations to façadist schemes along Barwick Street. At 75-77 Colmore Row, the final design of the rear elevation of the scheme by Birmingham architects Robert Seager Design (1986; plate 5.48) utilised patterned brickwork in a style reminiscent of the Arts and Craft style of a number of turn-of-the-century office buildings in the conservation area. This design contrasted with the style of the previous proposal by London based architects Rolfe Judd Group Practice (1984; figure 5.33) which utilised a more universal brick 'warehouse' vernacular style, although not wholly inappropriate for this part of the conservation area. The final design reflected an awareness from Robert Seager Design of demands for greater local specificity in design, clearly moving forward from their use of inappropriate historical references in the 158-170 Edmund Street scheme. Similarly, the Birmingham based firm Seymour Harris Partnership, taking over as architects for the controversial façadist scheme at 55-73 Colmore Row in 1989 (see below), revised plans for the rear elevation of the building. Their involvement changed the bay theme proposed in the earlier refused scheme (Peter Hing Jones, 1986) from its late-Modernist style (figure 5.34) to a more historicist design (plate 5.49). Through its greater use of brick, traditional patterns of fenestration and oriels and bays it sought to refer to the style of the small late-Victorian, Queen Anne/Dutch gable office buildings in the area, although exaggerating these features in a post-Modern parody. Both the designs for the rear elevations of 75-77 and 55-73 Colmore Row by Birmingham architects can be contrasted to the style of the rear elevations of the 79-83 Colmore Row façadist redevelopment by the Bradford based architectural practice Waller and Partners (1987; see plate 5.48). This design used a more universal 'stripped' historicist post-Modern style, with the LPA having little power to substantially alter the proposal, having adopted a more cautious negotiating stance following a significant appeal loss

in the 55-73 Colmore Row development. The architectural style is a blend of traditional and modern, with a focus on the rear elevation of the buildings. The text is partially obscured and appears to be a header or introductory text for the page.

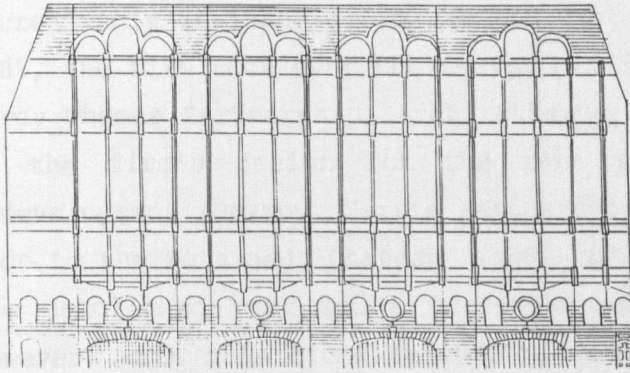


Figure 5.34  
Proposals for the redevelopment of 55-73 Colmore Row., Birmingham (rear) (redrawn from planning files)

Plate 5.49



55-73 Colmore Row, Birmingham (rear elevation)

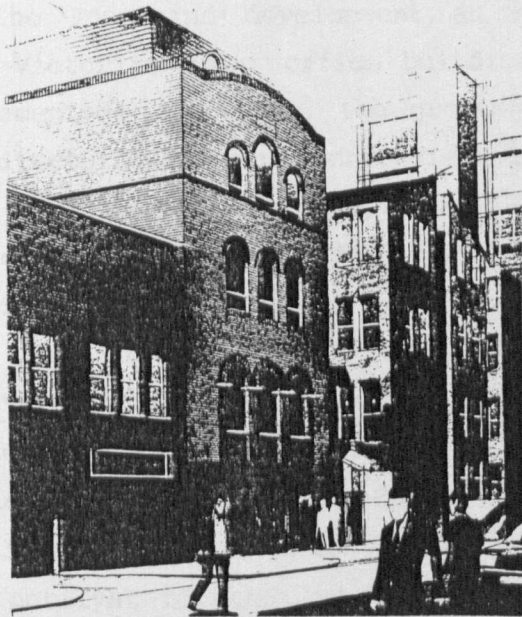
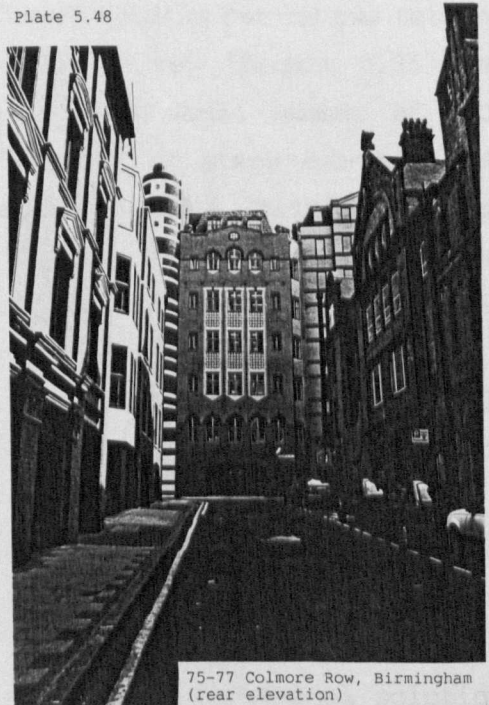


Figure 5.33  
Proposals for the redevelopment of 75-77 Colmore Row., Birmingham (rear) (redrawn from planning files)

Plate 5.48



75-77 Colmore Row, Birmingham (rear elevation)

on the 55-73 Colmore Row development (Hargreaves, pers. comm.), and reflecting the strong position of private business in the planning and development climate in the late-1980s.

During the late-1980s, the Seymour Harris Partnership became increasingly influential in new building design in central Birmingham. In 1989, the firm took over the design of the post-office development from the Percy Thomas Partnership, architects of the 33-41 Newhall Street building. In the firm's design for the new rear building in the post office redevelopment (Seymour Harris Partnership, 1989; plate 5.50), reference was made to the retained 'Chateau' front building and the neo-gothic styling of the demolished rear brick buildings in the style of the mansard roof. However, with its clock feature and use of stone effect and ground floor rustication it also reflected the more universal style of post-Modern historicist buildings, evident in other conservation areas, such as the Bristol area. Locally, the Seymour Harris Partnership were instrumental in translating historicist styling onto larger office development schemes. They further developed the style used for the 'Chateau' scheme in their proposal for the 'Fountains' development, an infill office building behind two retained late-Victorian front office buildings in Edmund Street (figure 5.35) (not implemented). However, the growing dominance of a small number of local architectural firms was criticised by the conservation areas sub-committee, some of whose members accused these architectural firms of "carving up" large scale projects between them, of excluding "architects of national quality" and of producing buildings that were "architecturally third rate" (McTear, 1992; p1). As in the Bristol area, criticism centred on the application of 'universal' historicist references and their use to merely 'cloak' large bulky buildings. This concern was voiced specifically by the CAAC and the Victorian Society in relation to the Chateau scheme. Thus, in the Birmingham area, at one level the fusion of enterprise and heritage concerns in the 1980s provided the catalyst for the increased use of historicist styles in new building. However, these pressures and challenges to local autonomy via appeal losses limited the power of the LPA to seek particular local contextual solutions. Therefore the limited moves in the mid-1980s to develop a clear locally negotiated contextual style foundered in the face of external pressure, and

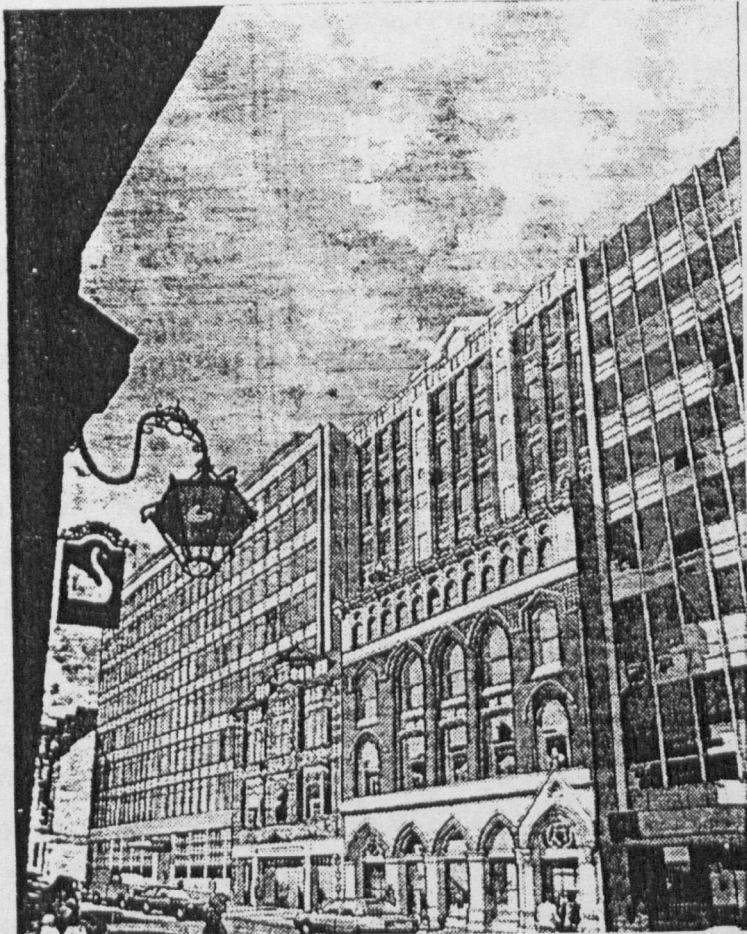


Figure 5.35 Proposals for the Fountains development, Edmund Street, Birmingham (source, CSW 1991)

again what emerged in the late-1980s was a general 'conservation-area-historicism' driven by external development demands.

### *Façadism*

Whilst the experience of the development of historicist styling for new building in the Birmingham area mirrored, to a certain extent, the transition from local contextualism to universal historicism in the Bristol area, the experience of the two areas with regard to façadist development differed markedly. In the office boom of the mid-1980s, façadist schemes remained significant in the Colmore Row conservation area, in comparison to the situation in the Bristol area where less was redeveloped in purely a façadist solution (figure 5.21a). In the Birmingham area, this trend was encouraged by two factors. Firstly, during the 1980s, there was a change in perception of what constituted the architectural heritage when, in popular national perception, Victorian styles began to be valued and appreciated. This encouraged the greater listing and preservation of this fabric, rather than its total demolition. Secondly, allied to the popularity of heritage references in new development in the 1980s, refurbished Victorian offices in the central areas of major industrial cities began to achieve high rents in relation to other offices in these cities (Bateman, 1985). The alliance of planning policies aimed at conserving the Victorian heritage and obtaining contextual solutions to new development, and the desire to redevelop these buildings to meet modern office standards produced a pressure for façadist schemes. The general acceptability of this type of redevelopment in the Birmingham area in the 1970s (Queens College Chambers, Waterloo Street etc.) set a precedent for the use of façadism, which developers were quick to latch on to in the mid-1980s when the development market picked up again. However, this increasing use of façadism met with increasing opposition, with a hardening of the LPA's position in relation to the alteration of listed buildings. As the Draft Conservation Strategy noted:

"Despite vigorous efforts, there is a continuing loss of many important buildings and interiors." (Birmingham CC, 1986).

Through policy statements in the CALP (Birmingham CC, 1984) and the first conservation strategy for the city centre (Birmingham CC, 1986), the LPA attempted to strengthen its commitment to the greater retention of the area's listed and unlisted Victorian heritage, particularly the retention of more

interior building features.

This tougher line from the LPA with regard to the retention of valuable interior features in schemes involving listed buildings was first evident in the negotiations on the scheme to redevelop 158-170 Edmund Street. Initial plans put forward in 1984 to retain only the façade of the listed 158 in the new scheme were flatly rejected by the LPA and amenity bodies. Mindful of central government guidance on the demolition of listed buildings, the developers revised the scheme to retain and refurbish 158, although still proposing the redevelopment of 160-170. The Victorian Society and the CAAC continued their opposition to the demolition of these buildings, maintaining that they made an important contribution to the street scene. The final scheme combining façadism and pastiche, provided a compromise that did little to satisfy Victorian Society demands for either full façade retention or a "sympathetic modern scheme". Whilst the LPA were able, to a certain extent, to control demolition of these buildings within the conservation area, their unlisted status, coupled with the developers assessment that refurbishment was economically unviable, precluded the LPA from obtaining anything more than façade retention. At the national level, the DoE regarded retention of the façade as an acceptable planning compromise, providing economic reuse of the site and satisfying conservation objectives in the case of mid-to late-19th century structures listed as of only local importance, or unlisted 'backcloth' buildings in conservation areas. Therefore, despite the significance of this block as an unaltered expression of the 19th century redevelopment of the Colmore Estate (see Chapter Four), in the absence of a character framework within which to contextualise the buildings, development decisions continued to be made on the basis of an assessment on the individual architectural merit of the building using national definitions of art-historic worth.

In the mid-1980s, the policy regarding the retention of internal features in development schemes involving listed buildings came into increasing conflict with redevelopment pressures along Colmore Row. Initially, the LPA were successful in pursuing the policy for greater retention. In 1983, the LPA, supported by the CAAC and comments from the Victorian Society, successfully refused a proposal for redevelopment behind a retained façade at 75-77 Colmore Row. They deemed the retention of the

whole front building as the minimum requirement, pointing out the survival of original features left out of the developers assessment of the building, and rejecting the developers argument that retention was uneconomic. Negotiation on the proposal obtained substantially more retention of rooms, stairs and interior features in the revised scheme submitted in 1984. Although the initial developers Friends Provident, and the new owners of the site Abbey National, submitted further schemes in 1985 and 1986 respectively pressing for greater demolition, the LPA were successful in holding to the original agreement. Success in negotiation on this scheme boosted the confidence of the conservation section in negotiating with developers (Hargreaves, pers. comm.). Following the 75-77 Colmore Row proposal, an application was submitted for a large redevelopment block at 55-73 Colmore Row, by Barclays Bank. The scheme involved the demolition of all but the façades and the banking hall of the Victorian Palazzo buildings owned by the bank along Colmore Row, Church Street, and part of Barwick Street. The planning authority wanted greater retention of the building, along the lines of the earlier scheme at 75-77 Colmore Row. The developers, however, did not wish to compromise and exerted considerable pressure on the LPA for a rapid settlement to the scheme through the submission of multiple applications. The original application submitted in 1985 was not determined within the statutory time period, and was superseded by two parallel schemes in 1986, one of which was refused by the LPA, and one which was again not determined by the LPA within the statutory time period. The developer decided to take the non-determined applications to appeal to the DoE, following a breakdown in negotiations between the developer and the LPA. The schemes were granted on appeal, with the inspector indicating that they both satisfied conservation objectives, concluding that the façades alone were of real importance in satisfying conservation aims, and that the proposed buildings provided an economic reuse of the site. Locally, the 55-73 Colmore Row decision left conservation policy in the area in a weakened state, with regard to control over demolition and moves to obtain greater preservation of the Victorian fabric (Hargreaves, pers. comm.).

Whilst the 'philosophical antipathy' towards façadism at the local level can be justified in an academic context, it has been noted that it has little legal basis in terms of the planning system (Linklaters and Paines, 1993).



Action against façadism remains based on individual cases and the merits of particular buildings, continuing to disadvantage particular conserved buildings and townscapes under commercial pressure. The decision to allow the façadist scheme at 55-73 Colmore Row was based on the presumption in favour of development at the national legislative level, and the diminished importance of Victorian architecture within the national context when tested at appeal. Nationally, Victorian and Edwardian architecture is not generally conserved to the same degree as buildings of the 18th Century. In the Birmingham area, the fabric is mostly post-1850 and is not highly regarded as preservable at the national level, despite its crucial importance at the local level for the character of the Colmore Row Conservation Area. In this case, the minimum of public conservation demand was satisfied, at the expense of a loss of meaning for many key buildings in the Colmore Row area with a significance to the character of the area in socio-historical terms that went beyond their architectural merit. The developers ability to appeal to the national context within the local development control system highlights the way in which national values can override local concerns in conservation area control. The Birmingham area façadist negotiations tend to support the belief held by some local authorities (Larkham, 1995a), that assessment of the merits of particular structures for listing and their worth in conservation terms remains overtly reliant on national rather than local significance, consequently under-valuing and under-representing particular building types, for example vernacular and industrial buildings.

It seems that the age of the building is an important determinant in looking at the incidence of façadism, with buildings of a certain age more susceptible than others. Currently, there are a series of buildings from the late-Victorian to Edwardian period that are old enough to be considered worthy of conservation, for the image their façades convey, but not old enough for refurbishment. However, it is apparent that the redevelopment fate of these buildings varies according to the wider townscape and policy context in which these developments are located, particularly the number of listed buildings. The differing dominance of Victorian and pre-Victorian townscape in a city seems to be an important factor in determining success in the development of conservation policies, and in obtaining refurbishment over façadism, demonstrated in the different experience with regard to façadism between the

Bristol and the Birmingham areas. Façadism is therefore a phenomenon that is not equally distributed within the townscape, or between cities, but tends to be linked to fairly specific areas and types of building. However, the townscape susceptible to façadism will not remain fixed, as façadism's incidence seems heavily linked to appreciation of building fabric. As architectural appreciation widens with time, as it has in the past (Ross, 1991), to include more inter- and post-war buildings, so the areas and buildings prone to façadism will alter. This has important implications for the future development of policy.

The decision on the 55-73 Colmore Row scheme was also problematic in terms of its devaluation of interior features within Victorian buildings, with the promotion of the façade to the key focus of conservation effort. This scheme again illustrated the confusion that façadism generates concerning listed buildings. In this scheme, as in others, a façadist solution was justified by the developers on the grounds that it is merely the façades of all but the 'best', or most 'historic', buildings that are listed. However, all structures within the curtilage of a listed structure are listed. The dilemma that façadism throws up is that once the redevelopment has taken place, even if only the front wall of the previous structure remains, the building is still considered listed. This adds weight to the argument that it is the façade alone that is important in building conservation. As in schemes noted previously, the 55-73 Colmore Row scheme had little regard for the historic totality of the building, with the loss of important interior features, and the loss of the townscape 'grain' via plot amalgamation. Again, the destruction of the building structure leads to the loss of the totality of architectural skill through an under-evaluation of building and construction skills. In the Birmingham area use of façadism has promoted a superficial view of the townscape, limiting deeper historic consideration.

In the wake of the 55-73 decision, unaltered Victorian buildings in the study area, with poor internal organisation by modern open-plan office standards, remained vulnerable to pressures for internal alteration in the development up-turn. The scheme to redevelop the rear of 79-83 Colmore Row, submitted in 1987, proposed the demolition and rebuilding of the rear of the Victorian building. While the CAAC regretted the loss of the rear Victorian

wing and some of the proposed internal alterations, it acknowledged that negotiation on the scheme had been affected by the Barclays Bank Appeal, and that the LPA had little scope for negotiation. In other subsequent developments involving major rebuilding, retention of front buildings was also obtained, although these principally reflected particular development circumstances rather than a re-strengthening of policy regarding feature retention. In the post office redevelopment and the informal Fountains redevelopment proposal important Victorian front buildings were retained. However, in these developments substantial back land development was available which provided the economic return in new accommodation to offset the cost of refurbishment. In the post office scheme redevelopment involved the demolition of the Victorian brick functional building to the rear of the retained Victorian Palazzo 'Chateau' post office building. The proposed Fountains redevelopment involved the retention of two four storey Victorian brick buildings, behind which a much larger office building was to be developed (CSW 21/2/91). As the site runs through the street block, these front buildings could be left substantially intact, although again with some demolition of the rear buildings. However, in 1989, a return to stronger demolition control in the area was evident in the LPA's flat refusal of demolition permission for an unlisted late-Victorian office building (67 Temple Row), overlooking the Cathedral Square.

Beyond these developments a number of substantially intact Victorian blocks remained vulnerable to erosion of their internal structure and plot pattern by façadist redevelopment proposals. Three key blocks remain within the Birmingham conservation area, the block bounded by Church Street, Edmund Street, Barwick Street, the triangular block of buildings at the Victoria Square end of New Street and the Queens Corner site. For the Church Street, Edmund Street, Barwick Street block, the owners Tarmac made it informally known to the LPA in the late-1980s, during negotiations on change of use applications, that they were looking to redevelopment in 1997 when the leases ran out possibly as a façadist scheme. Indeed, the redevelopment of rear buildings at 113-115 Edmund Street in the early-1980s had begun this process. Along New Street, environmental enhancement and pedestrianisation improvements in the early 1990s, increased the attractiveness of this area for business investment, putting the fabric under pressure for redevelopment to meet modern

retailing demands. Finally, Queen's Corner site, at the junction of New Street and Corporation Street, has been identified as a location where a scheme, involving the redevelopment of buildings behind their façades, some listed as Grade II, may occur in the future (Shrouder, 1991); an option supported by the LPA (Birmingham CAAC, 1984). However, in the recent BUDS report (Tibbalds et al, 1990) it was considered an area of townscape merit, a lost corner of the conservation area. Further to this, it can be argued that its significance as a key townscape symbol of Victorian City Corporation boosterism and retail transformation in central Birmingham (see Chapter Four) make its retention and refurbishment rather than redevelopment a priority. The outcome of these proposed schemes will provide the first significant tests of Birmingham's conservation policy since the 55-73 Colmore Row scheme. The outcome of these negotiations has important implications for the future use of façadism as a redevelopment option in this conservation area, and the degree to which the totality of Victorian commercial legacy in the core will be retained.

#### *Late-Modernism*

One of the primary criticisms levelled at conservation areas and policy is that the requirement for new building to 'fit into' the area leads to architectural banality (Rock, 1974; Punter, 1990). Evidence for this stifling of architectural innovation can perhaps most clearly be 'seen' in the styles absent from conservation areas, rather than those present within it. Notably, few buildings in the study areas have been developed in a late-Modern style, despite the popularity of this style for commercial buildings generally (Larkham, 1992). In Bristol, the coverage of most of the city core by conservation areas, an antipathy towards Modern buildings, and a development control policy driven by conservation, has led to the almost total absence of late-Modern buildings in the core (Punter, 1990).

In the Birmingham area, the reaction against Modernism was not as marked, evident in the development of new buildings in a Modern/neo-vernacular hybrid style in the 1970s. In the early 1980s, late-Modern styling was used on the scheme to extend the offices of the Birmingham Midshires Building Society, 42-43 Waterloo Street (Peter Hing and Jones, 1981; plate 5.51).

Demolition of the three storey inter-war building on the site (figure 5.36) was strongly opposed by the Victorian Society, and by the Ancient Monuments Society, in a rare comment on development in the Birmingham area. The new building was dubbed 'gross and crude' by the Victorian Society, and out of character by both groups, despite the mixed age of office buildings in this part of the study area. Clearly, the amenity society definition of 'good sympathetic modern development' called for in other new building schemes did not extend to the adoption of late-Modern styles. However, given the generally depressed nature of the central Birmingham office market at the time, and the local provenance of the firm developing the building, permission was granted, conditional on the production of new elevation drawings that satisfied CAAC concerns over façade details. In this particular case, the development of the building for owner-occupation by the Birmingham Midshires Building Society is important in understanding the use of this innovative style in the conservation area, reflecting the findings of previous studies acknowledging the role of architectural patronage in stylistic innovation (Whitehand, 1984; Freeman, 1988; Larkham, 1988a; Punter, 1990). However, the hostile reaction of the amenity bodies to this type of late-Modernist development generally leads the speculative development majority to adopt a 'safety first' approach to new development in conservation areas, with the greater use of historicist, replica and façadist styles.

The impact of the influence that conservation area control has in the minds of developers and architects in terms of design was illustrated by the differing style of development within and outside the conservation area in Birmingham in the 1980s. As noted, areas of similar townscape exist both within and just outside the Birmingham conservation area. During the 1980s, a clear difference in the style of new building could be observed between these morphologically similar areas, operating under different policy regimes. Outside of conservation area control, it seemed that the preferred style for new commercial building was indeed late-Modern, whilst in the conservation area historicist styles dominated. Just outside the conservation area boundary, the absence of demolition control for unlisted buildings and the absence of height restrictions led to the replacement of a number of Victorian commercial buildings with tall glass office towers in the late-Modern style. Stemming the development of glass office towers around the north-east edge of



Figure 5.36

42-43 Waterloo St., Birmingham (prior to demolition)  
(source, Birmingham CC planning files)

the conservation area was acknowledged at the inquiry into the Edmund Street extension to the conservation area as a key reason in favour of extension. These developments showed little respect for building form within the conservation area, offering no stylistic or height concessions, particularly within the Snow Hill development (plate 5.52 a & b), the Livery Street development (plate 5.53), the Embassy House development Cornwall Street (plate 5.54), and the Colmore Gate Scheme (plate 5.55). In the Embassy House redevelopment, whilst the Victorian façade was retained, it was limited to a purely sculptural role in front of a larger glass building, reflecting the form of façadism more common in high density American developments (DeMuth, 1988; Knox, 1991). The style of the Colmore Gate Scheme, on the conservation area boundary, reflected the stylistic duality of the architects Seymour Harris Partnership, contrasting with their developments within the conservation area.

The use of late-Modern styling just outside the conservation area also influenced styling in the conservation area in decisions to reclad Modern buildings. In the Birmingham area, in contrast to the disguise of Modern buildings using historicist references applied in the Bristol area, a number of office buildings were reclad in a late-Modern style. Recladding of 10-18 Colmore Row, a post-war redevelopment of the bomb damaged end of the Victorian GWA, was obtained as part of a scheme which added two storeys to this 1950s block. The cladding was allowed to be black granite, firmly linking the building with the 1980s late-Modern Colmore Gate development next to it which used similar cladding materials. Other examples of limited recladding, rather than total disguise, include the entrance alterations and recladding in granite effect panels of Bank House, Cherry Street (1986), the recladding of 71 New Street, an inter-war building, (1985), and the refurbishment and cladding of the former Woolworths building, 102 New Street. However, within these refurbishments, the amount and degree of remodelling has been much more limited, given the continued acceptance of Modern styling, in its late-Modern form, in Birmingham. Yet, despite this continued acceptance, generally late-Modern styles were deflected outside the conservation area by LPA design policies and amenity society opinion that tended to reinforce developer views of the acceptability of historicist styles.

## CONCLUSION

While the progression of conservation control relating to major development in the Bristol area has paralleled that of the Birmingham area, there were key differences in the timing of policy developments, and in their impact and effectiveness in each area. In theory the experience of each conservation area should be distinct, given that the uniqueness of character of these areas should produce local specificity in policy development and control. However, from the preceding discussion it is clear that conservation control does not sit in isolation, and is constrained by wider structural forces, including economic factors, central government policy guidance, and national opinions concerning the art-historic worth of buildings. It is particularly these wider forces that have produced similarities and differences in the impact of development and of conservation policies. However, it is clear that in each area agents working at the local level, such as architects, planners and amenity groups, have been critical in reacting to and negotiating these influences, producing particular outcomes.

In general patterns over time and in the development of policy the two areas display a degree of similarity. Both areas developed as prime office areas during the study period, and variations in the office development market proved critical to the nature and timing of major development activity, and the extent of the challenge to the character of the two areas. In the 1970s, the crash in the property market was most influential in putting an end to comprehensive redevelopment in both areas, allowing the growth of conservation concerns and a revaluing of building heritage, and precipitating the wider adoption of contextual styles, principally neo-vernacular. In the 1980s, the increasing popularity of heritage motifs in new building, coupled with a rise in major development activity, served to precipitate the widespread adoption of historical referencing in development in the two areas, increasing the profile of conservation concerns. Yet, in the detail of these changes key differences of timing and outcome were apparent.

### Changing character of the conservation areas in the 1970s

Within both study areas, the 1970s was a period of transition, which saw



the growth of conservation influences, precipitating an end to Modern styles of large scale redevelopment that had dominated the post-war period. Generally in both areas the degree to which character was altered as a result of major redevelopment was far less than it had been in the 1960s, due to the decline in speculative office building after 1974. With the designation of the conservation areas, both LPAs sought to encourage contextual styles of new building which respected the existing building context in terms of massing, materials and style. However, while this transition took place within a generally buoyant development and pro-active planning climate in the Bristol area, the transition in the Birmingham area took place within a stagnant development climate where planners were reluctant to impose conservation controls beyond minimum height and material considerations for fear of deflecting development.

Within the Bristol area, the designation of the conservation area, combining the two Areas of Special Control with Baldwin Street and the Quays, ended the comprehensive redevelopment of the Victorian commercial fabric within those areas formerly outside the Areas of Special Control. Post-1972 a number of schemes for large-scale Modern buildings were refused in the Baldwin Street and Marsh Street area. Around the Quays, a number of Victorian warehouse buildings were saved from demolition, or had their façades incorporated in new schemes, again arresting the erosion of this fabric that had taken place previously. The promotion of the brick warehouse style 'Bristol Docks vernacular' for new development on the dockside did much to enhance the character of this part of the conservation area, rooted as it was in historical precedent. The style was even used in an attempt to cloak large-scale redevelopments carried over from the early-1970s. The Broad Quay House development clearly attempted to preserve the dockside character of that part of the conservation area, through reference to the former warehouse building. However, vernacular detailing on the Bristol and West development exposed the superficiality often associated with misguided application of a 'conservation-area-architecture' (Rock, 1974), with no deeper reference to the townscape grain lost by the demolition of the former buildings on the site.

In the former Areas of Special Control covering the core and Queen Square, protection of the existing fabric and the control of new building was

tightened in the 1970s, as development control became tied in with the conservation programme. Here, new building became mainly confined to the development of backland sites, and the infilling of gaps, with little demolition involved. Also, post-1974, new building began to exclusively utilise contextual styles such as neo-vernacular or neo-Georgian, in order to blend in with the existing townscape, or to re-instate lost architectural unity. Within these areas, façadism also emerged as a contextual option used to slot new buildings into the townscape. However, use of this option was heavily controlled by the LPA. Alive to the dangers of the creeping erosion of character through the loss of interior features, the LPA sought to limit its use to rear buildings only, as for example in Queen Square where Georgian front buildings were retained, or to negotiate as much retention of interior rooms and features as possible, as in Corn Street.

Critically, the ideas and practice that had emerged in the Design Section in the late-1970s were codified in general design criteria for new office building, covering the quality of architecture, materials, context and quality landscaping (Bristol CC, 1980). This also established requirements for protecting listed buildings, and non-listed buildings in conservation areas, including interiors. The translation of design practice and appeal achievements and recommendations into policy, coupled with national recognition of Bristol's townscape importance and policy action in the form of HBC grants, placed Bristol conservation policy in a strong position to deal with development in the 1980s. It allowed the LPA greater control and opportunity in the maintenance and enhancement of area character through the management of change.

Within the Birmingham area, it was principally the low level of new building and major rebuilding that limited the amount of major character change in the 1970s. The designation of the conservation area only partially altered the style of new development in the area, principally by allowing the LPA to control the height of new buildings, limiting them to the height of the surrounding buildings. The impact of area designation on the control of building height in the conservation area was evident in the continuation of slab block and podium office buildings in the Modern style in the area of Victorian office townscape just outside the conservation area boundary. This

led to further erosion of this section of townscape. Yet, in the Birmingham area, beyond height controls, the style of new building remained ostensibly Modern, although cladding materials and mansard roofs were used to provide greater context, producing modern-vernacular hybrid buildings. Here the absence of a post-war 'domestic' building tradition and the continued dominance of Birmingham's 'Modern' image produced no concerted move towards neo-vernacular styles. In addition, there was little LPA commitment to the development of a neo-vernacular 'Birmingham style', with the designation document ignoring the warehouse character in the conservation area. Therefore, despite superficial stylistic changes, Modern building continued to transform the character of areas of Victorian townscape around the Cathedral and around the edges of the conservation area.

The most significant impact of the introduction of conservation controls in the Birmingham area came from the imposition of stronger controls on the demolition of buildings, and from the increased appreciation and listing of the Victorian fabric associated with the separation of this area of townscape as 'special'. The response of developers in the early-1970s to these stricter controls was to use rebuilding behind retained façades as a means to achieve an acceptable contextual scheme. The consequences of this trend were however problematic for conservation practice in Birmingham. Firstly, it limited the amount of negotiation on the direction of new building style within the newly created conservation area, polarising the choice of new building styling between Modern-vernacular hybrids and façadism. Secondly, it created a division in the worth of the Victorian commercial fabric, in terms of the importance of the façade alone. Consequently, whilst appreciation of the Victorian fabric increased, this was essentially superficial, with the more 'functional' Victorian buildings and interiors remaining undervalued. Initially façadist schemes were applauded by the LPA and local amenity societies, who saw the permission of backland development as a means to obtain the refurbishment of the front rooms of neglected Victorian buildings which were not deemed worthy of restoration in their own right. However, as its use increased in the late-1970s, amenity societies became increasingly concerned about the superficiality of conservation effort, and creeping character erosion through the loss of interiors of listed and unlisted buildings involved in façadist schemes. This view was not supported by the LPA who

continued to view façadism as an acceptable form of redevelopment for Victorian buildings, mindful of trying to balance conservation with economic reuse within a still sluggish development market. Therefore, at the end of the 1970s there was little stated policy concerning the protection and enhancement of area character to guide applications for demolition and new building, a situation that would lead to negotiation problems for the LPA during the development upturn in the mid-1980s.

### Changing character of the conservation areas in the 1980s

Within both study areas, the 1980s was a period of increasing tension between conservation and redevelopment concerns. While both LPAs sought to consolidate and extend policies pertaining to the protection and enhancement of area character, conservation objectives came under increasing pressure from increases in development activity in the late-1980s, and wider debates initiated by central government concerning the role of local planning control in influencing commercial development. Differences in the extent of policy development between the two areas at the beginning of the 1980s had a significant impact on the ability of the LPAs to direct this major development pressure to conform to policies regarding protection and enhancement. Of particular importance was the perceived strength and the worth of area fabric when judged against national criteria in the eyes of developers who increasingly sought to challenge locally determined decisions at appeal.

Within the Bristol area, the LPA fought hard to consolidate and strengthen the policy framework put in place in the early 1980s in the face of increasing pressure for redevelopment in the area, precipitated by the end of the speculative building moratorium and the influx of financial services. In this respect the LPA enjoyed differential 'success' in the protection and enhancement of area character. In the protection of area character through the control of demolition, the LPAs were relatively successful in guiding the location of new development and in limiting the use of façadism. The benefits of appeal victories and wider listing of the area's fabric in the 1970s became increasingly apparent in the 1980s.

Within key historic areas of the core, King Street, and Queen Square,

the LPA were able to stem the erosion of the pre-20th century fabric through redevelopment. Façadism virtually ceased as a redevelopment option, with its use only sanctioned in order to retain minor warehouse façades. This represented an attempt to value Victorian industrial architecture, although its value was not on a par with minor Georgian buildings. Lingering notions of 'outstanding' status in the City and Queen Square area tended to 'add value' to minor buildings, aiding their retention. Control of façadism was particularly important in consolidating LPA efforts to retain interior features, the totality of buildings, and the full craft and building skills embodied in these structures. Consequently, the LPA were able to maintain depth to the character of the area, avoiding the superficiality of conservation control often evident in commercial centres. As a consequence of demolition controls, new building became concentrated into backland and infill sites, temporary and derelict warehouse sites, and transit sheds, in line with area enhancement policy. Of particular significance was the way in which constraints on available sites precipitated moves to redevelop post-war office buildings in the zones of comprehensive redevelopment that had disfigured the area prior to conservation control. This allowed the LPA to apply new conservation standards to negotiation on these schemes.

In its attempts to enhance the character of the conservation area, through the control of new building design, the Bristol LPA encountered a number of problems and contradictions in its policy stance. Problems emerged as design policy became increasingly driven by general urban design concerns, rather than detailed assessment of the character and development of the conservation area. Challenges to the LPA's insistence on the use of the Bristol 'docks vernacular' emerged in the 1980s, as developers and architects moved towards the adoption of designs based on universal post-modern historical eclecticism and parody. Around the docks, and in the redevelopment and recladding of Modern offices in the Baldwin Street area, new building moved to adopt the superficial contextualism of 'conservation-area-historicism'. At one level, the ability of the LPA to insist on particular design solutions was limited by central government constraints on the application of excessive design control, the pro-business climate, and changes in architectural fashions. However, at the local level, the LPA encouraged the move away from specific local solutions to a certain extent through the

development of design briefs, particularly along Welsh Back, that employed more general dockside references, rather than Bristol solutions based on character assessments of the local historical context. This move towards general urban design solutions was also evident in the acceptance of pastiche development within Queen Square and King Street. Again a search for architectural harmony, rather than historical continuity was apparent. In the late-1980s, the need for clearer reference to historical context in enhancing area character, in order to avoid the architectural banality of pastiche and inappropriate universal historical detailing, was evident in the Bristol area, particularly with the increasing emphasis on conservation and design in local planning guidance in the 1990s.

Within the Birmingham area, the development upturn of the 1980s occurred within a conservation policy void. Attempts to develop policy in the 1980s were constrained by the legacy of a permissive development stance, the continued sluggish development market in Birmingham until the late-1980s, and by the constraints imposed by central government attitudes towards design control. Yet the Birmingham LPA did enjoy some success in the development of guidance for new building in order to enhance character in the area. In developing design guidance, negotiation on individual schemes assumed key importance, specifically the City Plaza scheme, 33-41 Newhall Street, 15 Colmore Row, and the rear elevation to façadist schemes on Colmore Row. These were important in moving new building style away from the Modern-vernacular hybrids of the late-1970s, towards more contextual post-Modern historicist styles. The greater involvement of local architects led to moves to develop a historicist 'style' that referred to the local townscape context. However, towards the end of the 1980s, increasing development pressure and a weakening of the LPA's power in negotiations precipitated the introduction of a more universal 'conservation-area-historicism', similar in style to that evident in the Bristol area. This was particularly evident in the superficial contextual use of historical detail used to cloak large office buildings.

In attempting to improve the quality of new building design in the Birmingham area, the LPA had to compromise on its other main goal, namely the greater protection of the Victorian fabric. With virtually no vacant plots in the area, most new development involved the demolition of Victorian and

early 20th century buildings. With developers unwilling to refurbish these buildings, due to poor internal room organisation, the LPA traded their demolition for greater control over the design of the new building. The availability of Victorian sites and the continued acceptance of modern buildings meant that redevelopment of the latter was not evident, as in Bristol. Consequently, the pursuit of design considerations was at the expense of continued erosion of the minor commercial fabric in the conservation area. Further to this, problems of the erosion of the Victorian fabric on the edge of the conservation area boundary continued to occur, due to problems concerning its definition. Just outside the area boundary, the Victorian fabric continued to be comprehensively redeveloped with tall office buildings in late-modern style. Many of these sat uneasily with developments within the conservation area.

Despite stronger policy controls concerning the redevelopment of listed Victorian buildings, these structures continued to be vulnerable to redevelopment pressures. Despite a reversal in LPA policy against façadist redevelopment of listed buildings in the 1980s, such schemes continued to be proposed by developers as an appropriate development option. The decision by the DoE, in the case of the redevelopment of 55-73 Colmore Row, to allow this façadist scheme had far reaching implications for the future strength and direction of LPA policy in this area. This served to confirm the acceptability of façadism as a redevelopment option for Victorian listed buildings imposing national standards of art-historic worth over local conservation concerns. Failure to contextualise these buildings within the wider socio-historic context of the area led to the continued threat to the historic and architectural totality of Victorian commercial buildings and a growing superficiality to conservation effort in the area. By the late-1980s, many key groups of Victorian commercial buildings had become merely façades.

While conservation policy in both areas was strengthened at the end to the 1980s, with new policy statements in each area, it was clear that in the face of continued problems of character erosion, through universal historicism in the Bristol area, and façadism in the Birmingham area, the need for comprehensive character assessments of each area in order to direct new major development remained acute.

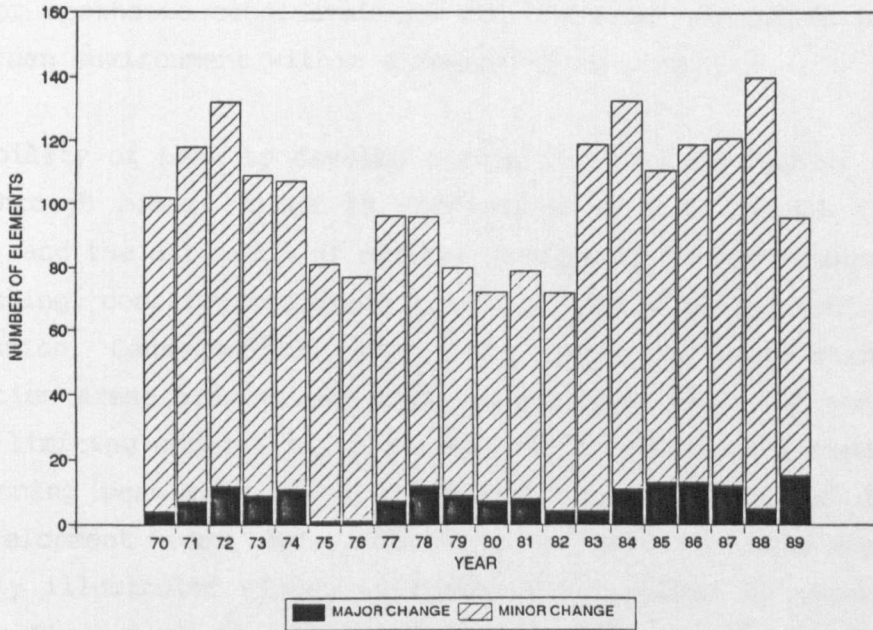
## CHAPTER SIX : THE EROSION OF CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER THROUGH MINOR CHANGE

Whilst major change to the built fabric has the greatest immediate impact on the townscape, it forms a small percentage of the total applications for fabric change in commercial centres submitted to an LPA. This is reflected in the ratio of major to minor change in the two study areas (figure 6.1). Individually these minor changes are often not of importance, although when added together in sensitive areas, such as conservation areas, they can produce a significant alteration to an area's character. In commercial areas, minor fabric changes, such as signage or internal alteration, or change of use can cumulatively 'erode' the character of that area. The designation of conservation areas was seen as a means to arrest the erosion of the unique attributes of place by uniform modern development using materials alien to the locale. However, among the primary concerns for conservation planning at present is the degree to which the original features within a conservation area continue to be lost through the erosion of minor detail (Larkham, 1987; Coupe, 1991; Suddards and Morton, 1991). While the designation of conservation areas has served to control the amount of new construction, small-scale changes to the character and appearance of these areas have continued (Larkham, 1987). This is a problem in both residential conservation areas (Sale, 1992), and those in town and city centres, even those of widely recognised historic merit (EHTF, 1992).

While the erosion of character through minor change can be viewed as a subordinate consideration in relation to other conservation issues, the ability of an LPA to address this issue provides an important indication of the strength of local conservation policy. Most conservation strategies recognise the need to increase enforcement to counter erosion through minor change, although attempts to address these issues have met with variable success. As a SAVE survey into LPA power concluded, conservation area law is "pretty toothless", "weak" and "completely ineffective" in stopping poor 'improvements' and preserving and enhancing character in conservation areas (quoted in Sale, 1992). Indeed, it has been argued that deterioration is so marked in some areas, that unless urgent measures can be found to halt this long term decline, de-designations could result (Coupe, 1991). Yet, while



**RATIO OF MAJOR/MINOR TOWNSCAPE CHANGE**  
**COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89**



**RATIO OF MAJOR/MINOR TOWNSCAPE CHANGE**  
**CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89**

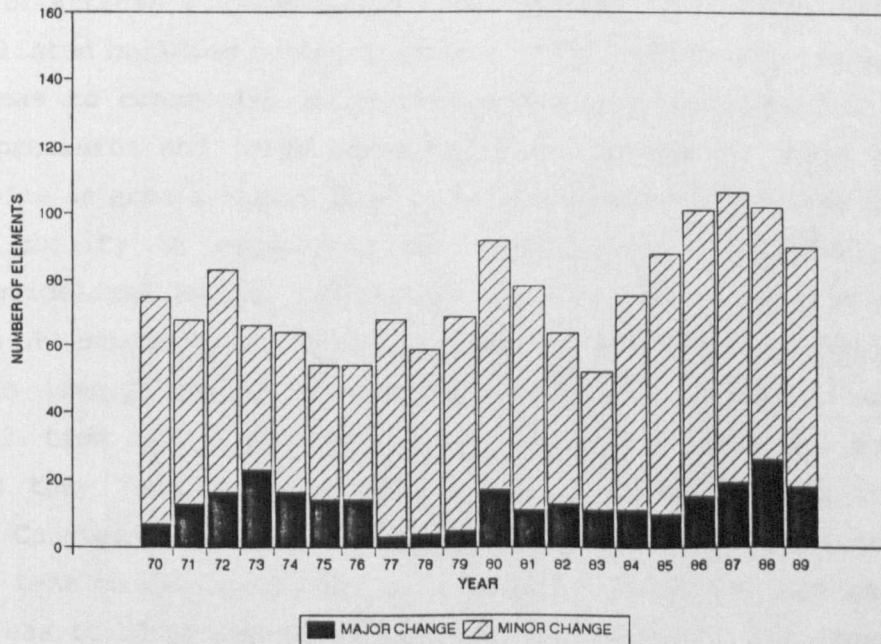


Figure 6.1; The ratio of major to minor townscape change in the two study areas.

many commentators have noted the problem of erosion through minor change, its causes, nature, and effect have been less well monitored and documented (Whitehand, 1983; Larkham, 1986). The ability of the LPA to negotiate on this minor change is an important factor, as is the degree to which commercial pressures, or aesthetic considerations and character retention objectives, shape the urban environment within a conservation area.

The ability of LPAs to develop strong policies to counter erosion of character through minor change is constrained by the nature of planning legislation, and the attitudes of central government to development. Unlike building listing, conservation areas do not provide added protection against minor alteration. Consequently, control of alterations to unlisted buildings in conservation areas lies solely through the requirement to seek planning permission, limiting control in sensitive areas. Many minor changes do not require planning permission, and are classified as permitted development (General Development Order 1988). The permitted nature of many changes, such as externally illuminated signs, increases the problems in negotiation for LPAs. Moves throughout the 1980s, linked to deregulation in the planning system, have sought to increase permitted development. It has been suggested that wider control over minor change could be achieved by the greater designation of Article 4 conservation areas (Coupe, 1991; EHTF, 1992), or the widening of listed building criteria (Noakes, 1991). However, the application of these ideas to commercial conservation areas is problematic, given the commercial pressures and large amount of minor change in these areas. In addition, while an area's status as a designated conservation area should give an LPA the ability to regulate minor development on aesthetic grounds, government guidelines on the control of minor aesthetic details since 1980 have limited LPA powers to negotiate on these matters (Punter, 1986). Further to this, the identification of erosion problems is difficult as, due to pressures of time and resources, LPAs are rarely able to monitor the applications they receive in detail, beyond the requirements for general statistics. Countering problems of cumulative erosion is also hindered by the inability of LPAs to cite precedent as a reason to refuse an application; each application has to be judged on its own merits. Finally, LPAs have problems in developing enhancement strategies for conservation areas involving landscaping, as they have no direct control over street furniture, and have

to liaise with highway departments which may pursue different agendas.

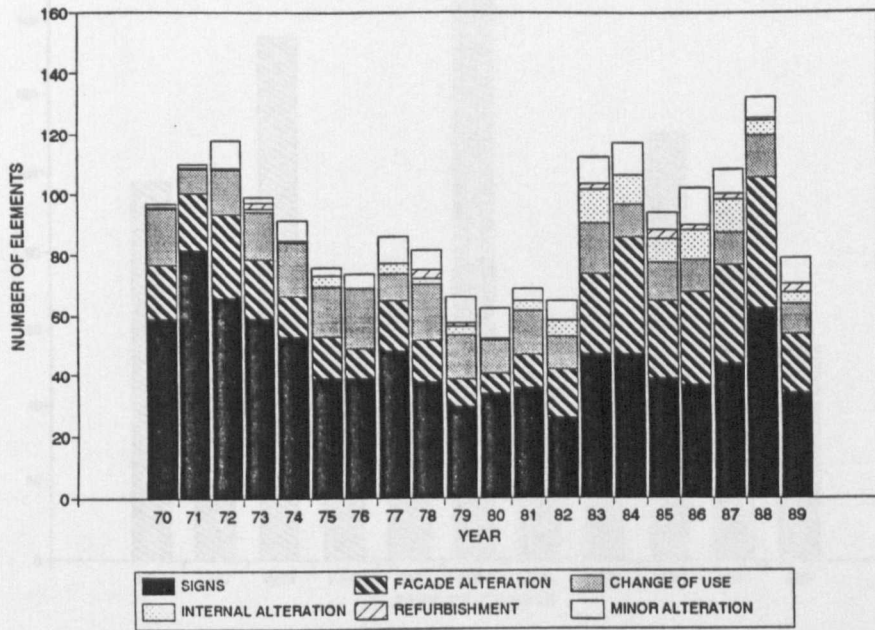
#### **THE NATURE AND AMOUNT OF MINOR CHANGE IN THE TWO STUDY AREAS**

The level of the problem posed by minor change in conservation areas generally was evident in the high number of applications for changes of building use, alterations to shopfronts, and internal alterations to listed buildings within the two study areas over the study period (figure 6.2). It has been suggested that minor alterations may be less variable than the construction of new buildings in their incidence over time, at the scale of the individual town centre (Whitehand, 1983). However, fluctuations were evident, related to the quantity and nature of commercial activity within the two study areas. Increases in the frequency of changes to signs, façades and interiors were linked to changing commercial pressures and subtle national and local variations in demand. The increasing scale of commercial operation, and the rise of large corporate concerns in financial, retail and leisure services, has accelerated this process in recent years, with the adoption of corporate house styles both externally and internally. Within the two study areas, the pressure for minor fabric change resulting from local and national business imperatives remained acute despite conservation control. The differential impact of recent commercial trends was reflected in the variation in the volume of minor change between the two areas. However, the variations in the nature and amount of this minor change evident were also linked to differences in functional character and the historical mix of the built fabric between the two areas, which shaped the impact of these wider forces. The large number of sign and façade changes in the Birmingham area (figure 6.2) indicate a townscape pressurised through cumulative erosion of its character from minor alterations linked to retail pressure. The Bristol area, however, had proportionally more internal and minor alterations (figure 6.2), reflecting the more adaptive nature of change of its older, more widely listed fabric.

The less controversial nature of minor fabric change was evident in the lower processing times for these types of application in the two study areas (figure 6.3). Generally, the processing times for minor changes in the Bristol area exceeded those for the Birmingham area, reflecting the strong

THE TOWN OF COLMERE  
 COLMERE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89

### AMOUNT OF MINOR TOWNSCAPE CHANGE COLMERE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



### AMOUNT OF MINOR TOWNSCAPE CHANGE CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

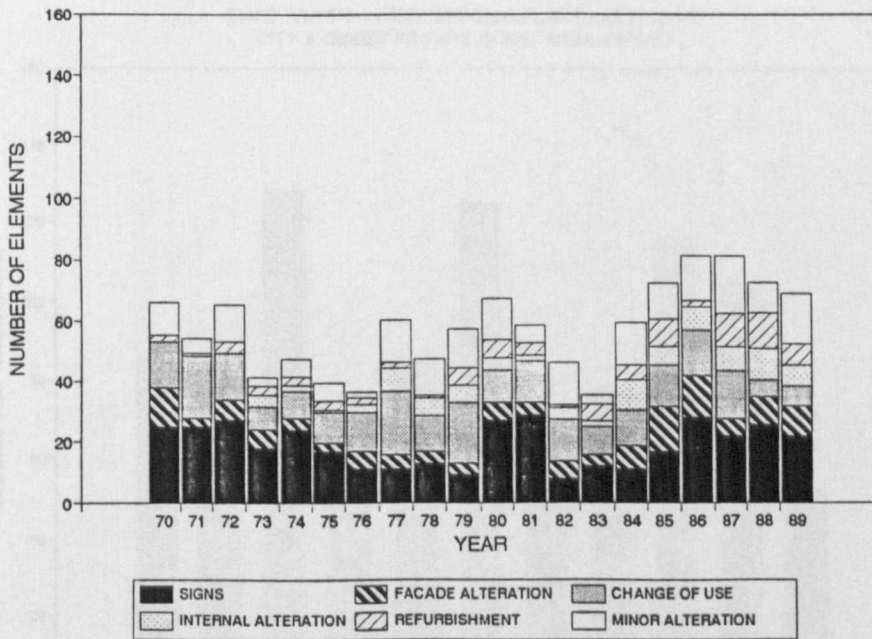
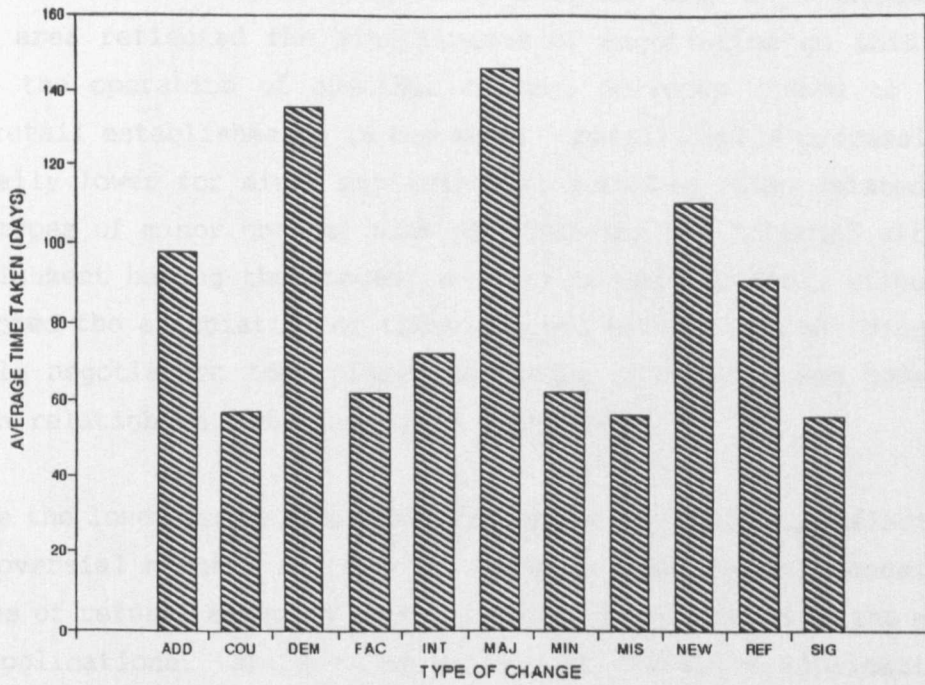


Figure 6.2; Amount of minor townscape change in the two study areas.

TIME TAKEN IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



TIME TAKEN IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

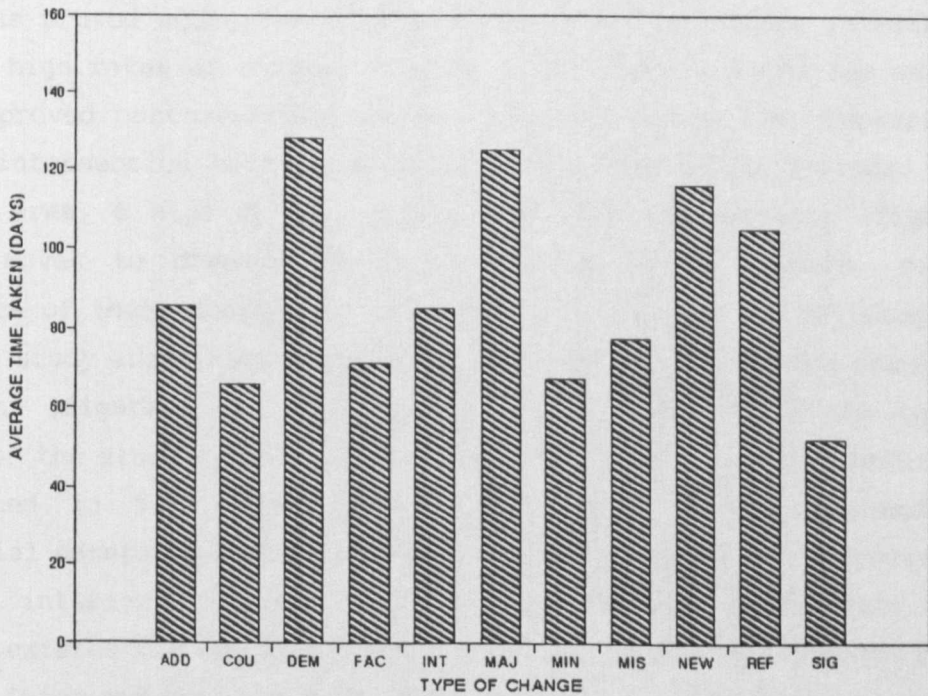
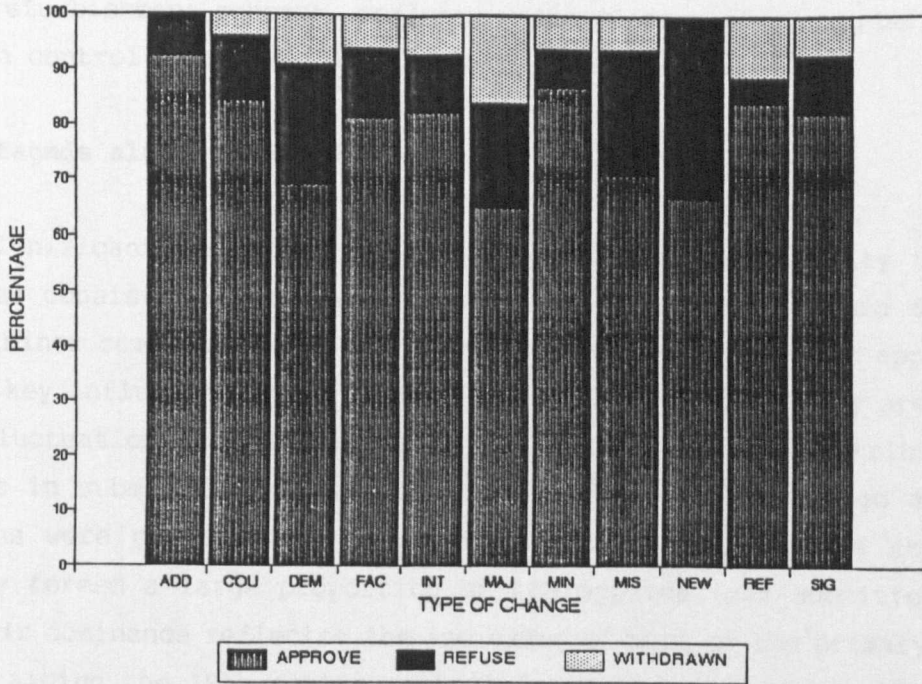


Figure 6.3; Time taken in determining applications, by type of change, in the two study areas.

negotiating and control policies operating in Bristol from the late 1970s onwards. However, the higher processing time for sign applications in the Birmingham area reflected the significance of negotiation on this type of change and the operation of specific control policies linked to the high number of retail establishments in the area. Overall, while processing times were generally lower for minor applications, variable rates existed between different types of minor change, with applications for internal alterations and refurbishment having the longest average processing times (figure 6.3). This reflected the association of these changes with listed buildings, where considerable negotiation took place, mediating commercial and conservation concerns in relation to these important structures.

While the lower processing times for minor applications reflected their less controversial nature, in relation to major applications, consideration of the rates of refusal suggests that some contention existed in the mediation of these applications. While rates of refusal for minor applications were generally similar between the two study areas (figure 6.4), variations in refusal rates for particular types of minor change indicated differences in the dominant pressures for minor alteration within the two areas, and differences in the application of policies to address these issues. Sign applications proved among the most problematic minor change in both areas, displaying high rates of refusal (figure 6.4). Applications for shopfronts and signs proved controversial, as at the micro scale they represented an important intersection between business and conservation demands. In the Birmingham area, a high refusal rate for façade applications (figure 6.4) reflected moves to develop shopfront control policies here, given the significance of these changes in altering the character of buildings in the area. Both study areas also displayed high rates of refusal for change of use applications (figure 6.4), reflecting a desire to maintain the functional character of the study areas, and uphold zoning policies. High refusal rates also existed in both areas for internal alterations, reflecting the controversial nature of these changes to listed buildings and a desire by LPAs to protect interiors. A particularly high rate of refusal for internal alteration existed for the Bristol area, reflecting the application of strong control policies and the high proportion of pre-19th century structures in the area. Strong control over minor change in the Bristol area was also evident

APPLICATION DECISION BY TYPE OF CHANGE  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



APPLICATION DECISION BY TYPE OF CHANGE  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

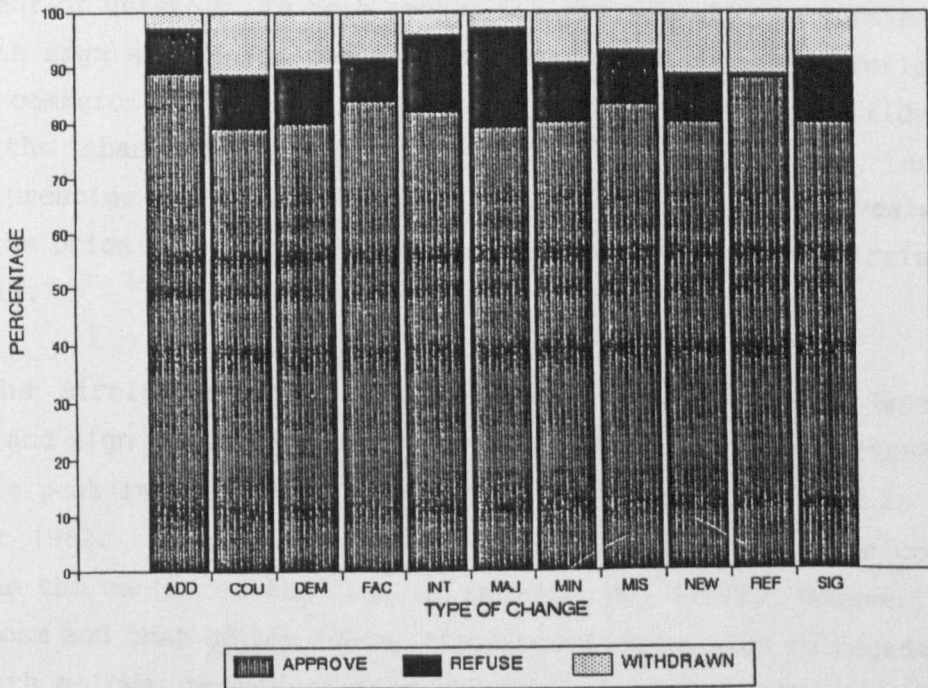


Figure 6.4; Percentage of applications approved, refused or withdrawn, by type of change, in the two study areas.

in a high refusal rate for minor alterations, and conversely a low refusal rate for refurbishment schemes, reflecting the climate of strong conservation and design control exerted since the late-1970s.

### **Sign and façade alterations and change of use**

A significant proportion of the minor development activity in the two study areas consisted of sign and façade alterations (see figure 6.2). The amount of minor commercial activity, reflected in these types of application, exerted a key influence on the volume of change in the two study areas. Much of the fluctuation in development activity overall was attributable to variations in submission rates for these types of change. Sign and façade alterations were particularly important within the Birmingham study area, where they formed a large proportion of the applications submitted (figure 6.2). Their dominance reflected the inclusion of part of the primary shopping area, containing the 19th century retail fabric legacy, within the boundary of the conservation area. Conversely, the smaller proportion of these types of change in the Bristol area reflected its limited retailing importance, having been marginalised as a primary retail area in the post-war redevelopment of Bristol. In both areas, but particularly in Birmingham, the increases in sign and façade change applications in the 1980s reflected the revival in commercial fortunes experienced at this time. Significantly, it reflected the changing commercial nature of the two areas, and their increasing prestige and desirability as commercial locations, revealed in the growth of the price of office and retail rents in these areas (Birmingham CC, 1987c; 1991).

In the Birmingham area, the trends in submission for both façade alteration and sign change reflected the fluctuating economic fortunes of the core, with a peak in the early 1970s development boom and a rise in activity again after 1982. The trough in the early 1980s reflected the commercial recession in the centre at the time (Birmingham CC, 1989). However, between the 1970s boom and that of the 1980s, the proportion of sign to façade changes altered, with a lower number of sign changes but more façade changes in the 1980s. This reflected the tighter restraints imposed on sign change by the application of conservation policies, and the impact of building and area



enhancement schemes. In the 1980s, there was upgrading of the retail environment, through new developments, such as the City Plaza, and the refurbishment of the 19th century retail fabric. In the Bristol area, the trends in submission for façade alteration and sign change reflected a slightly different pattern. Figure 6.2 highlights a decline in the amount of these types of change, indicating the increasing marginalisation of the Bristol study area as a retail area. This decline continued into the early 1980s, except for the years 1980 and 1981. The high increase in sign applications, although not façade changes, can be attributed to the end of the speculative office building moratorium and the increase in new building, precipitating a rise in applications for temporary contractors sign boards. The increase in sign and façade applications in the late-1980s in the Bristol area can be linked to the development of the area as a tourist/leisure area, associated with the redevelopment of the Docks (Punter, 1990). An increase in public houses and restaurants, and the arrival of more leisure orientated retailing into the area, accounted for much of this increased development.

The increasing pressure for shopfront and sign change in the 1980s prompted rising concern about the impact of these changes on buildings in the two study areas, but particularly the Birmingham area. This was evident in increasing consultation and comment on these types of application. In the Birmingham area, the increased involvement of the CAAC and Victorian Society in commenting on applications in the 1980s (see Chapter Five) centred upon sign and façade applications, which accounted for one third and one fifth of all comments on applications respectively during this period. Increased monitoring of these applications, and the application of specific policies that sought to improve design standards in the 1980s, was evident in the increased use of amendment conditions for sign and façade applications, and the increased use of architects, rather than shopfitters and sign makers, as agents in the 1980s. In the Birmingham area, whilst in the 1970s shopfitters and sign makers were used on 29% of applications as agents, and architects on 28% of applications, by the 1980s shopfitters and sign makers were only used on 16% of applications, while the proportion of architects had risen to 41%. However, while this partly precipitated the development of good design practice by local architectural firms, in consultation with the LPA, much of this increase represented the use of in-house architects by large corporate

concerns which perpetuated problems of character erosion. Nevertheless, the improving standard of design, and increasing willingness of applicants to participate with LPA shopfront and sign design policies, was also evident in the decline in appeals against refusal of permission for signs between the 1970s and 1980s in the Birmingham area (table 6.1). During the 1970s, appeals against refusal of permission for signs formed the majority of appeals within the Birmingham area, linked to the application of tighter policies of control following the designation of the conservation area.

Table 6.1; Birmingham Appeals.

	1970s GRANT	REFUSE	WITH	1980s GRANT	REFUSE	WITH
ADD	1					
COU		1	2	1	2	4
DEM			1	2		3
FAC				2		
INT				1		
MAJ				2	1	
NEW						3
SIG	5	5	6	2	1	1

A key concern in the monitoring of shopfront and sign change in the conservation areas was the extent to which much of this multiple minor change was hidden within single applications. As noted in Chapter Three, by splitting applications which contain two or more distinct elements, for which ordinarily separate applications would be sought, a more comprehensive view of minor development in the study areas is obtained. Consideration at this level highlights the potential amount of minor change that is masked by a consideration of numbers alone. While only approximately 50 applications in each area were clearly identified as having multiple elements within them, it was often difficult to identify multiple change from the descriptions of the development offered by applicants in an application. However, the cases identified in the two study areas demonstrated the way in which accumulated minor change and erosion of character could be hidden from analysis. In a commercial retail area, such as the Birmingham area, the most frequently 'hidden' change was that involving applications including multiple sign changes (SIG/SIG) (Table 6.2). Here it was important that applications for projecting signs were differentiated from those for fascia signs, as within the Birmingham area separate policy considerations operated. In a number of

Table 6.2; Applications with multiple elements, Birmingham.

	ADD	COU	DEM	FAC	INT	MAJ	MIN	MIS	REF	SIG
ADD		1	1	4	1				4	
COU				17	2		3			
DEM					2	1			3	
FAC					13				1	
INT							4		1	2
MAJ									1	
MIN										
MIS										
REF										
SIG										41

cases, projecting signs within an application were refused, although the fascia sign was approved, in an attempt to enhance the appearance of the area. In the Birmingham area, most of these 'hidden' double sign applications came in the 1970s. By the 1980s, a combination of increased building listing and tighter sign policies in the conservation area resulted in fewer 'hidden' applications for projecting signs, with separate applications affording the LPA more control. Further to this, the degree to which minor change involving sign and façade changes can be 'hidden' was also reflected in the high proportion of these types of application withdrawn in the two study areas (figure 6.4). While part of this withdrawal activity was attributable to the LPA exercising control and applying design policies, successfully deflecting undesirable development, a portion was attributable to the withdrawal of applications not requiring permission under the terms of the GDO.

As with applications for shopfront and sign alteration, change of use also showed a degree of sensitivity to wider economic trends. However, in both areas the number of applications for change of use rose during both recessive and boom cycles (figure 6.2). This may be due to the fact that during recessive phases in the economy, commercial turnover was high as businesses struggled to survive, or changed to higher value uses such as offices, while at the onset of 'boom' periods the composition of businesses changed as rents rose in prime commercial locations. However, these different processes produced very different problems for conservation management. During recession, rapid turnover produced neglect and decay that stored up problems, such as under use and poor alterations. During a boom, while more control was exerted, the pursuit of commercial advantage put the townscape under pressure from poor quality 'improvements', such as internal change or additional signage. It is therefore critical that change of use is considered

and monitored along with other changes and issues affecting the conservation area. However, the LPAs had only limited powers to control these changes, rarely sustaining change of use refusals when put to appeal. This mixed success was evident in the outcome of appeals against refusal of change of use in the Birmingham area (table 6.1) and the Bristol area (table 6.3).

Table 6.3; Bristol Appeals.

	1970s			1980s		
	GRANT	REFUSE	WITH	GRANT	REFUSE	WITH
ADD				1		2
COU				4	3	
DEM		1	1			2
MAJ		1				
MIN				1		
MIS				5		
NEW	2	1	2		1	3
REF	1					1
SIG		1		2	1	

With increasing rationalisation of the use classes during the 1980s, the degree to which LPAs could control changes within central business districts decreased. Levels of withdrawal of change of use applications in the two study areas (figure 6.4) principally highlights those changes of use for which permission was not required, reflecting the problem of control.

Change of use can often be seen as a precursor to fabric changes, frequently being accompanied by a proposal for other minor alterations. Many change of use applications often contain references to 'hidden' alterations accompanying the application for change of use. While many of these changes do not require permission under the GDO, the vagueness surrounding what type of minor change does, and does not, require permission results in much of this alteration associated with change of use going unmonitored. In the Birmingham study area, change of use was frequently associated with façade (ie shopfront) changes, shown in table 6.2 (COU/FAC), which highlighted the extent to which many minor fabric changes remained hidden in change of use applications in the area. In the Bristol area, change of use applications also frequently 'hid' proposals for façade change within them (Table 6.4). However, given the more adaptive nature of change within the Bristol area, resulting from its' higher proportion of listed buildings and tight control policies, changes of use also frequently contained proposals for further minor changes only (COU/MIN) (Table 6.4). Again, detailed monitoring of change of use applications is critical

in order to highlight those buildings and areas that may be under considerable pressure for minor alteration.

Table 6.4; Applications with multiple elements, Bristol.

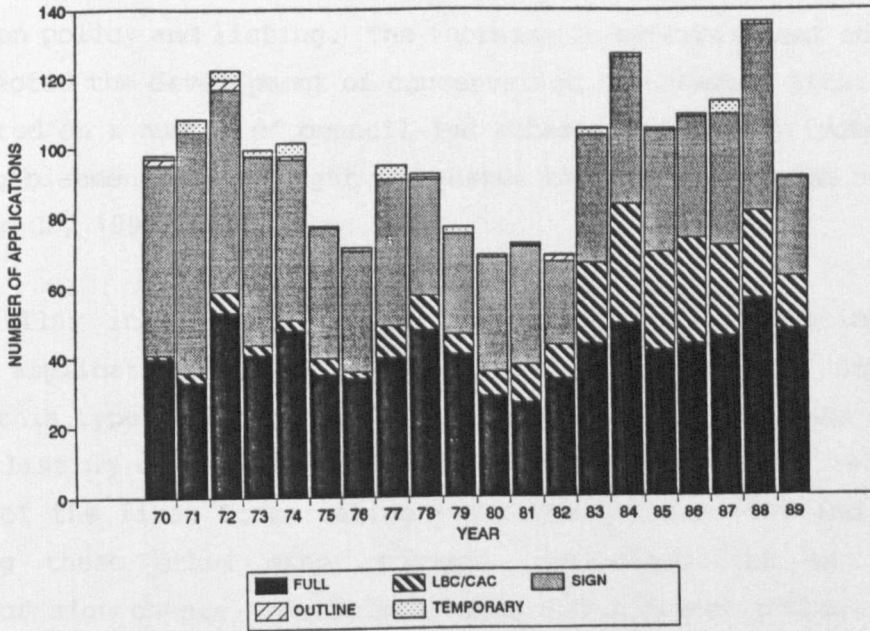
	ADD	COU	DEM	FAC	INT	MAJ	MIN	MIS	REF	SIG
ADD		1		3	3		3		10	
COU				14	1		18		4	
DEM									8	
FAC					14				3	
INT							5		6	
MAJ									1	
MIN									2	
MIS								1		
REF										2
SIG										1

### Refurbishment, internal alteration and minor alterations

Applications for refurbishment, internal alteration and minor alterations form a smaller part of the overall total of minor change, as many of these types of change do not require planning permission under the GDO. Rates of withdrawal for these types of change, particularly refurbishment, in the two areas reflected the permitted nature of much of this development (figure 6.4). It is usually only in applications for alterations to listed buildings that these types of change become recorded within the development control process. Their control by the LPA, within a conservation area, is therefore dependent on the percentage of the fabric of that area which is listed. Within both areas, the impact of increased building listing on this increase in applications for refurbishment, internal alteration and minor alterations was evident in the rising number of listed building and conservation area consents applied for (figure 6.5). Whilst pressure for development was undoubtedly stronger in the 1980s, the rise in listed building consents, allied to the increase in minor changes recorded, highlighted the extent to which many minor changes previously went unmonitored within the conservation areas, and the problems of controlling accumulated erosion through minor change to non-listed buildings in these areas.

Within the Birmingham study area, refurbishment, internal alteration and minor alterations rose after 1972 (figure 6.2), linked to the designation of

**APPLICATIONS BY TYPE**  
COLMORE ROW CONSERVATION AREA 1970-89



**APPLICATIONS BY TYPE**  
CITY & QUEEN SQUARE CONS. AREA 1970-89

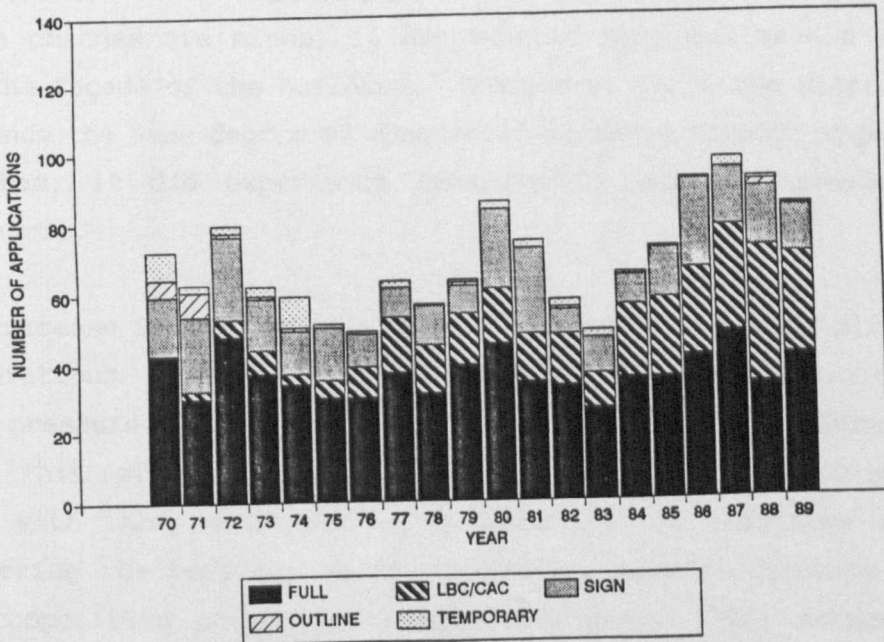


Figure 6.5; Applications by type, over time, in the two study areas.

the conservation area, accompanied by increased building listing and policy developments to promote the refurbishment of 19th century buildings. This upward trend in internal and minor alteration and refurbishment was particularly noticeable in the 1980s, under the expanding influence of the conservation policy and listing. The increase in refurbishment schemes in the 1980s reflected the development of conservation enhancement strategies in the area, centred on a number of council-led schemes and some private-sector led retail refurbishment which sought to enhance the prestige of the retail centre (Birmingham CC, 1992).

A similar increase in refurbishment, internal alteration and minor alteration applications was also evident in the Bristol area. Generally, the amount of this type of change was higher than in the Birmingham area, due to the wider listing of fabric within the Bristol area in the 1970s, and the operation of the first Conservation Programme between 1977 and 1982. When considering these other minor changes, not classified as specifically shopfront or sign change, the Bristol area had a higher proportion of minor change than the Birmingham area. Minor changes classified under this category included minor façade alterations, such as changes to doors and windows on an individual basis, rather than as part of a wider shopfront or façade change. While these changes are minor, if accumulated they can have a significant effect on the façade of the building. Therefore, while the Bristol area did not experience the same degree of commercial pressure through signage as that of Birmingham, it did experience considerable adaptive pressure on its historic fabric.

The increase in applications for refurbishment, internal alteration and minor alterations in the 1980s, in both study areas, highlighted the increasing pressure on listed buildings for adaptation to modern commercial standards. This reflected the commercial gentrification of both study areas, associated with their emergence as prestige office locations and leisure areas, offering the heritage veneer sought by new developments pursuing a niche in competitive commercial markets (Bateman, 1985; Ashworth, 1994). While the designation and the development of policy in both study areas protected them, to a certain extent, from character erosion through major redevelopment, these conservation strategies enhanced their prestige, and

increased the degree of minor commercial change and associated refurbishment in these areas. As Barras (1987) notes, the shift in the development cycle into the information technology age in the 1980s put considerable strain for adaptation on buildings within commercial office zones. At the micro-scale, technical innovation and changes in business practice increased the degree of internal and minor alteration to buildings in office use. One of the most significant pressures for minor alteration to buildings in financial service use during the 1980s was as a result of the introduction of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs), which often conflicted with policies designed to limit minor change on important banking buildings. Some of these conflicts were represented in the refusal rates for minor alterations in the two study areas, with a particularly high rate in the Bristol area (figure 6.4). Tensions were also evident in the increase in appeals against refusal of permission for minor changes, as applicants sought to challenge strong LPA control policies (table 6.3).

In both study areas, the rising pressure for the internal alteration of buildings to meet new commercial accommodation standards, both in office and retail zones, caused increasing problems. Internal change as the result of the decline of the small shop and amalgamation of buildings to form larger shops, and the desire to maximise ground floor retail space by removing internal features such as stairs, have been a long standing retail trend in the post-war period (Slater and Shaw, 1988). More recently, changing office requirements have led to increased internal alteration in office buildings through a need to incorporate new computer technology and the move to open plan office styles. The trend towards themed restaurants and public houses, and the desire for open plan bars, has led to the alteration of a number of historic buildings in many urban cores, as a result of the influx of these uses related to tourist and leisure developments. The frequent conflict over the change of interiors between commercial applicants and LPAs can be seen as a micro-scale metaphor for the tension and conflict that exists between functional efficiency and the growing conservation concern towards the built environment of commercial centres. The problematic nature of many of these internal alterations was represented in the high refusal rates for this type of change in the two study areas (figure 6.4). In the 1980s, applications for internal alteration generated increasing comment from conservation advisory



panels in both cities, and also from the Victorian Society in relation to the Birmingham area (see Chapter Five).

As in the case of some sign and façade changes, internal alterations are difficult to control. Again, permission for internal alteration is only needed in the case of listed buildings. In both listed and unlisted buildings, minor internal changes often happen in a gradual way, many not requiring consent, leading to a problem of accumulated but uncontrolled internal change in many buildings. Therefore, much of this internal change remains 'hidden' by being outside of control by the LPA. Tables 6.1 and 6.4 highlight the way in which applications for façade changes were often combined with internal alterations during a business change or premises upgrade in the two study areas. Only in the case of a listed building could the LPA call for a separate application for this internal change in order to control this development, and therefore much remained unmonitored. While conservation allows for a certain degree of adaptation in order to maintain economic use for the building, poor, accumulated internal alterations have important long term implications; the more original internal features that are lost, the easier it is for developers to argue for the complete redevelopment of a building behind a façade, resulting in the total loss of historic grain.

However, it must be noted that not all minor changes identified erode character. In many cases increasing minor change was linked to the growth in building restoration and general refurbishment in both conservation areas. Low refusal rates for refurbishment in both study areas (figure 6.4) reflected the high quality of these schemes, particularly in the Bristol area where LPA led refurbishment schemes of the late-1970s set a high standard. In the late-1970s and early-1980s, much of the minor change within the old core of Bristol was linked to the refurbishment of buildings, as conservation gain for minor works often to the rear of buildings. In the Birmingham area in the 1980s, some of the rise in this activity reflected the up-grading of the conservation area and its retailing to a more prestigious centre (Birmingham CC, 1992). In addition, in both areas, part of the increase in minor change was related to the development of LPA led area enhancement schemes. For example, minor changes around Corn Street and the quays in Bristol in the 1970s, and in Cannon Street, Needless Alley and Fore Street in Birmingham in the 1980s were

related to paving and new lighting as part of central area enhancement strategies. However, critics of these 'enhancement' schemes have argued that they merely add clutter to historic townscapes, particularly by the use of street furniture. It is argued that the widespread, ill-considered and indiscriminate use of particular 'catalogue heritage', such as the use of 'nineteenth-century' cast iron, including lighting, seating, litter bins, and bollards in historic areas erodes local character rather than enhancing it (Booth, 1993; Newby, 1994).

#### **COUNTERING EROSION OF CHARACTER : SIGN AND SHOPFRONT CONTROLS AND CONTROL OF INTERNAL ALTERATIONS**

For both LPAs, following initial designation of the conservation areas, action against the erosion of character revolved around attempts to reverse the legacy of lax control of minor change within central commercial areas. Many of the first enhancement schemes in newly designated conservation areas after 1967 sought to enhance through the removal of 'clutter' (Booth, 1993; Larkham, 1995a). These schemes stemmed from early concerns with 'tidiness' in urban areas, advocated by Nairn (1955) and Cullen (1961), although for reasons of 'good urban design' rather than for conservation specifically. In particular proposals sought to arrest the proliferation of shop signs and advertising hoardings, especially the high density of high level signs that had grown to cover many historic buildings in commercial areas. The scale of the problem is evident in both study areas in the 1950s and 1960s (figure 6.6). Also, with the large scale of redevelopment in many centres, advertising hoardings proliferated around redevelopment sites, and on buildings scheduled for redevelopment. Examination of sign applications submitted in the 1970s for both study areas revealed the development of clear policies by both LPAs to remove advertising hoardings and high level signs.

The other key area of policy development in both areas, related to the control of clutter, was the development of policies to control the design of shopfronts, in order to protect architectural detail and enhance building character. The key problem facing both study areas in the 1970s was the existence of a number of historic commercial buildings, particularly Victorian



A; Advertising clutter - Broad Quay, Bristol in 1950 (source, Bristol CC planning files).



B; Advertising clutter - Colmore Row, Birmingham in 1957 (source, Birmingham CC, 1989).

Figure 6.6; Problems of advertising hoardings in the two study areas in the 1950s and 1960s.

buildings, with modern shopfronts divorced from the architecture above them, covering up detail which was symbolic of the building, and giving a modern rather than a particular historic character (figure 6.7). While only being a small part of the component of area character within a commercial area,



Figure 6.7; Contrasting shopfronts in the Birmingham study area in the 1970s (source, Birmingham CC 1980, p.14.).

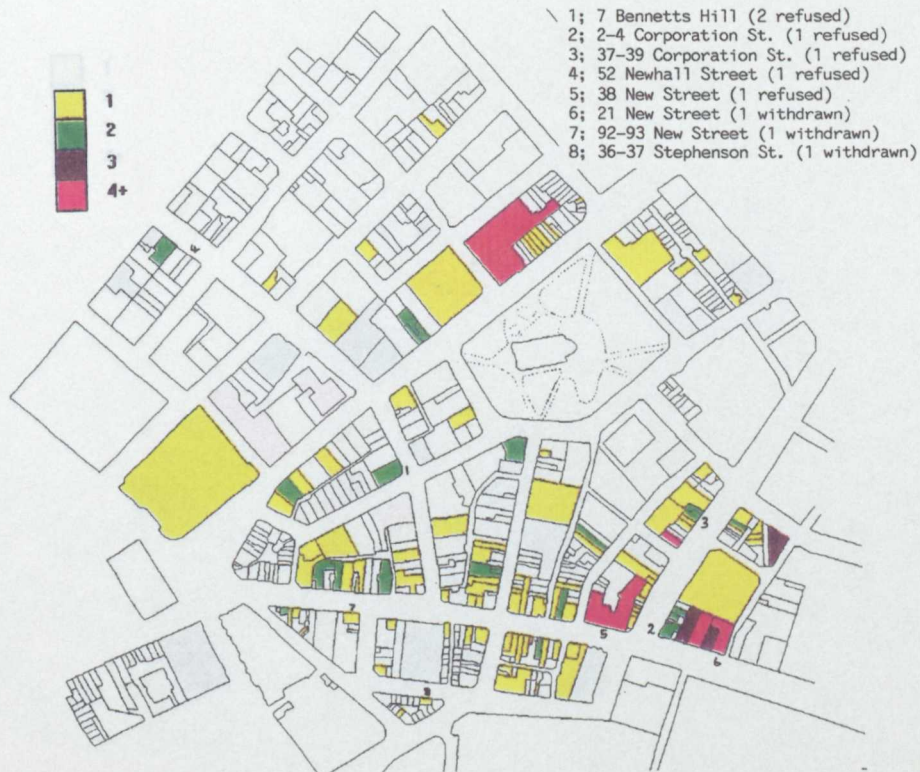
shopfronts and signs are nevertheless part of this character, and form a visual link between the street and the other morphological components of character. Consequently, if poorly designed they can have a significant visual impact upon conservation areas (Binney, 1978; Larkham, 1987; EHTF, 1992).

A key difficulty for LPAs in formulating policies to counter erosion of character through sign and shopfront change is the variable nature of the problem within commercial conservation areas. The problems of erosion of character through shopfront and sign change are not uniformly distributed across conservation areas, with particular buildings being more at risk. A number of studies have noted the tendency for buildings in shopping streets to be more vulnerable to minor alteration, either by frontal modification or internal transformation, with those buildings in the most central streets the most vulnerable (Buissink and de Widt, 1967; Sim, 1977; Larkham, 1986; Slater and Shaw, 1988). In particular, minor change related to frontal alterations is most concentrated in those areas with primary and secondary retailing functions. This frequency results from the more intimate relationship in retailing, than in any other city-centre function, between the attraction of trade and the external appearance of buildings (Whitehand, 1983). Retail

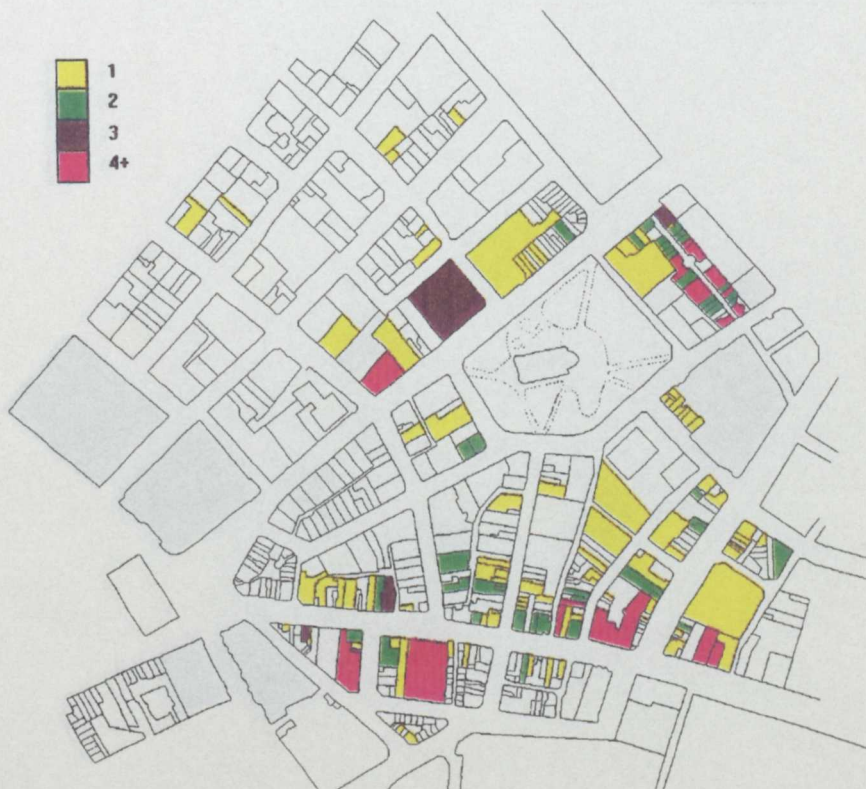
outlet competition through functional adjacency and desire for a corporate identity produces rapid restyling of fronts, particularly for chain stores. Within both study areas, the spatial distribution of sign and shopfront change was specifically linked to the location of particular commercial activities, with high concentrations evident in primary shopping areas, and professional and financial service areas with offices open to the public (figures 6.8 to 6.11). With more of these functions, the Birmingham study area recorded a higher pressure on its built fabric from applications for sign and façade changes, particularly along New Street and Corporation Street, and to a lesser extent the side streets linked to these two streets and Colmore Row (figures 6.8 & 6.9). Within the Bristol area, the lack of a primary retail function deflected much of this activity away from the historic core, although activity is evident in the secondary retail areas around Baldwin Street, High Street and Colston Avenue, and within the financial core centred on Clare Street and Corn Street (figures 6.10 & 6.11).

### **Early sign and shopfront controls**

Within both study areas, early policy effort in the 1970s was concentrated on sign control, and in particular on attempts to control sign clutter and size. In both areas, the early operation of a tight policy controlling advertising hoardings was evident, seeking to end their use around development sites and at high level on the sides of buildings. In Baldwin Street and King Street in the Bristol area, and Hill Street in the Birmingham area, advertisement panels around development sites were refused in the early-1970s (figure 6.12). In the main commercial streets of both areas, other early forms of control were based on projecting sign control policies. These were designed to prevent overloading by projecting signs, keeping the size of the projecting sign below 3', and controlling the position of the sign on the fascia, as part of early attempts to reduce clutter. Yet, despite the problems of poor fascia design generally within the main commercial streets within both conservation areas, in the early stages of designation in the 1970s, the development of broader fascia control guidelines did not focus on these areas. Mainly the LPAs sought to develop good practice by concentrating on particular prestige parts of the conservation area, namely the core, Queen Square and King Street in the Bristol area, and Colmore Row and Waterloo



a; applications approved in the 1970s



b; applications approved in the 1980s

Figure 6.8; Façade alterations approved in the Birmingham study area

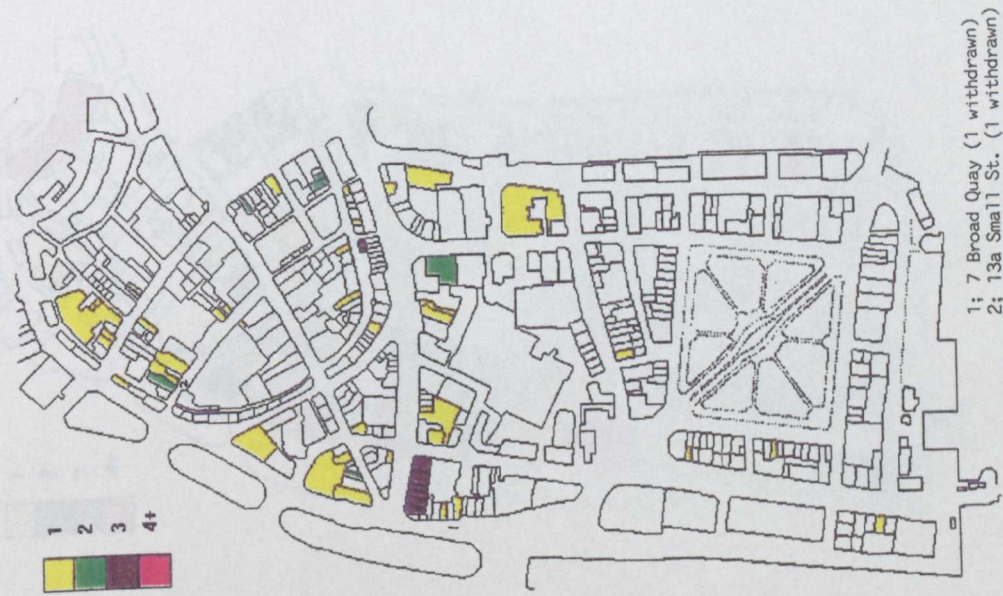


a; applications approved in the 1970s



b; applications approved in the 1980s

Figure 6.9; Sign changes approved in the Birmingham study area



a; applications approved in the 1970s



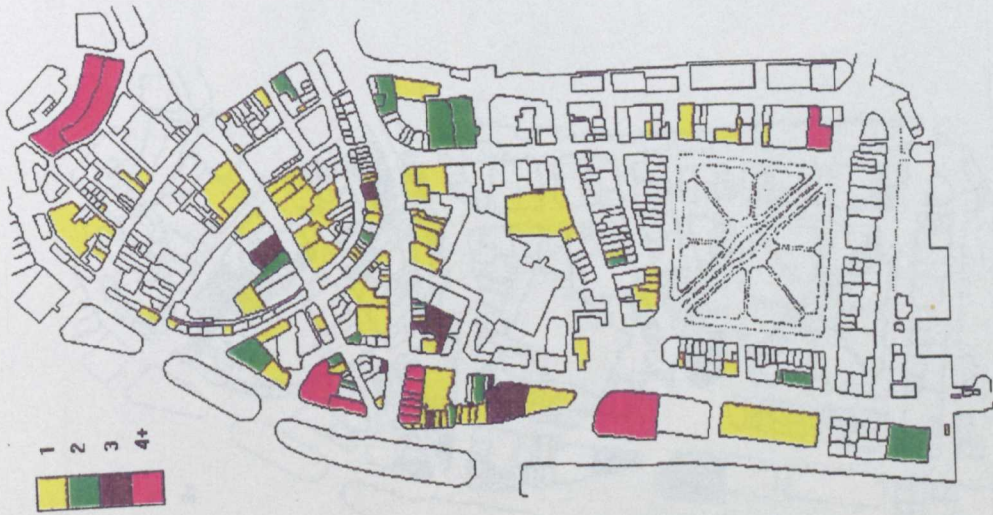
b; applications approved in the 1980s

Figure 6.10; Façade alterations approved in the Bristol study area





b; applications approved in the 1980s



a; applications approved in the 1970s

Figure 6.11; Sign changes approved in the Bristol study area



b; applications refused or withdrawn in the Bristol study area



a; applications refused or withdrawn in the Birmingham study area

Figure 6.12; Sign changes refused or withdrawn in the 1970s

Street in the Birmingham area. Attempts to broaden out these good design policies from these prestige parts of the conservation areas into the main commercial streets met with varied success between and within the two study areas. In both areas while high standards were achieved on a number of buildings during the 1970s, it proved difficult to extend these policies beyond listed, refurbished buildings even within these more tightly controlled prestige parts of both conservation areas.

### Bristol

Within the Bristol area, tight shopfront and sign control policies operated within the old core area prior to conservation area designation, due to its status as an Area of Special Control. Consequently, in streets such



Figure 6.13; Signage in Broad Street, Bristol in the late-1960s (source, Bristol CC planning files).

as Broad Street there was little problem of poor signage (figure 6.13). Aided

by the high concentration of listed buildings in this area, tight control on the restoration of façades operated following designation, with the Design Section pressing for the use of natural materials such as oak wood and non-illumination, drawing on the precedent of these types of shopfront in the area (figure 6.13). The Design Section was active in attempting to extend these design guidelines into other commercial streets previously on the fringe of the Areas of Special Control. Negotiation for improved fascia and sign design was also evident in St Nicholas Street around the refurbished Market, where timber fronts were obtained and cornices and other detail reinstated on refurbishment schemes at 8 and 11 St Nicholas Street (1975) and 30 St Nicholas Street (1976).

In the mid-1970s, the LPA also sought to develop sign policies concentrating on the control of sign numbers and clutter, and limiting the size of sign projection, on buildings within the Victorian commercial area around Colston Avenue, Baldwin Street and Corn Street which had been outside of the Areas of Special Control until incorporation into the conservation area in 1972 (figure 6.12b). Along Broad Quay, the abandonment of the road widening scheme that had blighted the buildings in the early-1970s prompted moves to arrest building decay and the loss of architectural detail in this area, by seeking to remove high level signage. In 1978 a high level illuminated hoarding on 1-2 Broad Quay was refused renewed permission, granted on a temporary basis when it had come up for renewal in 1976. Further negotiation at the same time led to the withdrawal of a high level sign on 6 Broad Quay. Developing from the tightening of sign controls initiated in the Broad Quay area, policies were developed to control the size of fascias, and to encourage the use of pilasters, timber frames and non-illuminated signs, such as on 7 Broad Quay (1976;1978), negotiated by the CAP, and on 6 Broad Quay (1980).

The control of clutter along Broad Quay was an important early policy success, promoting the refurbishment of previously blighted buildings. However, the listing of these buildings in 1977 was of great significance to the strength of this policy development. On listed buildings, greater control was available to the LPA for the control of sign and shopfront change. On non-listed buildings in the main commercial streets the LPA continued to

experience problems in controlling signage and shopfront design, particularly in its attempts to limit the internal illumination of signs. Good practice built up here was subsequently developed into firm shopfront and sign design policies in the early 1980s, with the codification of practice developed during the first conservation programme 1977 to 1982. The influence of the Conservation Programme was critical, both in raising design standards generally within the core, and more importantly in fostering a climate of grant aided refurbishment. Façade and sign improvements in Broad Quay provided an early demonstration of the strength of grant aided negotiation. The combination of the 'stick' of refusal with the 'carrot' of grant aid in obtaining the enhancement of buildings in the Bristol area became a key strategy in the late-1970s and 1980s. Critically, there was an early recognition of a need for grant aid for premises within the main commercial areas in order to offset business efficiency demands. Yet, despite these policy developments success in controlling sign and shopfront change remained mixed in the Bristol area in the 1970s. Even in Broad Street, illuminated signs continued to be approved, particularly on commercial buildings close to its junction with High Street, where arguments for attracting custom continued to dominate aesthetic concerns.

### Birmingham

Within the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area, one of the earliest attempts to develop a sign policy was centred on the area around the refurbished Georgian buildings of Waterloo Street and Bennetts Hill, in order to demonstrate a commitment on the part of the LPA to enhancement in key parts of the newly designated conservation area (figure 6.12a). This policy was largely *ad hoc*, and sought principally to obtain non-illuminated letters on the listed Georgian and early Victorian commercial buildings in the area, rather than to develop a basis for a comprehensive signs policy for the area:

"Specific policies are required for sensitive areas, and the effects of this can be seen in Waterloo Street as compared with New Street." (Birmingham CC, 1980; p18)

Bolstered by some success in sign policy in Waterloo Street and Colmore Row, this approach was extended with the adoption of a non-illuminated projecting and fascia sign policy around the Cathedral. This new focus was reflected in the increased negotiation of submitted applications and a number of

application refusals in the 1970s along Temple Row and Colmore Row (figure 6.12a).

Attempts to extend this policy proved difficult, particularly as much of the 19th century retail fabric, where the greatest problems occurred, lay outside the boundary of the conservation area until the early-1980s. Along the main retail streets, early forms of control were based on projecting sign policies, seeking to prevent overloading by projecting signs:

"In some areas shops have introduced a variety of new shopfronts and signs that compete with one another and form a visual muddle.." (Birmingham CC, 1980; p14)

The relative success of this policy in Birmingham is evident in a number of refused projecting sign applications in the main commercial streets, particularly in Corporation Street, New Street and Lower Temple Street, in the 1970s (figure 6.12a). However, as these streets were outside the area boundary in the 1970s, refusal was principally for reasons of traffic and pedestrian safety rather than for conservation or design considerations. The extent of building listing in central Birmingham also hindered the development of design controls. In contrast to Bristol, where 60% of the Victorian fabric in the city centre was listed by 1977 (Brook, pers. comm.), the limited listing of Victorian commercial buildings in retail use in central Birmingham in the 1970s restricted the power of the LPA in negotiation on minor changes. Further to this, while greater control could be exerted on completely new signs, negotiation on straight replacements to existing signs and shopfronts proved more complex. The Birmingham LPA were relatively powerless to counter the problem of previous poor changes, given that change within existing boundaries of a sign or shopfront was generally permitted, limiting 'stick' policies of refusal. These factors were important in limiting the development of more comprehensive sign and shopfront policies along these retail streets until their incorporation into the Colmore Row conservation area in 1984.

The problems facing the LPA in developing stronger policies to control sign and shopfront change were clearly illustrated by the case of the terracotta Arts and Crafts former Kardomah Cafe, 41-42 New Street. Although listed in the early-1970s as a building of considerable local and national importance, the commercial pressures upon it within the primary retail area in the 1970s led to the accumulation of a number of external minor changes

which the LPA were unable, and to some extent unwilling, to control. This threatened the character of the building. In 1972 external and internal changes to the building were only amended following objections by the Ancient Monuments Society, a rare intervention in the Birmingham area at this time. However, a number of further sign changes were made throughout the 1970s, in conjunction with its use as a bakery, which continued to erode external architectural features. Further to this, fascia changes were also made in 1981 without comment, and subsequent minor amendments were made in 1983. The problems of this legacy were only revealed in 1986, when grant aided refurbishment of the building, in removing the poor earlier changes, uncovered the extent of the lost features.

The primary retail character of parts of the Birmingham area therefore presented particular problems in attempting to remove advertising clutter, and poor external change remained a major problem until well into the 1980s. Design control in the primary retail part of the Birmingham area was viewed as a hinderance to efficient business operation. National retail firms proved unwilling to reduce sign numbers and size in a competitive retail environment. Consequently, in the 1970s, within the more commercial streets of mixed 19th and 20th century character contained in the original Birmingham area boundary, such as Bennetts Hill, development sign control was more gradual. Early successes were obtained in the negotiation of illuminated letters rather than fascias, such as at 9-10 Bennetts Hill 1971. However, it was not until the early-1980s that the LPA were confident of confronting commercial demands and negotiating for external illumination, with the refusal of internally illuminated letters on 33 Bennetts Hill an example of this change. The LPA's reluctance to put controls on commercial signage in the late-1970s can be viewed as the micro-scale manifestation of the wider concern of not being seen to be deflecting commercial development away from a depressed Birmingham core, allied to the 'Birmingham Means Business' campaign (see Chapter Five).

### **The development of sign and shopfront control policies in the 1980s**

Accelerated commercial transformation of urban cores throughout the 1980s increased the pressure for building alteration through minor change. Functional changes to the core included the intensification and expansion of

the primary office area, the incursion of 'quasi-retail uses' (Kirby and Hoff, 1986) into retail areas, and the development of the centre as a leisure area. The parts of the two conservation areas that were under most pressure were secondary retail and mixed commercial areas which became increasingly dominated by professional service functions, such as Clare Street, Baldwin Street and Broad Quay in the Bristol area, and upper New Street, Bennetts Hill and Temple Street in the Birmingham area (figures 6.8b, 6.9b, 6.10b & 6.11b). This increasing pressure was linked to the growing domination of commercial activity in core areas by multiple chains in the 1980s, and activity was most marked in those areas dominated by branches of national chains. There was less pressure for change in those parts of the office area housing local, small scale offices, such as Broad Street/Small Street and Queen Square in the Bristol area and the Newhall Street/Cornwall Street in the Birmingham area (figures 6.8b, 6.9b, 6.10b & 6.11b).

This reorganization and development of the financial service industry, through merger activity and technological innovation, precipitated a number of minor changes, particularly fascia and signage changes. The design of new corporate logos for merged institutions and the advertising of new services produced concerns regarding sign overloading on key buildings, with many financial institutions occupying listed buildings. Also of importance during this period was the introduction of ATM machines into many buildings with financial and professional service uses. Continued pressure for sign and fascia change was also evident in retail parts of both conservation areas, where the rapidly changing house-styles of national firms, exerted substantial pressure on the built fabric. The development of leisure functions within the core, linked to economic regeneration strategies and planning policies to promote '24 Hour cities', also created pressure for signage and advertising. In the Bristol area, concentrations of sign and fascia applications were evident in streets such as King Street and Prince Street, linked to the development of a leisure area around the Docks. The development of 'bright lights' policies in leisure and entertainment zones in both areas came into conflict with the development of policies to control signage in the conservation areas, by creating increased demands for neon signs. In the Bristol area, along Baldwin Street, and in the Birmingham area, along Cannon Street, tensions arose over the use of neon signage on buildings both in the



conservation area and in the entertainment area, where neon signs were designated as appropriate. Here difficult choices had to be made over whether to prioritise 'bright lights' or conservation policies.

In the 1980s, both LPAs sought to develop sign and shopfront control policies, and extend the best practice attained in prestige parts of both conservation areas into the main retail and public office zones to combat the continued clutter and erosion of character here. In particular, there was a concerted attempt to develop control and enhancement policies in the primary retail streets with 19th century fabric in the Birmingham area, as a consequence of the wider listing of this commercial fabric in the 1980s, and its inclusion within the conservation area in 1984. In terms of controlling this change during the 1980s, LPAs sought to develop shopfront design guidance, as an aid to negotiation with developers. In the Bristol area, this involved the codification of guidance developed as part of the conservation programme, and good practice related to tight controls on listed buildings (Bristol CC, 1984). In the Birmingham area, absence of this background required the development of new guidelines, extending good practice from isolated schemes to the mixed commercial districts (Birmingham CC, 1986).

The growing importance of aesthetic considerations in shopfront and sign applications across both conservation areas was evident in a changing emphasis in negotiation issues and refusal reasons concerning shopfronts and signs given in planning file correspondence. There was a shift in emphasis from technical details such as size, location and number, to more aesthetic considerations such as style and method of illumination. In both areas, the increasing involvement of the conservation advisory bodies was important in the development of policy. The backing of advisory bodies, in negotiating amendments to applications, was an important factor in both LPAs achieving the stated aims of their shopfront policies. There was an added importance put on the outcome of these negotiations, as LPAs moved to the use of planning gain to achieve enhancements, given the reduction in local and central government funds for grants (Montgomery and Thornley, 1990; Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994)). In the wider application of shopfront and sign policies, greatest success was perhaps achieved in the Bristol area in the 1980s, due to the greater 'listability' of the fabric. The Bristol LPA attempted to

utilise its strong negotiating position, developed in the late-1970s, to press for conservation gain in shopfront improvements from developers in return for granting permission, often on an application unconnected to the shopfront or sign. In the Birmingham area shopfront and sign improvements were sought through negotiation and the offer of grant aid, given the less assured negotiating position of the LPA at this time. Within both areas, these policy and negotiating developments were constrained by wider limits to LPA powers to control small-scale design features (Punter, 1986). Although not supposedly acting within conservation areas, the pro-business and streamlining climate in planning generally acted to put pressure on aesthetic control policies operating within commercial conservation areas where planning priorities remained blurred.

It is clear that both LPAs enjoyed a degree of success in enhancing the character their respective conservation areas through the control of poor modern internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs, moving towards the greater use of externally illuminated fascia and hanging signs. Generally, this move was aided by the trend towards the use of 'traditional', retro-shopfronts by businesses eager to exploit heritage based leisure and tourist initiatives. However, many applicants adopted a formulaic 'heritage haze' (Booth, 1993) of shopfront and sign elements which it was felt would satisfy the design concerns of LPAs, regardless of local context. This fusion of enterprise and heritage concerns created problems for conservation areas with the application of an "overdone corporate heritage" (Hargreaves, pers. comm.) which continued to create clutter and erode the local sense of place.

### Bristol

The Bristol study area enjoyed further success in the application of sign and shopfront policies in the 1980s, as a result of the clear differentiation of particular area types within the conservation area where specific controls would apply. Differentiation was made between commercial/financial areas with public offices such as Clare/Corn Street, where there was an acceptance of illuminated fascia signs and hanging signs by the LPA, and the office area around Queen Square and Small Street in the core. Listed buildings were also differentiated:

"New shopfronts should generally respect local traditional forms in terms of scale, proportions and materials, although there will be some locations where a well designed modern shopfront may be acceptable." (Bristol CC, 1984; p12)

"On listed buildings the use of standardised national and regional fascia signs is unlikely to be acceptable...Where listed buildings with a domestic elevation are now used for commercial or professional office purposes, the most acceptable form of external sign is usually a brass name plate." (Bristol CC, 1984; p16)

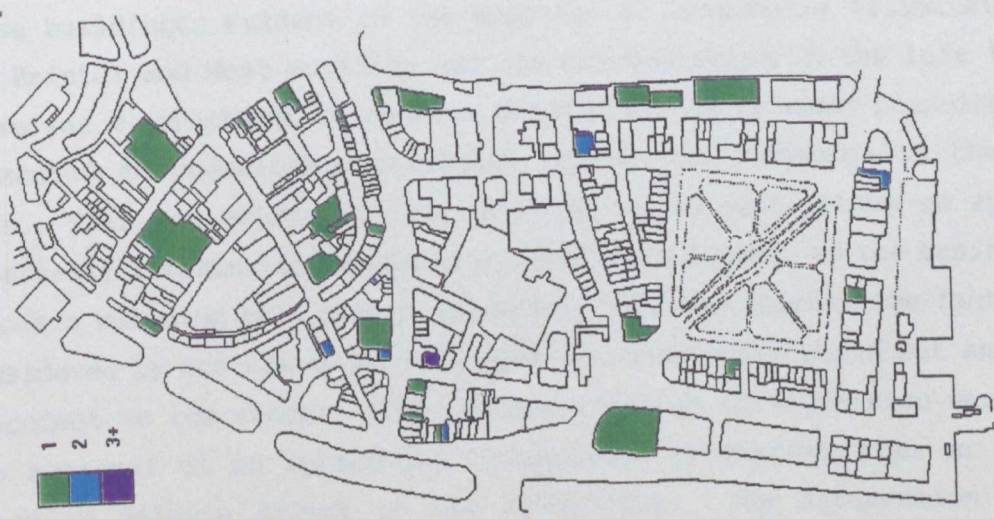
Policies for promoting external or halo illumination for fascia signs and for promoting hanging signs were extended to cover the High Street, Markets and Baldwin Street in the 1980s. These statements demonstrated an awareness by the LPA of the need for the application of a differentiated policy in the case of national commercial office and retail areas, where pressures for advertising existed.

In combination with this differential application of sign and fascia policies, the Bristol LPA also sought to use the strength of consultation, negotiation and control developed in the late-1970s to press for further improvements. They sought to use the possibility of withholding or delaying permission, particularly for floorspace increases, as a 'stick' with which to obtain improvements beyond that applied for in the application, or to improve the design of those changes applied for. With this policy, the LPA sought to shift the financial responsibility for improvement onto commercial applicants in the core, in place of the continued use of grant aid incentives which were needed to tackle dereliction in the 'inner ring' (Bristol CC, 1979). An early success using this style of negotiation was the gain of a more 'traditional' (ie conforming to stated policy) shopfront on 32 St Nicholas Street, in return for permission for a rear extension. Success in using this policy was also evident along Broad Quay where shopfronts continued to be improved. In 1986 the LPA was able to achieve substantial revisions, through withdrawal and negotiation, to the standard corporate illuminated signage of Brooks Cleaners (5 Broad Quay) and Alfred Marks (6 Broad Quay). Smaller, non-illuminated fascia and projecting signs and pilasters were obtained in line with policy, with an extension of the application of this policy to press for the reinstatement of lost architectural features in return for permission. However, in the late-1980s, the increased threat of appeal against refusals of minor change applications (see above), particularly those involving refusal of acceptance of 'tied' permission involving further planning gain, served to

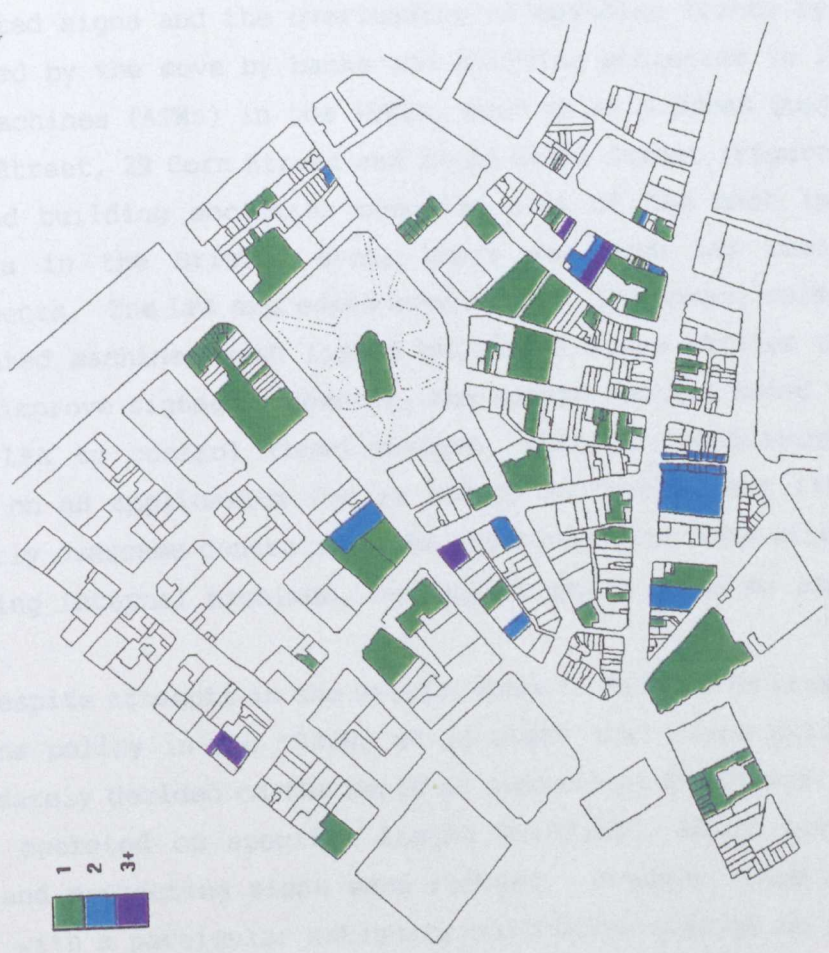
limit the application of this policy in the Bristol area.

The fragile nature of these shopfront and sign policies was particularly evident in those streets housing major national businesses. These commercial operators, sensitive regarding the maintenance of their corporate identity, fought strongly to utilise their particular image or house style. In Bristol pressure was particularly evident in the financial area around Corn and Clare Streets (figures 6.11b & 6.14a). In St Stephens Street, policies developed in the late-1970s seeking to amend internally illuminated projecting signs to hanging painted signs were increasingly challenged. In 1987, pressure from the Co-op emerged for an internally illuminated projecting and hanging sign, which was twice refused. However, as a result of the architectural importance of the buildings, the scheme was eventually amended to a painted sign and externally illuminated spot lit fascia. Nevertheless it was the importance of the buildings, rather than the area based policy per se, that was influential in underpinning this negotiating success.

In Baldwin Street the LPA also attempted to maintain a strong policy stance in respect of the problems of the legacy of poor signage here. Along Baldwin Street, further attempts were made to reduce sign clutter and improve the standard of commercial shopfronts through the use of enforcement powers to remove illegal advertising, for example at 4-12 Baldwin Street (1986); 12 Baldwin Street (1987); 6 Baldwin Street and 8 Baldwin Street (1988) (figure 6.14a). This was used to strengthen the LPA's negotiating position, and its decisions in refusing internally illuminated signs in the street. However, the permitted nature of much of this minor sign change made it difficult for the LPA to exert control and remove poor past changes. Despite strong resistance many changes were allowed, due to the limited degree of control available to the LPA at this level even in the conservation area. On an application for a shopfront on 12 Baldwin Street (1987), while there was a desire to remove the internally illuminated fascia, amendments were made to make the change only a change in letter colour, a permitted development over which the LPA had no control. This exposed the limits to the use of 'stick' policies alone, with the LPA conceding that it would have to offer grant aid as an incentive to get a better scheme.



a; applications refused or withdrawn in the Bristol study area



b; applications refused or withdrawn in the Birmingham study area

Figure 6.14; Sign changes refused or withdrawn in the 1980s

In these commercial streets, attempts by the LPA to control the use of illuminated signs and the overloading of building fronts by signs were also frustrated by the move by banks and building societies to install Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) in the 1980s, such as at 9 Broad Quay, 4-12 and 23-25 Baldwin Street, 29 Corn Street and 22-23 Small Street (figure 6.11b). As many banks and building societies occupied some of the most important historic buildings in the Bristol area, there was much LPA resistance to these developments. The LPA expressed concern over the uneasy relationship of these illuminated machines with listed buildings where earlier attempts had been made to improve signage. However, the Design Section noted the limited power of the LPA to control these changes, through negotiation or refusal, in comment on an application for an ATM on 29 Corn Street (1984). Applicants frequently overcame controls by the positioning of ATMs within windows, or by installing internal machines, neither of which required permission.

Despite attempts in the Bristol area to develop an area-based shopfronts and signs policy in the 1980s, it is clear that these policies continued to be ultimately decided on the basis of individual buildings. Tighter controls rightly operated on specific listed buildings, where both non-illuminated fascia and projecting signs were refused. However, this served to fragment policy, with a particular ambiguity concerning signage on post-war buildings in the area. The LPA demonstrated a realistic attitude towards signage on these buildings, evident in the approval of internally illuminated signs on the Bristol and West Building and the Unicorn Hotel in the late 1980s. Yet, there was a reluctance to approve these signs as in wider planning terms they presented an undesirable precedent, given the pressures in the commercial core. This was evident in the granting of an application on appeal for an internally illuminated fascia sign in Baldwin Street, on the basis that it was a modern building in a commercial area. This was despite the fact that it was considered by the LPA to be of a poor standard which would set an undesirable precedent in the street. The repercussions of this decision were evident in the approval of an internally illuminated projecting sign on Royal London House in Baldwin Street in the late-1980s. The application of sign and shopfront policies here exposed both the limits to the application of conservation and design controls in the face of commercial pressure, and the wider limits to negotiation and control over minor change in the planning

system. In particular it highlights the limited effectiveness of the conservation area in adding to the LPA's power to control minor change and enhance the commercial character of the area.

### Birmingham

In the Birmingham area, the impetus for wider policy development came from critical comments made by conservation officers and the CAAC concerning shopfront designs for the units in the Grand Hotel, following the refusal of an illuminated projecting sign in 1981. In 1982/83 these widening concerns about signage along Colmore Row were translated into the first shopfronts policy in the conservation area, the Grand Hotel Shopfronts Policy. The criteria set out within the Grand Hotel Shopfronts Policy became the basis for negotiating tactics for retail premises across the conservation area. In addition to the previous concerns of controlling projecting signs and illumination, these new criteria included the use of timber/coloured metal frames, retention and reinstatement of cornices and pilasters, and the design of fronts as single units with fascias within pilasters. These elements of the policy can be seen to parallel the guidelines developed by the LPA in Bristol in the 1970s in relation to shopfronts within the core area (Bristol CC, 1984).

The development of the Grand Hotel Shopfronts Policy coincided with the refurbishment of the Great Western Arcade (GWA), where similar controls were being developed, using a design brief by the architects John Madin Design Group for the landowners, Prudential Assurance. The action of Prudential in obtaining compliance to this brief, through leasing agreements, provided an interesting demonstration of how landowners such as the Council could enforce refurbishment schemes and disseminate best practice. However, given the complications of dealing with different departments, in this case City Valuers, and the fragmented nature of Council ownership, this practice did not develop, with the LPA concentrating on the use of grant aid as an incentive to obtain refurbishment.

In the application of this policy, a certain degree of success was obtained in controlling shopfront design around the Grand Hotel by negotiating

amendments and refusing unacceptable designs, for example on sign applications for 27 Colmore Row (1985); 31 and 33 Colmore Row (1986); 35 Colmore Row (1987); 39 and 41 Colmore Row (1983) (figures 6.14b & 6.15). In 1983/84,



Figure 6.15 Façade applications refused in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s.

prompted by calls from the planning committee and the Victorian Society, the LPA sought to extend the policy to other retail areas, particularly to tackle the problem of clutter and improve the quality of shopfronts in New Street and Corporation Street, with their legacy of problems from lax control in the 1970s:



"Here it would be desirable to consider how the planning authority might reasonably take action to bring about the re-exposure or re-introduction at street level of some of the architectural features which have been hidden or lost in recent years" (Birmingham EDD, 1984; n.p.).

In this context, the greater listing of buildings within the retail area was critical in allowing the LPA more power in negotiation with applicants. At the Victoria Square end of New Street, where declining retail use in the 1970s had blighted buildings, listing provided the strength to negotiate on a standard Spud-U-Like front to 83 New Street in 1983 in order to comply more closely to the emerging shopfronts policy. This was the start of wider control of corporate signage in this area, with further successful negotiation concerning signs on 63 New Street (employment agency) and 66 New Street (Pizza Hut) in 1986. Yet, despite these developments, amid the strong pro-development climate of the 1980s, the fragile nature of these policies was evident as firms fought strongly to utilise their particular corporate image.

A key problem in the application of shopfront and sign policies in the 1980s was lack of differentiation between commercial areas in the application of these policies in the Colmore Row Conservation Area. This led to some confusion in the enforcement of particular aims, and weakness in negotiations with applicants regarding appropriate signage and shopfronts. While clear differences existed between the more stringent fascia policies as applied along Waterloo Street, and the retail fronts policy as developed for the Grand Hotel, there was an ambiguity in the exact spatial limits of these particular policies. In particular, a failure to delimit 'quasi-retail' areas, and to define their commercial character, on the boundary between the main office and retail nodes led to a high degree of policy conflict in these areas. In Colmore Row there had been some success in controlling illuminated signs (projecting and fascia) in the 1970s, even on modern buildings such as the Nat West Building. However, in the 1980s, attempts to remove all projecting signs in favour of non-illuminated letters, as in Waterloo Street, were less successful. This policy underestimated the desire for signage by the businesses with public offices in this area. Commercial applicants assumed that by applying for a non-illuminated hanging sign they would meet heritage criteria, as a general solution to signage in conservation areas. The application of this overtly strong policy weakened the LPA's negotiating stance through the straining of negotiating relationships with applicants and

the precipitation of frequent appeals. While the LPA was able to deflect hanging signage from 122-124 Colmore Row (a GI listed building) in 1982 and 1988 against the threat of appeal, it was unable to do this for other buildings in this area. In 1987 and 1988, applications for hanging signs on 118-120 and 116 Colmore Row were approved, both against recommendations from the CAAC, with the LPA fearing the overturning of a refusal at appeal in the light of recent bigger appeal losses. This wariness in taking a strong stance was also evident in the reluctance of the LPA to use enforcement action to remove illegally installed shopfronts and signs, due to the cost of action and a perceived lack of potential success.

Policy confusion and ambiguity was also evident in decisions on signs in Bennetts Hill. Here, while an externally illuminated sign on 19 Bennetts Hill (near New Street) was approved in 1987, as it replaced an internally illuminated sign, an externally illuminated projecting sign was refused on 34 Bennetts Hill, with the CAAC citing the protection of Waterloo Street as a reason. Again, the difference between these two parts of Bennetts Hill, and their relationship to other parts of the conservation area was not clearly expressed. The weakness of this stance when challenged was illustrated by the granting on appeal of an application for a sub-fascia sign on 20 Waterloo Street, an altered early 20th century building. Here the inspector accepted the commercial necessity for an increase in advertising on this building, against the LPAs arguments concerning the detriment to the visual amenity in the conservation area, and the architecture of the building. Problems were also evident in other mixed commercial parts of the Birmingham area; in 1983 an appeal against the refusal of a projecting sign on 29 Newhall Street was allowed as other projecting signs existed in the street. However, a similar refusal on 55 Newhall St in 1984 was upheld at appeal as it was near important building groups, highlighting the degree to which policy was still driven by a consideration for particular buildings.

Again, in all these cases, the lack of weight provided by conservation area status in supporting these policies is clear. In the face of national arbitration, these locally based concerns were shown to have little power. Without the nationally sanctioned protection of building listing, the failure to explain the relationship of the building and policy to the wider townscape

context and the character of the conservation area limited the LPA's ability to extend design control and enhancement policies. The lower number of listed Victorian commercial buildings in the Birmingham area can be seen to have put the LPA at a disadvantage in the development of policies to control shopfront and sign change. The problems encountered highlight the clear need for a deeper understanding of the differential functional character of the Birmingham study area and the differential nature of shopfront and sign pressures in order to develop more effective policies.

Further to these policy limits, the permitted nature of many changes, such as minor sign changes, ATM installation, and roller shutter installation continued to cause problems for the Birmingham LPA in seeking to control minor shopfront changes and remove poor past changes. Again there was concern over the inability of the LPA to control these alterations to non-listed buildings in the conservation area. In relation to signs, a significant limit was the inability of the LPA to control change to signs within their current boundaries, this being a permitted development offering no grounds for refusal or negotiation. An internally illuminated projecting sign on 31 Corporation Street had to be approved in 1986 as it was smaller than the one already there, and the LPA therefore had little power to negotiate. These limits were also behind the LPA's inability to reduce the size of fascia on 21 Temple Street (1987), despite the refusal of the projecting sign. On 43 Temple Row, the LPA were concerned that a non-illuminated ribbed band sign would be a poor precedent in this sensitive part of the conservation area around the Cathedral. However, as the non-illuminated sign was technically a permitted development there was no room for negotiation. Amendments were only gained following negotiation on a separate application for a projecting sign, over which the LPA had more control. In using this as a bargaining tool, the LPA were taking a risk, given the lack of legal foundation for this form of coercion. A further problem for the LPA regarding signs was the trend for non-illuminated sign boards, and other minor additions such as lamps, to be affixed to public houses in addition to traditional signs. In the Birmingham area, applications for additional features were made for the Trocadero, Temple Street (1978), the Wellington, Bennetts Hill (1983), Le Pub, Cannon Street (1984), the Cathedral Tavern, Church Street (1985), and the Old Contemptables, Edmund Street (1989). In most cases the signs were non-illuminated, and the

LPA had little power to control this growth in 'heritage clutter' despite concerns from the Victorian Society and the CAAC concerning the erosion of building character due to the number of signs and fascia additions applied for in each application. The fact that the Wellington and the Trocadero were the only listed Victorian pubs in the Birmingham area significantly limited the ability of the LPA to control these changes in the face of business demands.

As in the Bristol area, the attempts of the Birmingham LPA to control the overloading of buildings by signs were also frustrated in the 1980s by the moves to install ATMs. Again, areas with high concentrations of banks and building societies were most pressured in this respect, with applications at 11-12, 19, 23, 25, 33, and 34 Bennetts Hill and 26 and 43 Temple Row in the Birmingham area (figure 6.9b). Again, the positioning of many of these machines within windows further highlighted the limits to the LPA's ability to control signage. In addition, in the Birmingham area the permitted nature of the majority of change involving the installation of shutters also created problems in the application of enhancement strategies in the retail streets. During the 1980s, the increasing desire by many retailers for shutters, in order to combat crime, became a major source of conflict. In the Birmingham area, from 1986 onwards, there was an attempt to operate a roller shutter policy, to limit their use:

"There will be a general presumption against the erection and design of security shutters on listed buildings and within conservation areas..[roller shutters] in conservation areas will be sympathetic with the aesthetic ideas pursued in conservation areas." (Birmingham CC, 1987; p7).

However, while there was some success in rejecting external solid metal shutters on listed buildings and their neighbours in Cannon Street and New Street, insurance requirements and the LPA's inability to control the installation of internal shutters highlighted the clear limits to LPA power in this matter.

In 1985, the CAAC called for the encouragement of "GWA type schemes" for listed Victorian buildings, illustrating the impact of this private scheme in highlighting the economic potential of these refurbished buildings. Following this, the LPA sought to encourage the removal of the existing legacy of poor shopfronts and signs and foster a climate of good design through the offer of grant aid, given the limits to the improvements obtainable through strong

control and enforcement action. Grant aid was used as a 'carrot' to persuade applicants to improve the quality of designs submitted, or to provide enhancements beyond the changes applied for. In this respect the LPA pursued a policy in line with the successful grant driven developments of the Bristol area in the 1970s. The benchmark in this policy was the improvement of shopfronts in the 35-40 New Street Block, in line with the 1984 enhancement strategy. The most successful was the shopfront developed by Body Shop, which set a high quality standard for the area. In a number of instances along New Street grant aid was offered to achieve a design solution in line with LPA policy, and offset applicant reluctance stemming from the perceived cost of refurbishment schemes. In the conversion and refurbishment of a former cinema in New Street (92-93), grant aid was used to obtain the design stipulation of hand painted signs and wood frames. Grant aid was also used to expose terracotta and add pilasters to shopfront schemes on important Arts and Crafts buildings in New Street, particularly on 41 New Street and 45 New Street. It is clear that grant aid provided a new strength to the shopfronts policy in the Birmingham retail streets, and by 1990 problematic signs were more likely to be withdrawn following negotiation, rather than refused outright, and grant aid offered. These developments fostered a general improvement in design standards along New Street, with the decision by Rumbelows to change an internally illuminated box sign to individual letters on a marble fascia on 124 New Street in 1987 being an indicator of the new standards expected for the area.

By 1989 the CAAC was suggesting the widespread use of grant aid along the main shopping streets to improve shopfront designs. However, the amount of grant aid available to this scheme overall was small (Hargreaves, pers. comm.). Consequently, improvement remained dependent on cooperation from applicants and private landowners, and strong pre- and post-submission negotiation by the LPA. Efforts to develop integrated shopfront improvement schemes met with limited success. Where the Council owned the freehold of buildings in the retail streets some success was achieved in developing integrated refurbishment schemes, principally on buildings on Corporation Street, with good signage and shopfronts achieved on 37-39, 41-45 and 47-49 Corporation Street through the offer of grant aid for 'Bodyshop type' developments. However, in blocks in private ownership many tenants were

unwilling to develop schemes unless applying for change themselves. For example, in relation to the Pizza Hut application for 41 New Street, while the LPA wanted an integrated scheme with 42 and 42a New Street, their powers were too limited to achieve this even with grant aid. Some improvements were made to the poor shopfront on 42a New Street in 1987, although the LPA had to compromise on its objectives and allow neon signs in return for the exposure of terracotta detail. In Corporation Street, the LPA pressed for the uptake of grant aid by refusing a shopfront application when the applicant declined the offer of grant aid; a risky strategy given the danger of appeal on these refusal grounds. Compelling applicants to engage in enhancement strategies proved difficult given the lack of support from the private landowners of these Victorian commercial buildings towards their enhancement. The actions of the private landowners of 2-6 Corporation Street effectively stopped the wider development of refurbishment schemes in lower Corporation Street, as they did not wish to improve their building whilst waiting for the opportunity to redevelop. Further to this, attempts to gain improvements to the front of the Cathedral Tavern Church Street in 1985 were thwarted by short lease tenancies offered by the landowners in anticipation of redevelopment. These cases provided a clear illustration of the power of private landowners in commercial areas to limit the impact of conservation policy.

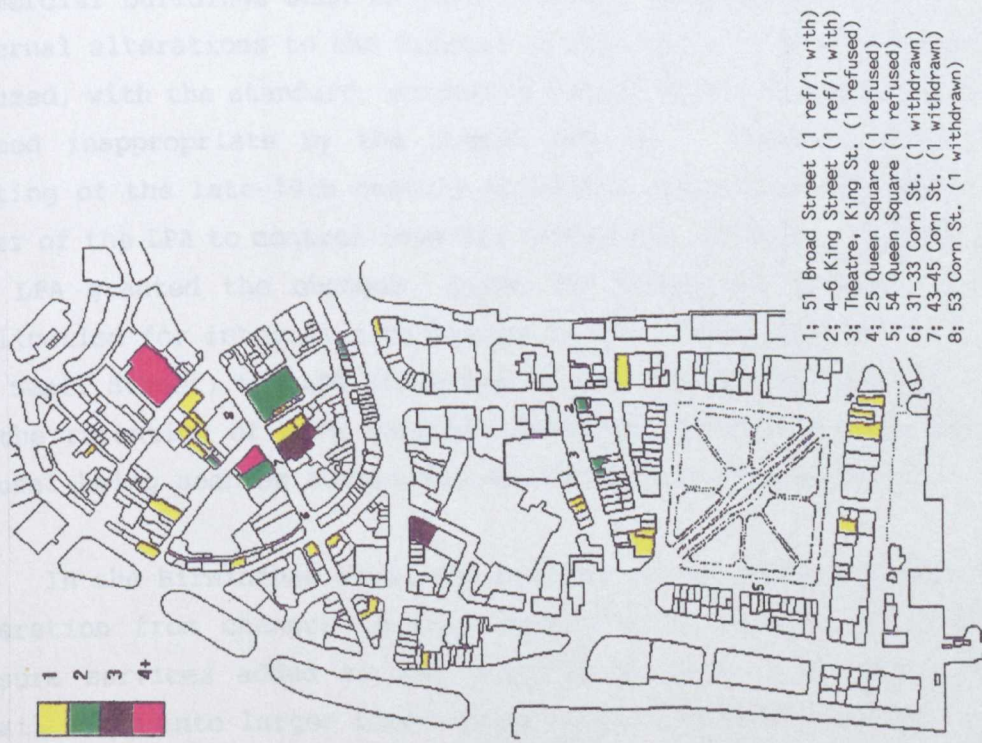
### **Reusing old buildings; the control of interior alteration**

The economic upturn of the 1980s, coupled with a growing appreciation of the value of old buildings, provided the impetus for wider refurbishment of these buildings. In particular, many historic buildings were colonised by secondary functions such as public houses, restaurants and cafes to support the expanding leisure and tourist sector, precipitating alteration and refurbishment. Within both conservation areas, problems occurred in relation to character erosion through the application of a standardised corporate heritage in the external and internal refurbishment of buildings. The most contentious aspect of this private-sector driven improvement was the alteration of building interiors during refurbishment schemes. Again, these developments provided a useful example of the conflict between corporate identity and LPA policies, and an indication of the relative strength of conservation and business arguments. In the 1980s, both areas sought to

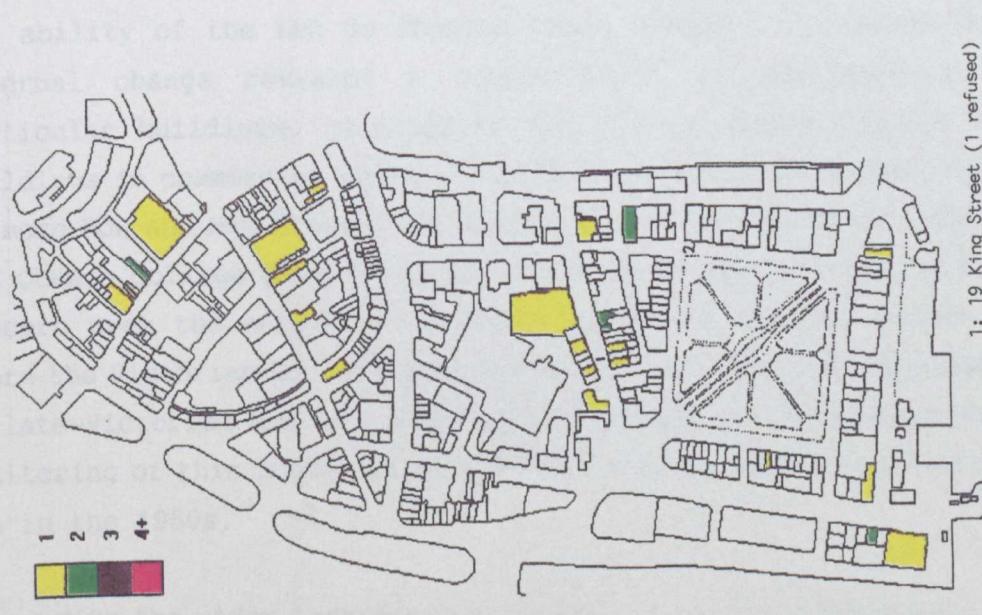
control erosion of character through internal change (Bristol CC, 1984; Birmingham CC, 1986). However, as the requirement for permission for internal alteration applies only to listed buildings, even in a conservation area, the ability of the LPA to control internal change was again dependent on the number of listed buildings, conditional on the national worth placed on the fabric of an area.

In both areas, the refurbishment of public houses caused much concern, with intense battles concerning the internal alteration of these buildings. In the Bristol area, a significant proportion of the internal change applied for involved public houses, with activity centred around King Street, associated with the transition of this historic street into an important leisure area in the 1970s (figure 6.16a). With a move to open plan bars, and theme bars, the operating criteria of the public houses and restaurants moving into the area conflicted with the 17th and 18th century layout of much of the fabric. In 1975, a number of internal alterations to 20 King Street were carried out without much LPA comment, despite objections from the Civic Society and the DoE. However, by 1977, with the development of the conservation programme, control became increasingly evident with the refusal of an application for internal alterations to 19 King Street. In 1987 alterations to the Llandogger Trow (4-6 King Street) were refused, due to lack of detail, and the erosion of features condemned (figure 6.16b). In this case the LPA were able to control these applications for change, and to negotiate a complete refurbishment scheme that was specific to the Llandogger Trow, rather than of a corporate nature, due to the full listing of this building, and its age. However, the lack of exemption for these old buildings from fire and building regulations continued to cause problems for the LPA in attempting to control internal alterations during conversion into leisure uses in this street (Brook pers. comm.).

For younger buildings in the Bristol area success in controlling internal alteration was more mixed. The LPA were able to limit internal alteration to important buildings in commercial use, such as banks along Corn Street and offices around Queen Square, where refusals indicated evidence of increased awareness of the problem of erosion in these listed buildings



a; applications approved in the 1970s



b; applications approved in the 1980s

Figure 6.16; Internal alterations approved in the Bristol study area



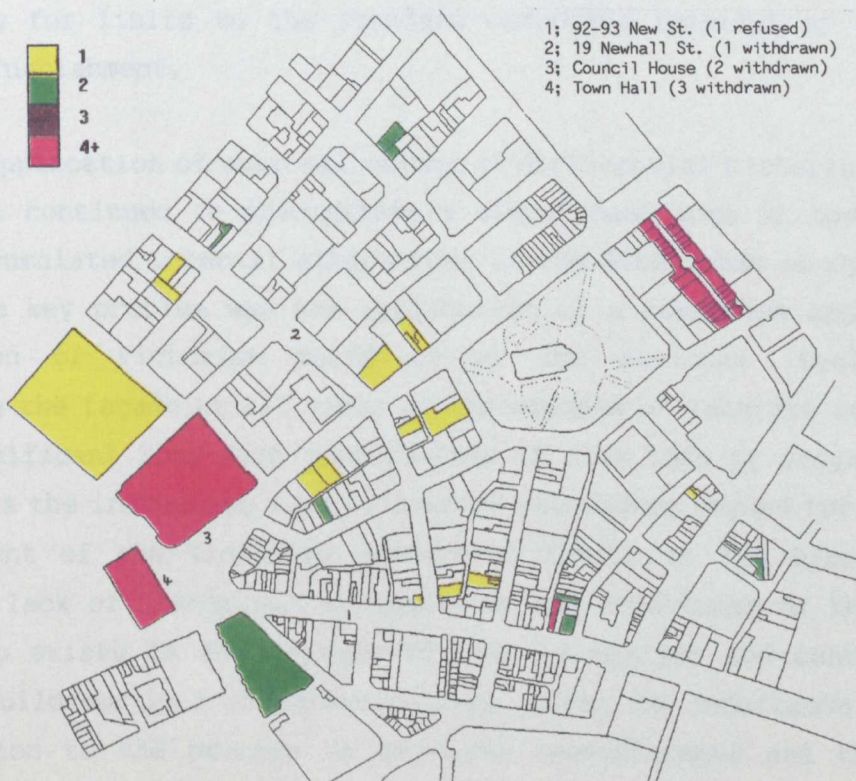
(figure 6.16b). However, attempts to control alteration to minor Victorian commercial buildings such as public houses were mixed. In the early-1980s, internal alterations to the Bristol Bridge Inn (1-5 St Nicholas Street) were refused, with the standard, corporate ground floor 'Victorian Style' interior deemed inappropriate by the Design Section. However, with only partial listing of the late-19th century buildings comprising the public house, the power of the LPA to control internal change was limited. Following amendments the LPA granted the changes, given the threat of appeal. Again, for an application for internal alterations to the listed Assize Court public house (15 Small Street) the LPA preferred to approve the application conditionally on the retention of more internal features, given the problems of outright refusal being seen as curtailing efficient business operation.

In the Birmingham area, the problem of increased pressure for internal alteration from changes in the accommodation demands of professional and leisure services added to the existing problem of pressure to amalgamate retail units into larger floor areas in primary retail streets. However, in the Birmingham area, in the 1970s, the majority of internal change to retail and financial buildings in the conservation area was uncontrolled, due to the limited listing of the area's Victorian commercial fabric, which restricted the ability of the LPA to monitor these changes. Detailed examination of internal change revealed a concentration of applications relating to particular buildings, principally the Council House (figure 6.17a). Few buildings in commercial use are highlighted, only listed bank buildings along Colmore Row and New Street, the Kardomah cafe on New Street, the Post Office, and Queens College Chambers along Paradise Street. In particular, there was concern over the extent of internal change to offices around Colmore Row, where the Victorian Society grew concerned about the loss of internal features to late-Victorian and Arts and Crafts offices. It is clear that the lack of monitoring of this change in the 1970s stored up considerable problems for the LPA in the 1980s.

With the wider listing of buildings in the Birmingham area in the 1980s, the pressure for internal change became more evident (figure 6.17b). Yet, despite moves to develop stronger control of internal change by the Birmingham LPA, there was a continuing problem with the loss of interiors (Birmingham CC,



a; applications approved in the 1970s



b; applications approved in the 1980s

Figure 6.17; Internal alterations approved in the Birmingham study area

1986). The small scale incremental nature of internal change continued to create problems for the LPA in monitoring and controlling the accumulated threat to valued interiors. In addition, the continued ambivalence to the importance of Victorian buildings expressed at a national level (noted in the inspectors comments in relation to 55-73 Colmore Row; see Chapter Five), limited the development of this particular policy in the 1980s. One of the most important test cases concerned the retention of historical internal features in 41 New Street, a listed Arts and Crafts building. During the 1980s, there were eight applications for internal alterations in 6 years. In 1981, internal alterations were carried out without an LBC application, with the LPA taking the unusual step of threatening enforcement action, which was partially successful in limiting the extent of internal change. In 1987, the LPA pressed for the retention of original features and the reinstatement of some lost features during the buildings' fitting out with a standard Pizza Hut interior. However, in the pro-business climate in central Birmingham at this time, following the Colmore Row decision in 1986, the LPA had little success in pressing for limits to the standard corporate interior or in obtaining further refurbishment.

The application of national values of differential historic worth at the local level continued to precipitate a significant loss of townscape grain through accumulated internal alterations in the Birmingham study area in the 1980s. The key problem was the application of a townscape approach to the conservation of Victorian buildings at the national level, based on maintaining the façade at all costs at the expense of internal features. One of the significant long term implications of this loss of original internal features was the increasing ease with which developers argued for the complete redevelopment of the Victorian commercial fabric in the Birmingham area, citing the lack of historical authenticity and importance of the interiors. A clear gap exists in the ability of LPAs to monitor and control internal change to buildings in a conservation area, given the importance of this type of alteration to the process of building redevelopment and the long term historical integrity of the building. The current situation clearly encourages the development of a conservation area made up merely of key buildings surrounded by façades.

## CHARACTER EROSION THROUGH FUNCTIONAL CHANGE

In the post-war period the cores of most European cities have undergone significant functional change, specifically the growing domination of service sector industries in the CBD, and the concentration of more business in the hands of larger national and multi-national companies (Burtenshaw, Bateman and Ashworth, 1991). This trend has affected all service functions within the CBD including retailing, financial and professional services, leisure, and hospitality industries. Yet, despite the frequent coexistence of the CBD of a city with its historic core, the relationship of these functional changes to conservation planning has often not been explored in depth (English Heritage, 1988b; Slater and Shaw, 1988).

However, monitoring is important as functional change can be the precursor to fabric changes, resulting from the increasing non-conformity between new uses and the existing building. In addition, a noticeable consequence of urban conservation in many European cities has been to change the functional mix of conserved areas (Burtenshaw, Bateman and Ashworth, 1991). Increasingly, the survival of historic buildings, not in public ownership, depends largely on private capital, as grant availability is limited. Key economic problems face the reuse of old buildings, with a lack of tax relief for refurbishment of buildings in the U.K.. In terms of nationally available conservation funding, commercial premises have consistently received less aid than residential property, either through grants obtained from Town Schemes (stemming from the 1953 Historic Buildings & Ancient Monuments Act) or section 10 grants (available to all conservation areas since the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act) (Brook, pers.comm.; Hargreaves, pers. comm.). Many LPAs relax land utilisation policies in order to find long term new uses for historic buildings and obtain refurbishment. Consequently, it is economic opportunities offered by historic buildings as prestige offices or tourist assets which motivates the private investment crucial to the financing of conservation effort in these areas (Bateman, 1985; Ashworth, 1994). A result of these efforts has been to alter the economic balance of these areas, and to displace established users by improving environmental quality, and thus increasing land values. Central conservation areas have tended to become precincts dominated by those

businesses which value historicity sufficiently to pay for it, and thus become commercially gentrified.

The degree to which the LPA can monitor and control changes of use in conservation areas is limited by their ability to control the changes of use occurring within commercial centres. As for other minor changes, conservation area designation offers no additional control over change in use. As in other areas control is limited to changes of use between use classes. In addition, no further direct control is offered in the case of listed buildings. Despite the need to monitor change of use, LPA attempts to control this change have frequently fallen foul of central government attitudes towards the excessive control of private enterprise. Throughout the 1980s, the ability to control changes of use was limited by central government moves to loosen controls on business operations, culminating in the revision the Use Classes Order in 1987 (Cullingworth and Nadin, 1994). As a consequence of this stance by central government, attempts to fuse control over land use with other policies, such as conservation, have met with resistance when challenged on appeal. This lack of support at the level of central government is compounded by an incomplete understanding of the processes of commercial change at the local level. While change between use classes, such as between retail and offices, is controlled at the local level it is rarely monitored in detail, and is little understood by LPAs. This limits policy development (Kirby and Holf, 1986).

While the overall functional character of the two study areas remained commercial and civic in the post-1970 period, a combination of land use and conservation policies produced a number of significant changes to the functional sub-zones within each area. These changes affected both the extent of the sub-zone boundaries and the internal composition of these zones. The lack of detailed monitoring of the dynamics and impact of these changes at the micro-level led to the poor integration of landuse and conservation policies. It also led in some instances to the application of contradictory policies, particularly surrounding issues of vitality and building survival and reuse. The failure to adequately define key functional areas within both conservation areas had important implications for the recognition of areas where there was increasing functional non-conformity which could create broader conservation

problems. Monitoring of functional change is particularly critical in the recognition of the occurrence of problems such as the under-use of buildings, and the incursion of dead frontage uses. An exception to this was the recognition by the Bristol LPA of the link between the development of the new Law Courts building in the city core and the maintenance of small legal offices around Small Street. Here, the particular character of the area to be maintained stemmed from the high conformability of the fabric with the use. The LPA recognised that if the Courts were not built in Small Street then a problem of retaining legal firms in the area would result, with the potential for under-use and decay in this important historic area, stemming from the non-conformability of these small offices to other modern office users requiring open plan offices (Brook, pers. comm.).

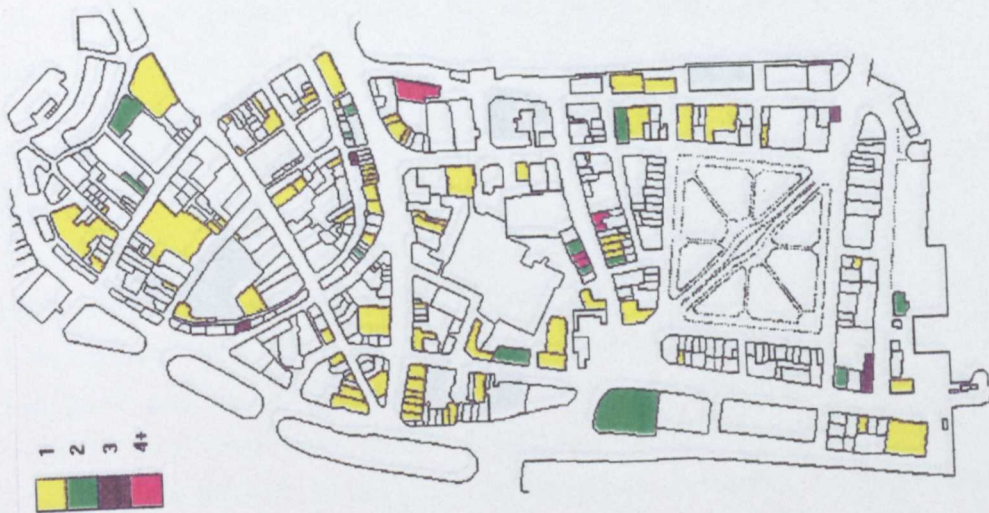
### **The incursion of new office development into warehouse and industrial areas**

In the post-war period, changes in the structure of the British economy, in the form of a gradual shift in emphasis from manufacturing to services, produced a switch from a demand for factories, workshops and warehouses towards offices in the core (Whitehand, 1983; Burtenshaw, Bateman and Ashworth, 1991). The growth in floor space devoted to offices, especially professional and financial services, reflected an increase in both office employment and the amount of space per office worker, as a consequence of the introduction of new technology (Whitehand, 1983). As noted in Chapter Five, office floorspace growth in the two study areas was also stimulated by the relocation of offices to provincial cities (Bateman, 1985). The main increases in office floor space in the 1960s and 1970s resulted from the construction of new, free standing office blocks at an increased scale. This occurred principally on sites formerly occupied by lower density offices, and through the incursion of offices into other functional areas, particularly those containing warehouses and industrial establishments (Whitehand, 1983). The decline in warehousing reflects, in part, the decreasing dependence of retail establishments on separate centrally-located wholesaling facilities (Davies, 1976). The process of transition was aided by the zoning out of certain functions in the core within post-war planning policies, and through comprehensive redevelopment schemes. The increasing domination of office functions produced a ripple effect within mixed use areas, re-orientating

these areas towards office functions. The redevelopment of sites as large office schemes reduced the number of small units of office accommodation, displacing these offices into other adjacent non-office areas and displacing other small businesses from central sites.

In both study areas, the expansion of office zones into areas containing warehousing and industrial functions was evident in the 1970s. The particular geography of these functional changes was evident in concentrations of change of use activity around the boundary zones between the primary office areas and mixed commercial zones, and activity within semi-industrial and mixed commercial zones (figure 6.18). In the Birmingham area, the combination of zoning, road improvement and comprehensive redevelopment policies in the post-war period purposely sought the removal of the 19th century legacy of industrial and warehouse functions from the core contained within the Inner Ring Road. Speculative development was harnessed to aid this transformation. An illustration of this process was the application for a new office block, at a greatly increased scale, to replace the existing warehousing at 120 Edmund Street in 1970.

The designation of the Colmore Row conservation area, rather than seeking to arrest the process of office domination, served to complete the transformation and marginalisation of warehouse functions in the core. The wording of the designation document for the Colmore Row area specified the protection of its office character, thereby downgrading other uses in the area and adding to its prestige as a prime office location (Birmingham CC, 1971). In addition, the erratic designation of the boundary of the conservation area aided the removal of the last of the mixed industrial/commercial uses from Printing Quarter to the north of Colmore Row. Outside of conservation control, the unlisted mixed commercial Victorian fabric continued to be removed and replaced by large new offices (see Chapter Five). The ripple effects of this continued in this area during the office boom of the 1980s, with further use changes along Barwick Street, Church Street and Edmund Street (figure 6.19b). Within this mixed warehouse/office area, increases in change of use activity provided an indication of the onset of further functional transformation through new office development. The landowners of some of the remaining Victorian blocks in the area rented properties on short leases

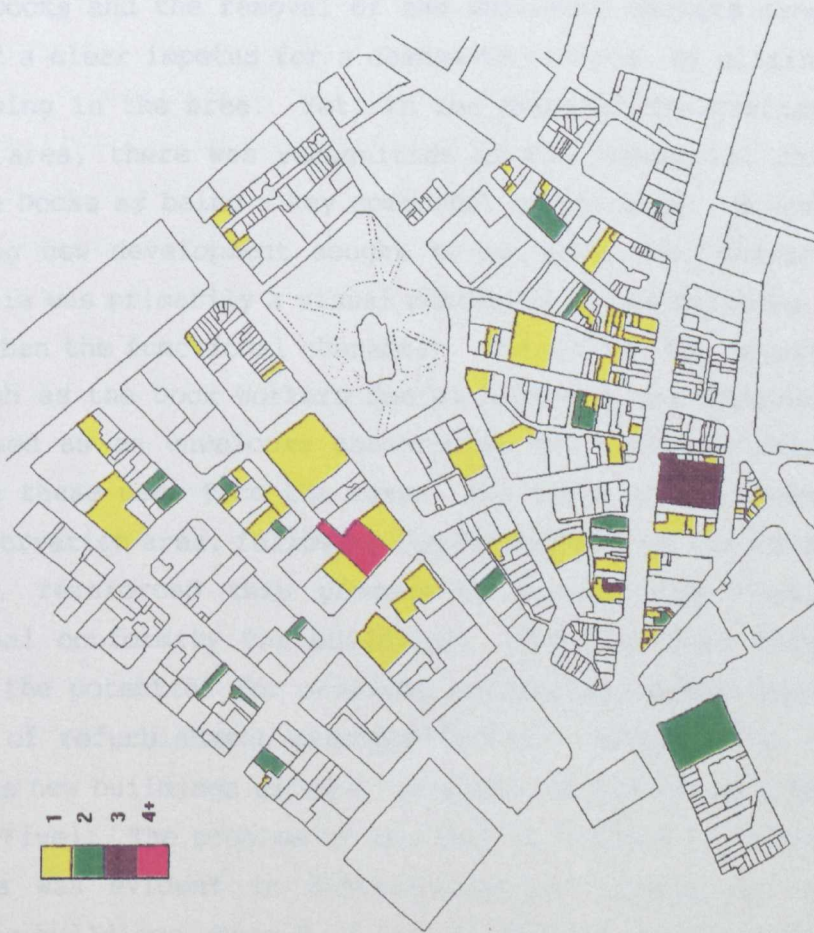
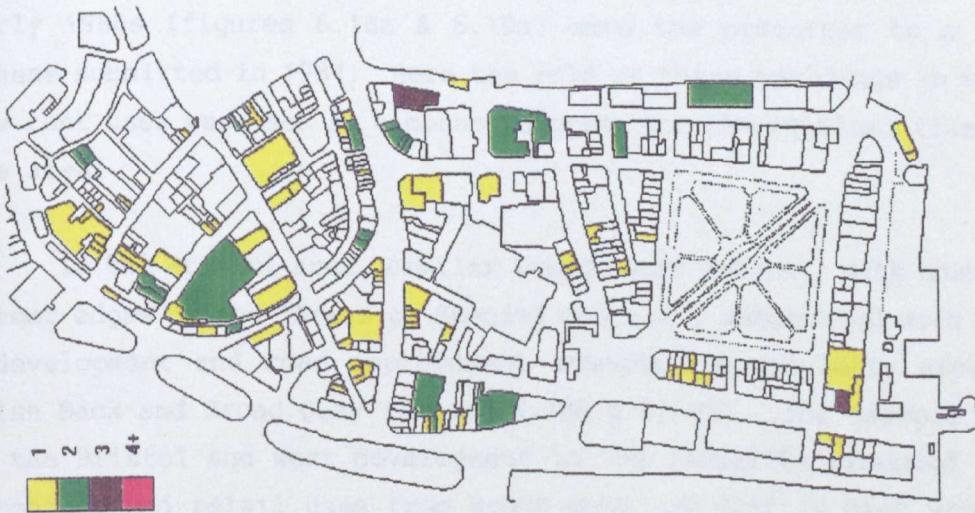


a; applications approved in the Birmingham study area

b; applications approved in the Bristol study area

Figure 6.18; Changes of use approved in the 1970s





a; applications approved in the Birmingham study area

b; applications approved in the Bristol study area

Figure 6.19; Changes of use approved in the 1980s

in order to exploit the potential of these sites for future redevelopment. The high turn over of uses in 158-164 Edmund Street in the late 1970s and early 1980s (figures 6.18a & 6.19a) were the precursor to a redevelopment scheme submitted in 1984. Here the role of these buildings in housing mixed, low rent uses was used as a means to press for the eventual transformation of the area.

In the Bristol area, similar trends were evident, with change around the former edges of the 'Areas of Special Control', associated with comprehensive redevelopment and road improvement schemes, particularly around the quays Welsh Back and Broad Quay (figure 6.18b & 6.19b). For example, the building of the Bristol and West development in the 1960s/70s prompted the flight of warehouse and retail uses from Broad Quay, evident in high vacancy rates in the 1970s, and replacement by office uses (figure 6.18b). Both the closure of the Docks and the removal of the wholesale markets around Baldwin Street provided a clear impetus for a change to offices, by eliminating the need for warehousing in the area. Yet, in the original designation document for the Bristol area, there was recognition of the industrial character associated with the Docks as being a key component of the area. However, while policies directing new development sought to maintain the 'character' of the Docks area, this was primarily a visual character in new building (see Chapter Five) rather than the functional character. Generally, the legacy of this past Dock use, such as the Dock Workers Social Club and the workshops and warehouses, was viewed as an unwelcome anachronism and land use policies continued to preclude these uses from the core. The focus on the reduction of blight in the conservation area, following the development of the Conservation Programme in 1977, reinforced this process by prioritising repair and reuse over functional conformity for buildings. The low floor heights in warehouses limited the potential for straight conversion (Brook, pers. comm.), and the pursuit of refurbishment precipitated the redevelopment of many warehouses either as new buildings using a 'warehouse style' or as a façadist scheme (see Chapter Five). The problem of the lack of support for warehouse functions in the area was evident in difficulties in finding new uses for important warehouse buildings where full refurbishment had been achieved, most notably the Granary (32 Welsh Back). Although used as an entertainment venue throughout the 1970s, it remained empty after refurbishment in the mid-1980s,

the form of the building being functionally obsolescent in the current functional structure of the conservation area.

### **Office displacement of residential uses**

A further consequence of the replacement of many small office buildings in both study areas by larger buildings was to concentrate these small office users into the remaining older buildings. In order to satisfy the demand for small offices, the trend in both areas was towards the conversion of upper-floors to office use. In particular, residential uses in upper floors were vulnerable to this pressure. The trend for residential premises in upper floors to become under-used or vacant, as a result of social trends, the operating demands of retailers, and problems of building adaptability, has long been recognised in historic areas (Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, 1978; Hennesey, 1979; English Heritage, 1988a; Slater and Shaw, 1988). With the advent of conservation controls on new building and building adaptation in both areas, the conversion of upper-floor subsidiary uses into further office accommodation provided an inexpensive means of cashing in on local demands for office accommodation. In both areas there were a number of applications in the 1970s for the conversion of caretakers flats to office accommodation linked to the rise in electronic security.

Within the Birmingham area, the trend was principally the conversion of subsidiary uses to offices, for example along Bennetts Hill, with little residential accommodation left within the core in 1970. In the Bristol area, the survival of more residential accommodation within the core, produced a more noticeable displacement of residential uses. Conversion was most evident in the late 1970s and early 1980s, coinciding with the office building moratorium and the expansion of the professional and financial services in the city. A number of flats close to the main office zones were converted, with examples in Corn Street (40 (1979) and 53-55 (1981)), Baldwin Street (1-5 and 12-14 in the mid-1970s), and Queen Square (1 (1981), 17 (1979), 46 (1982)). In the late-1970s, the Bristol LPA attempted to arrest this trend by linking together land use policy objectives and conservation concerns. In the first conservation programme in 1977, the LPA attempted to retain residential accommodation in the centre, in order to promote vitality. Frequently, grants

were used to facilitate the rehabilitation of historic buildings for residential use in order to meet housing needs (Punter, 1991). Initially the scheme was successful, with an example being the introduction of social housing into 66 Prince Street in 1977. However, the ability of the LPA to pursue this policy was eroded by the new legislation in relation to LPAs and housing post-1979 (Punter, 1991). In the early 1980s, the LPA recognised that they could do little to help retain these residential uses and adopted the practice of allowing this change to offices in return for conservation gain, in the form of building refurbishment. With a lack of interest from developers, attempts to provide residential accommodation in new developments were frequently dropped for conservation gains in negotiation. The refurbishment of 62 Prince Street (1987), and its partial use as an urban studies centre and youth hostel, was obtained as a gain for the deviation from the original brief (1983) allowing offices instead of residential uses.

The position of central government planning guidance, in denying the inclusion of land use as part of conservation's remit, imposed limits on the operation of this conservation gain policy in the Bristol area, which was particularly exposed at appeal. In the case of the loss of residential accommodation over the Bristol Bridge pub (5 St Nicholas Street; 1984), the LPA had been prepared to allow the change in return for major refurbishment works. When a commitment to this refurbishment was not forthcoming from the applicant, the application was refused and was taken to appeal. However, the LPA chose to contest the appeal in terms of its breach of the policy to resist the loss of residential accommodation in the core (H8 policy), rather than on the conservation gain clause (E16 policy), feeling that the former policy would be more easily defended. While the appeal was dismissed this merely served to reinforce the operation of land use policies, rather than the conservation gain framework. Therefore, in 1989, an appeal against the refusal of a change of use from residential to offices in Queen Square was granted, questioning the LPA's ability to use the loss of residential accommodation lever to obtain refurbishment, and more broadly calling into question the whole conservation gain framework.

## **The incursion of office functions into retail areas**

The growth of financial and professional services in the core since the early 1970s, and in particular those agencies with public office functions, has altered the character of retail areas within the core (Kirby and Holf, 1986). This pressure for change to offices has been facilitated by the contraction of retailing in the core, which has led to the availability of vacant premises in declining secondary retail areas. Underpinning this decline has been the demise of the small shop, through the growth in control by the multiple retailers. Between 1960 and 1989 multiple traders in Britain increased their share of the market from 33% to 80% (O'Brien and Harris, 1992). More recently, vacancy has occurred as a result of a contraction in the number of retail outlets in the core, due to the movement of particular retailing sectors out-of-town (Schiller, 1986; Jones and Simmons, 1990; O'Brien and Harris, 1991; Guy, 1994). The trends of redevelopment, multiple domination and out-of-town movement have produced a reduction in the variety of goods and services offered, leading to the homogenisation of many high streets, the loss of local character, and a loss of vitality in many centres.

The trend towards the comprehensive redevelopment of retail areas, introducing shopping precincts and, latterly, covered shopping malls, precipitated a change in the character of shopping areas, and shifts in the retail gravity of a core in the wake of this redevelopment. New shopping centre developments have had a tendency to attract retailers away from existing streets, which have then suffered as shopping streets, inviting an influx of service trades, or 'quasi-retail uses', such as employment agencies, travel agents, betting offices, estate agents and building societies (Kirby and Holf, 1986). One of the most important incursions by these quasi-retail uses throughout the 1970s was that by building societies and estate agents, particularly in large centres (Kirby and Holf, 1986). Between 1965 and 1976 their numbers trebled (URPI, 1979). In the mid-1980s, the economic boom and the restructuring and deregulation of many parts of the financial services sector resulted in the further incursion of building societies and estate agencies. Also of importance has been the growth of employment agencies, associated with rising unemployment and changes to flexible working habits. The increase in professional services has led to the problem of 'dead

frontages', and the application by LPAs of policies to control their spread and ensure a continuous retail frontage in particular areas (see Larkham and Vilagrassa, 1995).

In both study areas from the 1970s onwards there was evidence of a contraction of retailing functions, and of a change of retail gravity towards post-war retail developments outside of the study areas, namely Broadmead in Bristol and the Bull Ring in Birmingham. Within both study areas the geography of functional change resulting from these trends was evident in concentrations of change of use activity along the boundary of the primary financial office zone in each area where it abutted mixed use and retail zones (figures 6.18 & 6.19). In the Birmingham area, Temple Street in particular exemplified incursion of professional service functions with public offices in place of retailing. On the edge of the conservation area during the 1970s, and occupying a key position between the primary office zone and primary retail zone, it experienced an influx of building societies and estate agents in the 1970s (20, 21, 22) and employment agencies in the 1980s (15-16, 23). Functional change was also evident along Colmore Row, again well placed between office and mixed commercial zones. Offering as it did a prestige address for offices, change was intense, with small shops within the Grand Hotel building and 71-73 and 77 Colmore Row changing from retail to employment agency, building society and bank functions in the 1970s and early-1980s. In the Bristol area, similar changes were evident along Clare Street and Baldwin Street, again on the border between a declining mixed commercial area, and the public office professional service area along Corn Street. Along Clare Street, the incursion of building societies was evident in the early 1970s (eg 3-5 and 17-19), and further building societies and employment agencies in the 1980s (eg 9 (1987), 10 (1984), 12 (1986), 14 (1985)).

The development of office functions within both areas also led to the incursion of other quasi-retail uses into their secondary retail areas, with the growth in office support functions. In particular there was an increase in sandwich bars and takeaways in both areas, servicing the growing lunchtime office trade. In the Bristol area in the 1980s, the main growth area was around Baldwin Street, near the markets retail zone, and St Stephens/St Nicholas Street. While there was a reluctance on the part of the LPA to see

the erosion of retailing around the Markets through the incursion of offices, these support services were allowed a niche in the area in an attempt to bolster retailing. In the Birmingham area, development focused around Edmund Street/Church Street, and the secondary retail area around Navigation Street and Pinfold Street. However, by the mid-1980s, the growth in these functions in both conservation areas was causing concern, with their perceived down-market, 'tacky' image deemed to be at odds with the creation of a high quality retail and leisure image. Yet, generally there was little that the LPAs could do to control this change, given the DoE's positive disposition towards service uses in retail areas (Kirby and Holf, 1986). After 1987, the simplification of the Use Classes Order made it more difficult to stem their influx, making change between food uses a permitted development.

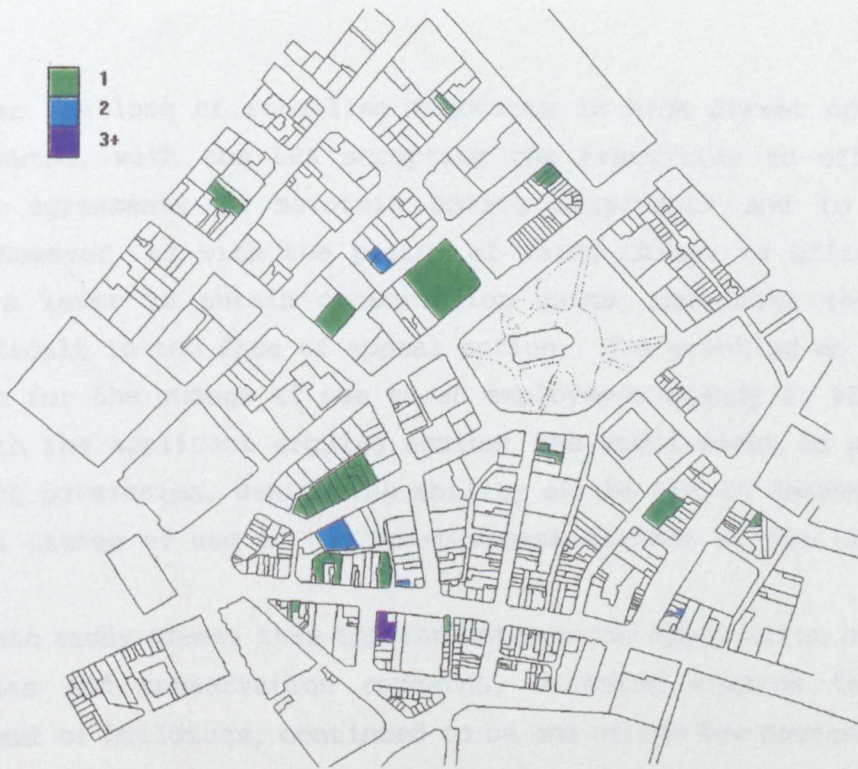
Within both study areas, the influx of quasi-retail uses was aided by both land use and conservation policies. In both areas, the process of erosion of mixed commercial and retail areas was facilitated by ambiguity in the definition of boundary zones between retail and office areas. This limited the ability of both LPAs to refuse particular functions and control the influx of these uses. In the Bristol area, the overlapping nature of primary functional zones was acknowledged as a key problem in maintaining and enhancing mixed use areas (Mills, pers. comm.). In the Birmingham area, the intersection of four functional zones (office, retail, civic, entertainment) along New Street created difficulties in formulating a clear policy in relation to land use in the area, leaving it susceptible to changes in its functional composition. As a result of its mixed status, a number of restaurants and wine bars were developed in the area in the 1970s and early 1980s, such as 63, 66, 67 and 68 New Street.

Further complications became evident in the conflicts between land use and conservation concerns in the Birmingham area. At the Victoria Square end of New Street, during the 1970s, there was a gradual change in the emphasis placed on particular policies, with a shift from a concern for the protection of functions towards a greater concern for the building fabric. In the early-1970s, strong land use controls continued to be applied to protect the primary retail area, with the refusal of an employment agency at 69 New Street (1970), a withdrawn application for an employment agency at 83 New Street (1973), and

a refused application for a building society at 98 New Street (1973) (figure 6.20a). By the mid-1970s, the increasing vacancy in the area prompted planners to allow changes to bank use at 54, 61 and 71 New Street, in preference to dereliction. However, in each case, action was taken to limit wider office incursion by granting special permission for bank use only, where the use would revert to a shop if the banking function ceased. Policy shifted again in the early 1980s, with moves to reverse the loss of shopping in the area, prompting a number of refusals for changes of use to building societies, eg at 61B New Street (1983) and 61 New Street (1984) (figure 6.20b). This was linked to the development of the CALP in which the LPA were keen to exhibit a strong commitment to retaining the shopping character of the area. Consequently, the debate between reuse and the protection of retail uses along New Street continued in the late-1980s. In comments on an application for change to 51 New Street from retail to an employment agency (1988), the views of strategic planners, in wishing to protect the primary shopping area, differed from those of the conservation planners who wanted reuse of the building, citing the problems of long term dereliction in the area. It is clear that the increasing influence of conservation concerns in the control of development in the Birmingham area served to facilitate the expansion of office functions into marginal retail areas, through a desire to reuse buildings and avoid long term dereliction, and by increasing the prestige of those streets within the area through refurbishment schemes.

In the Bristol area, unlike the Birmingham area, retailing was accepted as secondary in relation to retailing in Broadmead. Consequently, there was a lack of success in retaining active uses in the old city in the mid-1970s as a result of retail changes. In addition, the LPA were keen for newly listed buildings in the area to maintain a use and avoid problems of dereliction (Brook, pers. comm.). Consequently, in the 1980s, the further transformation from retail to public office functions within these mixed zones was allowed in return for conservation gain in terms of refurbishment. In Clare Street, the influx of professional services was used by the LPA as a lever for obtaining conservation gain, in the form of improvements and refurbishment. This was also evident in the secondary retail areas around Broad Street, Wine Street and High Street, in relation to the incursion of employment agencies in the 1980s. Although the Civic Society expressed





a; applications refused or withdrawn in the 1970s



b; applications refused or withdrawn in the 1980s

Figure 6.20; Changes of use refused or withdrawn in the Birmingham study area

concern over the loss of retailing functions in High Street opposition was generally muted, with the LPA accepting the transition to office uses in return for agreements to maintain active shopfronts and to improvement fascias. However, as with the policy of using change to offices of upper floors as a lever to obtain conservation gains, upholding these policies proved difficult in the face of appeal action. The granting on appeal of an application for the change of use to an employment agency at 46 High Street (1986), with the applicant arguing against the requirement to provide gains for granting permission, dented the ability of the LPA to demand these gains and control change of use in the pro-business climate of the 1980s.

In both study areas, this tension between the application of strict land use policies and conservation concerns, directed towards the reuse and refurbishment of buildings, continued to be one of the few sources of conflict between specialist conservation and general urban planning concerns (Mills, pers. comm.; Murry, pers. comm.). While in the 1980s the influx of office functions into both conservation areas was useful in helping to refurbish and maintain historic buildings, the increasing proportion of these uses has stored up problems for the future. It seems unlikely that the expansion of public offices evident in the 1980s will continue in the future. Indeed, with the increasing rationalisation of the financial service sector, the collapse of the housing market and moves to phone banking, there has been closure of a number of bank, building society and estate agent branches (Rodgers, 1995). Evidence of the past correlation between change in the financial services and change within the built environment of the city centre suggests that this is a transformation that requires close monitoring in the future. Trends towards the creation of monofunctional office areas within central conservation areas, and a reliance on office users to refurbish buildings, has created an inflexibility in land use and conservation strategies which could lead to a number of derelict buildings within these areas. The poor adaptability of many of these buildings to other uses highlights the possibility of the further erosion of building character in these areas.

#### **COUNTERING EROSION OF CHARACTER : ENHANCEMENT**

Within both study areas, specific policies aimed at enhancing the

conservation areas followed a similar pathway of progression from the 1970s to the 1980s, responding to the particular conservation requirements and development environments in those two particular decades. In the 1970s and early-1980s enhancement strategies took the form of positive action in terms of landscaping improvements, as a pump-priming exercise which it was hoped would stimulate private sector led improvements to buildings. With its injection of grant funds in the late-1970s, with which to initiate landscaping improvements, the Bristol area led the way in this form of development, in advance of efforts in the Birmingham area. In the mid- to late-1980s, LPA policy in both areas shifted towards the management of the increasing number of private sector initiated 'enhancements'. Increases in building refurbishment were tied into the increasing association of heritage and economic promotion in the 1980s. In particular old buildings were reused within leisure and tourist developments, and in retail arcades and malls (Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995). Both LPAs sought to obtain high quality refurbishments, both to the interior and exterior of buildings, resisting the application of standardised heritage 'improvements', and to direct private money into wider building and area improvements.

### **Landscaping improvements**

One of the key problems identified within the early stages of conservation area designation, as a threat to area character, was the incursion of cars and the demand for parking. Guidance by the Civic Trust in 1972 stressed that there was more to improvement than physical appearance of buildings and areas, particularly emphasising the removal of traffic (Booth, 1993). However, traffic flows and related issues such as car parking remain central to the continued functioning, and the character and appearance of the majority of conservation areas (Larkham, 1995a). Yet, little guidance exists for conservation planners beyond that dealing primarily with technical considerations, with little consideration of the impact, in conservation and enhancement terms, of these schemes. From the 1970s onwards, both LPAs were active in their attempts to remove open parking, parking within office developments and in developing pedestrianisation:

"The main elements which would raise the quality of the area for the people are the improvement and extension of pedestrian areas and the introduction of shrub and tree planting to these areas."  
(Birmingham CC, 1980; p11)

These newly liberated surfaces brought the need to consider hard landscaping and street furniture, enhancing by addition. With the use of universal modern materials in street landscaping becoming more widespread, for many historic areas a key problem was the homogenisation of the streetscape, the exact reverse of the original idea of conservation area enhancement (Davies, 1991; 1993). However, both LPAs attempted to add paving and street furniture that harmonised with buildings and provided a sense of place.

In the Bristol area, the main improvements took place around the Quays in the late-1970s, where parking was removed and paving reinstated for pedestrian access to the dockside. In the Birmingham area, limited pedestrianisation took place around Temple Row, Cherry Street and Union Street. However, along the main shopping streets, there was opposition to wider pedestrianisation from both the highway engineers and traders well into the 1980s. It was not until the mid-1980s that reduced access for cars was extended into other shopping streets, a process completed with the partial pedestrianisation of New Street in the early 1990s. Despite opposition, in conjunction with building refurbishment schemes, paving and pedestrianisation proposals proved beneficial to the economic fortunes of the two conservation areas. In the Bristol area, the combination of dockside paving and Council-led building refurbishment was crucial in leading the wider enhancement of the conservation area and in setting a standard for building refurbishment (Brook, pers. comm.). Also, in the old core of Bristol, the full pedestrianisation of Corn Street in 1982/3, using grant aid, was important in encouraging the enhancement and maintenance of buildings in this area (Brook, pers. comm.). In the Birmingham area, the combination of these two strategies was critical to the enhancement of the retail environment, particularly around New Street in the late 1980s, reversing the retail decline of the area.

On public highways, and land owned by the Council, the initiation of landscaping improvements proved relatively simple, such as along Corn Street and Bristol Quays. However, on land owned by private companies the initiation of landscaping improvements, and particularly the removal of parking, often proved more difficult. This was due to the fact that land left as open car parks proved highly profitable in central areas. In the Birmingham area, the problem of temporary car parking in Cannon Street was not resolved until the

development of the City Plaza on a site vacant since the 1960s. In the Bristol area, problems with temporary off-road parking remained in Baldwin Street and in the forecourts of offices around Queen Square, despite its removal from the Quays. The LPA had to compromise on parking in Baldwin Street, privately used for offices, as they had no power to force redevelopment. The space had been left as part of a three phase office scheme, started in 1971, which fell foul of the collapse in the office market in the mid-1970s. Refusal to give temporary permission in 1981 and 1983 was taken to appeal and granted on condition that an entrance façade was erected, in line with conservation officers recommendations to restore the street frontage. This was a limited conservation gain where the power of the LPA to negotiate was weak.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Bristol LPA sought to control forecourt parking in Queen Square, to complete environmental improvements in the area:

"The impact of parked vehicles within historic areas should be minimised...the intrusion of vehicles into front gardens or forecourt areas will be opposed." (Bristol CC, 1984; p19)

As Larkham (1995a) notes the wider enhancement of Queen Square initiated in the early-1990s constituted a significant improvement to the conservation area. However, this was not achieved without a considerable battle on the part of the LPA, and it was only when an enhancement strategy was incorporated into the statutory City Centre Local Plan that significant advances were made (Bristol CC, 1990a). Prior to this, change was more incremental and piecemeal, with the use of conservation gain for office development to obtain improvements. During the mid-1980s, the pressure for increased office space in the Square was used as a lever with which to strike deals for the removal of parking and the restoration of forecourts, for example at 4-5 (1985), 6 (1983), 37 (1987). However, limits to the application of this strategy became evident. In 1982, attempts to obtain wider conservation gains beyond the change applied for were challenged, when the refusal of a window change and parking application relating to 46 Queen Square that did not meet the wider requirements of the LPA was taken to appeal. The change was granted on appeal, as the LPA were seen to be demanding too much from the applicant; they had no right to refuse on the grounds of non-compliance with changes demanded beyond those applied for. This condition was again challenged in 1986, at the

height of the development boom, when negotiation on a new application failed to secure parking removal with the refurbishment of 46 Queen Square, as it was claimed that refurbishment already provided a conservation gain. In 1984, the refusal of an application to remove the parking condition imposed during negotiation for a development at 49-51 Queen Square was granted on appeal. Here it was felt that the developers had provided sufficient conservation gain in the refurbishment of the building, in line with the LPA policy. Again, Bristol's conservation strategies encountered problems when pitched against commercial imperatives, such as the demand for parking.

### **Conservation area enhancement and functional vitality**

In the 1980s, the preeminence of the CBD as the primary location of high rank retail functions was challenged by the move to out-of-town locations of many retail activities (Schiller, 1986; O'Brien and Harris, 1991; Guy, 1994). This move out-of-town prompted increased debate within planning and in the popular press surrounding the continued survival and vitality of the city centre/high street (Worpole, 1992; DoE, 1993). The response of many LPAs to the out-of-town threat was the development of positive management and enhancement strategies for commercial centres, and the promotion of the city centre as a heritage and festival based leisure and shopping environment, based on the spectacular growth in leisure services and leisure shopping in the 1980s (Kirby and Holf, 1986). The link between conservation activity and high status retail provision has long been recognised in historic towns (Shaw and Slater, 1988). While conservation controls are often applied to existing high status retail areas, the development of building conservation policies within a retail area can also attract high status and leisure orientated retailing to an area, pushing out existing general retailing uses (Barrett, 1989). Allied to these building conservation schemes, retail area enhancement strategies have also frequently included the development of pedestrianised routes, the development of new retail foci, such as new shopping centres, and the refurbishment of old post-war shopping centres (Jones, 1989).

In the two study areas, these policies were designed to complement policies already in operation which sought to maintain vitality by obtaining active ground floor uses in new developments. In the Bristol area, the policy

of promoting active ground floor uses, in operation from the mid-1970s onwards, achieved only limited success, due to the marginalisation of non-office activities in mixed use areas by new office schemes. In the late-1970s and early 1980s, many ground floor showrooms and retail spaces that had been obtained by negotiation were converted into offices to increase space in modern office developments, for example in Marsh Street, Queen Charlotte Street, "Brigstowe" 5-10 Welsh Back, the Bristol and West development on Broad Quay, and the Nat West development in John Street. In the Birmingham area, the number of active ground floor, mixed use schemes negotiated was more limited, given the low level of new building in the area. Notable successes in maintaining and enhancing retail vitality in the area were the retention of ground floor retail uses in the conversion of the former Woolworths store on New Street into an office building, and the building of the City Plaza shopping centre in Cannon Street.

#### Conservation area enhancement and retailing

The problem of a declining role for the city centre, and the shortage of high quality shopping was identified as a key issue for the Birmingham area in the 1970s (Birmingham CC, 1989). In 1976, the problems of a declining retail environment in upper New Street and the adjoining side streets, with a high turnover of shops, increasing vacancy and consequent lack of repair, was noted specifically in a report to the Planning and Highways Committee. The problems of the area were seen to stem from the development of arcades and pedestrianisation schemes around Union Street, which had provided a more pleasant retail environment. Consequently, in the late 1970s, an influx of office and other uses was allowed into the area, in order to counter the problems of vacancy, a move which weakened its primary retail status (see above). The continuing marginalisation of retailing in New Street was evident in the closure of the large Woolworths store in the mid-1980s (102-106 New Street). In the 1980s, following the inclusion of retail areas into the conservation area, and the listing of more of the Victorian retail fabric, the LPA embarked on a programme to enhance the retail environment, utilising conservation controls and environmental enhancement schemes.

Within the Birmingham area, three parallel strategies were evident; the

refurbishment of the Victorian retail fabric, the development of a new retailing focus, and the removal of vehicle traffic from retail streets. The private refurbishment of the Great Western Arcade (GWA) between 1983 and 1986 set the standard for the refurbishment of the Victorian retail fabric in the area. The private funding of this scheme by the owners Prudential illustrated the profitability of specialist retailing provision in the mid-1980s. This development did, to a certain extent, curtail the incursion of offices into this part of Colmore Row, on the ground floor, providing a focus for specialist retailers in the area. In 1986, Pizza Hut moved into one of the units at the front of the GWA on Colmore Row, further bolstering the mixed character of the area. The Council were also active in the refurbishment of Victorian buildings in its ownership, such as the refurbishment of the City Arcade and buildings in Cannon Street and Corporation Street, in addition to paving and environmental improvements. The enhancement of the retail environment around Cannon Street was also aided by the development of a new retail focus, namely the City Plaza shopping centre between Cannon Street and Temple Row (see Chapter Five). In the late-1980s further private-sector led commercial upgrading was achieved in those side streets that had been part of these earlier enhancement schemes, for example on 13, 35 and 40-41 Cannon Street.

The effect of the removal of vehicle traffic in changing the character of a conservation area has been rarely addressed (Larkham, 1995a). In the Birmingham area, it was perhaps the extension of the pedestrianisation programme, into some of the side streets off New Street, and eventually into New Street itself in the early 1990s, that was the most effective weapon in preventing the erosion of the retail character of the area. In 1984, the pedestrianisation programme and the building refurbishment programme were used as the basis for refusing an application for a change of use to a solicitors office at 17 Cannon Street. This was important in strengthening land use policy, consolidating retail uses at the boundary with the primary office zone. The policy of upgrading to a high class retail area was also used to argue against the classification of Cannon Street as a secondary retail area by an applicant, therefore deflecting applications for a change of use to betting office at 35 and 40-41 Cannon Street in 1984 and 1987 respectively. The increasing retail confidence generated in upper New Street, by plans to



complete the pedestrianisation programme in the late-1980s, was evident in the movement of retail functions back into the area, such as the welcomed change to retailing at 80-81 New Street in 1988. These changes continued in the 1990s with the completion of the pedestrianisation programme. These successes allied to pedestrianisation in the Birmingham area parallel those resulting from the removal of traffic from the Quays in Bristol in the 1970s, allowing the development of leisure uses.

However, there are problems for conservation areas in pursuing the development of specialist retail provision and retail enhancement. Specifically there is a danger of producing an over capacity in specialist shopping, which is particularly vulnerable to downturns in consumer spending, as noted in historic town centres where these uses can dominate (English Heritage, 1988b). This was evident in the sluggish take up of leases in the completed City Plaza development in the early 1990s. Conversely, the success of enhancement schemes in promoting a buoyant, high quality retail environment can also create conservation problems. Increased conservation and upgrading activity can combine to boost the retail profile of the area, producing pressure for the internal and external alteration of buildings, problems evident in historic towns since the 1970s (Slater and Shaw, 1988). This pressure was beginning to become evident in the Birmingham area in the late-1980s, with the application to redevelop a public house behind a façade in Cannon Street (see Chapter Five). In the 1990s, following the completion of the pedestrianisation of New Street, further trends have become evident with the redevelopment behind the façade of 88-91 New Street for a new Habitat store, and the redevelopment behind façades of the Queens Corner site in Corporation Street.

#### Conservation area enhancement and the development of tourist and leisure uses

As noted in Chapter Two, the marketing and selling of the tangible urban heritage in the conserved historic city, by the tourist industry, has been an important economic success for many cities during a period of economic recession. The well publicised success of the 'first wave' of heritage cities, such as Norwich, Chester and Bath in profiting from the tourist boom encouraged other cities to sell their heritage as part of new economic

strategies for central areas (Ashworth, 1987). In many cores, tourist districts have developed, focused around waterways, historic monuments and other tourist resources, containing clusters of supporting uses or secondary resources, including cultural quarters, craft and souvenir areas, appropriate shopping (boutiques and books), catering functions, hotels and tourist information centres (Ashworth, 1987; 1994).

The development of the two study areas as important tourist-historic districts was illustrated by the development of tourist information centres within each area. The development of Bristol's central tourist information centre in the converted St Nicholas Church in the 1970s illustrated the advanced development of tourist and leisure promotion strategies in the core of Bristol. This was allied to the development of a leisure retail environment in the same area, with the conversion of the former wholesale market to craft market trading. These early developments reflected tourist potential of its diverse historic fabric and heritage and the opportunity for leisure development prompted by the closure of the City Docks. Within Birmingham, the move to heritage marketing and tourism did not develop until into the 1980s, associated with the wider appreciation of Victorian industrial and commercial heritage. The development of tourism in the Birmingham area was illustrated by the development of the central tourist information centre in the refurbished Victorian City Arcade in the early-1980s. These tourist developments have been important in retaining hotel uses within both areas, particularly in the older hotels, following periods of uncertainty in both areas in the early 1970s. By the late-1980s, these developments had led to the expansion of hotels within the cores of both areas. Further to this, the growth of tourism in both centres led to the development of clusters of supporting functions or secondary resources. For Kirby and Holf (1986), the growth of quasi retail uses such as amusement centres and catering establishments provide evidence of this increasing leisure reorientation of the city centre.

In the Birmingham area, the upper part of New Street experienced a rise in the concentration of leisure functions in the 1980s, particularly public house, wine bar, restaurant and cafe development, adding to those that moved into the area in the 1970s (figure 6.19a). Developments included an

application for a cafe at 85 New Street (1983), a public house at 92-93 New Street (1985) as part of the refurbishment of the former cinema, the arrival of Pizza Hut at 41 New Street (1986), and the transition to food uses in two of the new units as part of 102 New Street refurbishment (1989). However, not all leisure functions were welcomed by the LPA, particularly the increase of amusement arcades, with change to this function refused along New Street and Navigation Street in the 1980s (figure 6.20b). These changes reflected the role of New Street in Birmingham's heritage/leisure strategy. Within the City Centre Strategy (1986), it was viewed as a linking shopping/restaurant axis between New Street Station, and the two entertainment zones centred on the Bright Lights area of Hurst Street and the Broad Street/Convention Centre area.

In the Bristol area, King Street became an important focus for these supporting functions, clustering around the theatre and the leisure development of the Quays. The development of the King Street and Quay areas as a leisure district was aided by pioneer, local leisure developments in the 1970s, such as the planned conversion of a Byzantine warehouse at 13-15 King Street into an arts workshop. The use of local cultural activity as pioneer was also evident in the refurbishment of 19th century warehousing and transit sheds for arts use, including the Arnolfini Gallery on Prince Street and the Watershed complex on St Augustines Reach. Local entrepreneurs were also active in developing supporting functions at this time, with a number of applications for public houses and restaurants in the area in the 1970s initiated by them; eg 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 32, 33-34, 35 and the Old Library King Street (figure 6.19b). By the late-1970s and early 1980s applications for the conversion of buildings around the Bristol Quays were primarily office and food based, reflecting the changing character of the area and its reduced marginalisation. The increasing commercial returns obtainable from water based leisure development in the 1980s was evident in applications for the conversion of minor industrial buildings around the quays, such as the Engine Shed and Lock Cabin in Prince Street, to a snack bar and newsagents respectively.

Although the increases in leisure and tourist uses have acted to boost the profile and operation of conservation planning and the refurbishment of

building fabric in both areas, the relationship between planning, heritage and tourism remains one of paradox. The utilisation of the built fabric for consumption by external tourists and local leisure users continues to create problems concerning the erosion of area character through alteration, evident in both study areas. With the increasing commercialisation of the leisure and heritage markets, a tension continues to develop between building conservation and the uses to which old buildings are being put currently.

## **CONCLUSION**

While minor change to the built fabric is often overlooked in favour of the more spectacular new building developments, contestation over minor change can reflect concerns similar to those at the larger scale. They can therefore help shed light on the issues surrounding commercial pressure and conservation control, and limits to conservation control. Within both study areas, the majority of changes applied for within the study period were minor in nature. Examination of the nature of minor change in the two conservation areas revealed important differences in the development pressures acting upon them. There were important local differences between the two areas in the impact of wider economic trends, which stemmed from their different character, particularly the amount of retailing and the number of listed buildings, which resulted in different dominant types of minor change in the two areas.

Although, individually, these changes represent a limited alteration to the townscape, when their accumulation over space and time is considered, they represented a significant transformation to the fabric of both central conservation areas. Examination of minor change in the conservation areas was particularly useful in exploring the limits to LPA conservation controls, in relation to business demands. It is clear from examination of negotiation on minor changes in both study areas that the degree of relative power between conservation control and efficient business operation remained blurred. In many cases both LPAs encountered difficulties in applying strong control policies over minor change deemed unsuitable. This was particularly true in the 1980s, when central government adopted a more permissive attitude to minor commercial change. While in conservation areas tighter control was supposed to be possible, in reality this proved difficult to obtain in commercial

conservation areas, given the permissive attitude of central government and the bullish attitude of commercial applicants. In particular, LPAs found it difficult to obtain conservation gains, in terms of building refurbishment, from private applicants, in return for planning permission. With the reduction in grant aid, the use of conservation gain became increasingly important in obtaining refurbishment. Consequently, the difficulties for both LPAs in obtaining conservation gain limited enhancement activity.

Conservation planners were also limited in their ability to control minor changes, as conservation area designation offered no additional control over these changes. Planners were therefore dependent on the general planning controls available to regulate minor changes. Only in the case of listed buildings were extra controls offered, tying success in controlling change to the national worth placed on the fabric of a conservation area. The wider listing of the built fabric was one of the key factors in explaining the greater degree of success in the Bristol area in the control of minor change. However, the lack of wider controls meant that in both conservation areas, much minor change remained unmonitored, and outside LPA control, due to its permitted nature. In particular, problems arose in the 1980s with the positioning of 'heritage clutter', such as non-illuminated signs, on buildings, much of which was classed as permitted development. The permitted nature of changes within existing sign dimensions also created problems for LPAs in attempting to reverse poor shopfront changes applied for before stricter controls, affecting the relationship between the street and historic building façades.

One of the solutions to this problem, it is argued, would be legislative change, and the reduction of permitted development rights in conservation areas, through the application of Article 4 status to all conservation areas (Coupe, 1991; EHTF, 1992). However, while this would provide greater power for LPAs in countering erosion of character through minor change, it would also create a huge administrative burden in respect of commercial conservation areas, given the volume of minor change in these areas. Article 4 Direction is difficult to achieve, although it is commonly a precondition precedent to the provision of grant aid from English Heritage under sections 77 and 79 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Coupe, 1991).

In 1988-89, for instance, only 14 out of 43 Article 4 requests were actually approved (32.5%) (Coupe, 1991). A compromise, agreed by English Heritage, would be to selectively target those unlisted buildings that could be shown to significantly contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area (Coupe, 1991). However, these need to be identified, and this still does not address the fundamental problem of the lack of clear character assessments, and the lack of consideration given to local concerns in commercial areas.

Within commercial conservation areas, a more appropriate solution would be the greater availability of grant aid, to offset business imperatives and to encourage private refurbishment. In both study areas, where grant aid was offered as a 'carrot' to obtain more acceptable design solutions, or to obtain wider building refurbishment, clear improvements were gained. This was particularly true of attempts to improve signage and shopfronts in the Bristol area in the late-1970s, and in the Birmingham area in the 1980s, where significant improvements were obtained. Again, the preferential treatment given to Bristol in terms of grant funding accounts for its greater success in controlling minor alterations generally. Additionally, in respect of policies relating to the control of signs and shopfronts, the clear detailing of their spatial extent is important to their successful implementation. In both study areas, but particularly in the Birmingham area, a lack of clear differentiation between office, quasi-retail/public office, and retail areas, and their differing signage demands, reduced the effectiveness of these policies. A clear understanding of functional sub-zones within commercial conservation areas is therefore critical to the effective operation of these policies.

While the problems of increasing control over minor change in commercial conservation areas in respect of sign, shopfront and other minor facia changes is clear, there is perhaps a stronger case for increasing control over internal alterations. A clearer recognition of the links between incremental uncontrolled internal change and increasing pressure for the greater redevelopment of buildings is required. Within both areas, there were increasing problems of pressure for the internal alteration of buildings to meet modern business needs. However, again only listed buildings were

afforded extra protection, limiting the ability of the LPAs to control and monitor this change. In both areas, a significant proportion of this type of change remained 'hidden'. In this respect the Victorian commercial fabric in the Birmingham area was particularly disadvantaged. However, for both listed and unlisted buildings in the study area, the application of a 'townscape' approach at national level, reducing the importance of interiors over the preservation of façades, limited the ability of LPAs to control interior change. In many cases this made it easier for developers to argue for the complete redevelopment of a building, reducing the grain of the townscape, particularly evident in relation to Victorian buildings in the Birmingham area.

Equally, there is a case for the clearer acknowledgement of the links between conservation and functional change. The relationship between conservation area status and enhancement schemes in both study areas remained largely unexplored. Within both areas, conservation area control and enhancement have had contradictory affects on the functional character of these areas. In the early stages of designation, in both areas, moves towards obtaining the refurbishment of buildings and the reduction of dereliction, facilitated the incursion of office uses and public office functions into retail and mixed use zones, by encouraging the take up of premises by high value users able to afford the upkeep of historic structures. In the Birmingham area, the original designation document privileged office functions over other functions such as warehousing, leading to its decline. In the Bristol area, maintenance of the Docks character revolved around the application of warehouse styles on new office developments, rather than through the maintenance of warehouse and other Docks functions.

However, the application of enhancement policies, including landscaping improvements, pedestrianisation and building refurbishment, contributed to the enhancement of functional vitality in both study areas. These developments enhanced the tourist and leisure potential of each area, particularly around the quayside in the Bristol area. In the Birmingham area, pedestrianisation and building refurbishment arrested the decline of retailing around upper New Street. However, conservation planners need to be aware of the problems of relying on office, leisure/tourist, and specialist retail uses to refurbish

and enhance conservation areas. Firstly, transition to these uses has put considerable strain on the built fabric of the conservation areas, as a result of modern business demands and the increasing non-conformity between building and function. These 'enhancements' can continue to cumulatively erode the character of these conservation areas, through the application of standard commercial solutions and the homogenisation of local heritage. Secondly, these uses have been affected by recent economic fluctuations, with the closure of many public offices and specialist retail outlets; the first due to financial service rationalisation, the second to a reduction in consumer spending. A clear problem of future building dereliction exists in these increasingly gentrified, mono-functional conservation areas, unless clearer land use policies are applied in these areas, seeking to expand the functional mix in these areas. However, this is also dependent on support from central government in expanding functional use in city centres. Generally, in order to counter erosion through minor change, there is a need to move towards more comprehensive enhancement schemes at the local level. These need to embrace all aspects of the built environment, including building fronts and interiors, paving and street furniture, and functions, setting out a practical and detailed framework for change for the whole area, based on meticulous historical and architectural analysis.



## CHAPTER SEVEN : CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to demonstrate the relevance of detailed urban morphological analysis of local townscape development to the assessment of the character of conservation areas, and to the formulation and application of conservation policies to preserve and enhance this character. This conclusion firstly provides a brief review of some of the key concerns for conservation area control that were identified by the examination of the literature in Chapter Two. Secondly, it considers the character of the two study areas, the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area (central Birmingham) and the City and Queen Square Conservation Area (central Bristol), which was examined in Chapter Four. This provides the basis for an assessment of the effectiveness of local conservation management, over a period of twenty years from 1970 to 1989, in preserving or enhancing character within these areas.

It is clear that conservation considerations have come to form an increasingly important part of city centre planning in the post-war period. This has been particularly so from the 1970s onwards, following the widespread designation of conservation areas within which there was a specific requirement to either preserve or enhance area character. Yet, within many city centres, commercial pressures have led to continued tensions between conservation and development priorities. This is particularly true of those cities not 'traditionally' recognised as the principal historic cities or towns, especially those that developed primarily during the 19th century, where conservation concerns have only recently come to the fore.

Whilst the number and variety of conservation areas have grown rapidly since 1967, and the concept has become well established within town planning legislation and practice, debate concerning the success, or otherwise, of the conservation area idea has never been greater (Ross; 1991; Larkham and Jones, 1993). At a deeper level, the growing appreciation and popularisation of heritage generally has prompted increasing popular and academic debate concerning its meaning and use (Worskett, 1982; Hewison, 1987; Corner and Harvey, 1991; Ashworth, 1994; Larkham, 1995a). Many of the long-term uncertainties and concerns facing conservation practice stem from a general lack of any accepted conservation ethic (Worskett, 1982; Larkham, 1995a). As

part of this debate, the increasing numbers of listed buildings and conservation areas has led to a questioning of the innate desirability of conservation, and an examination of conservation rationale. The rising number of conservation areas has precipitated increasing scrutiny of the practicalities of conservation area control, particularly area designation, character assessment, and suitability and effectiveness of area preservation and enhancement strategies (Morton, 1991; Larkham and Jones, 1993). Generally, it is clear that an evaluation of the operation and impact of conservation areas is long overdue (Pearce et al, 1990).

One of the primary problems identified within recent surveys addressing the conservation area concept has been the limited understanding of conservation area character by many LPAs, and the lack of periodic character reviews (Pearce et al, 1990; Suddards and Morton, 1991; Larkham and Jones, 1993; Larkham, 1995a). Inadequate understanding of area character, and the number and type of changes occurring within conservation areas, has presented difficulties in formulating and substantiating policies directed at preserving or enhancing this character. As a result of these problems, a key concern of the academic and professional literature has been the degree to which there has been an erosion of the character of many conservation areas through unsympathetic development, and inadequate, or inappropriate, control and enhancement (Larkham, and Jones, 1993). Among the key pressures threatening the erosion of local character in conservation areas have been the use of banal neo-vernacular and historicist conservation-area-architectural styles on new buildings (Rock, 1974; Larkham, 1986; Punter; 1990), increasing redevelopment behind retained façades (Barrett and Larkham, 1994), the accumulation of minor townscape changes (Larkham, 1987; Coupe, 1991; EHTF, 1992; Davis, 1993), the application of standard 'heritage haze' elements in area or building enhancements (Booth, 1993; Newby, 1994), and commercial and residential gentrification (Burtenshaw et al, 1991; Jacobs, 1992).

In order to assess the degree to which local conservation policies have been effective in countering the threat of character erosion, the evaluation of policy operation in the two conservation areas under investigation was underpinned by both theoretical and empirical components. The theoretical discussion considered the ways in which historical townscapes are viewed, and

methods for the appraisal and definition of the character of the conservation areas under investigation. From this it was clear that what constitutes the character of an area, and how this can be 'measured' and communicated, is a matter of some debate. Empirical micro-scale analysis, detailing the number and type of changes submitted to the two LPAs during the twenty-year study period, supported by detailed case study material, was used to examine the tensions surrounding conservation management within complex and functionally dynamic city centre environments. The assessment of this change, with reference to a detailed assessment of area character, was essential to a thorough investigation of the impact of area designation, the character definitions employed by the LPAs in assessing development, and the effectiveness of the strategies pursued for preserving and enhancing character.

The character assessment debate was explored in Chapter Four, in which the case was made for the application of a historical basis to the appraisal of conservation area character. At present, the majority of character assessments undertaken base appraisal on the identification of key building groups, usually listed buildings, and the identification of building characteristics, employing the terminology of urban design practice. However, within heterogeneous areas of townscape, such as city centres, this can result in a static and inflexible interpretation of area character. In particular, this approach ignores the changing nature of area character, and the symbolism embodied in the townscape as an expression of the socio-economic, political and ideological values of the society that produced it (Cosgrove, 1989; Domosh, 1989). Employing design criteria and assessments of building significance, based on relativist notions of art-historic worth (Riegl, 1982), privileges those buildings deemed of architectural significance, and disadvantages more mundane buildings, such as vernacular and industrial buildings. Yet, these mundane buildings may, nevertheless, be of critical importance to the historical character of the area, and to local meaning. Often a gap exists between those buildings planners regard as providing collective meaning, and those that the public may regard as providing this meaning, frequently manifest in public protest concerning the loss of familiar buildings.

In order to address these limitations of current character assessment techniques, the appraisal of the character of the two study areas employed an approach to townscape analysis based within the Conzenian urban morphological tradition. This tradition views the townscape as an "objectivation of the spirit" of the society that produced it (Conzen, 1975, p82). This objectivation of the spirit becomes the spirit of place, or *genius loci*, which is particularly strong in those townscapes that demonstrate historical longevity and continuity, or historicity (Conzen, 1975). Historicity is not bound up with architectural character, but with the local historical associations of all townscape components, as a narrative of past urban social life linked to the production and use of the urban landscape. The townscape is viewed not merely as a collection of buildings, but as a complex amalgam of plan (streets and plots), building forms, and land utilisation (Conzen, 1960). For Conzen (1975), the task for townscape management is the illumination and maintenance of local townscape historicity, given its broader social purpose and the important environmental experience it provides for the individual at a practical, aesthetic and intellectual level.

The adoption of a historico-geographical perspective provides the basis to link detailed historical analysis of the townscape to its future management. The townscape is a historical phenomenon, and variations in the nature and intensity of this historical expressiveness form the basis for identifying units of particular townscape character, providing a framework within which conservation can be carried out (Conzen, 1975). Mapping techniques developed by Conzen allow the presentation of the dynamic of townscape development, and a visualisation of significant parts of the townscape. The key problem in applying Conzen's townscape management ideas to the analysis of conservation area character is the limited amount of published work on the theory underpinning them and the practicalities of linking townscape analysis to future urban management.

The character of the townscape in the two study areas derived from the unique combination of the three townscape form complexes (town plan, building form and land utilisation), which represented particular socio-economic and cultural impulses of specific morphological periods within the two cities. Separate analysis of the three form complexes formed the basis for the

delimitation of townscape regions. This involved the detailed analysis of the nature and timing of the development and transformation of the plan, using cartographic evidence backed up by documentary sources, survey of the date of origin of buildings present within both areas in 1970, and survey of the land utilisation pattern within both areas in 1970. Of these three analyses, morphogenetic analysis of the plan proved most important to the identification of units of townscape significance, reflecting Conzen's work in Alnwick (Conzen, 1960) and Ludlow (Conzen, 1975; 1988). The role of the plan in containing the other form complexes, and its persistence, given the investment embodied within it, confirmed its pre-eminence in a hierarchy of morphogenetic priority (Conzen, 1988). Within both areas, key phases of town plan creation, associated with periods of economic prosperity and expansion, formed a persistent framework within which subsequent townscape transformations took place.

Within the Bristol area, these key areas of townscape significance were the old medieval town kernel and extra-mural area with boundaries fixed by wall developments, and two phases of Corporation-sponsored residential expansion from the late-17th and early-18th century, King Street and Queen Square and Prince Street, associated with growing mercantile capitalist prosperity. Within the Birmingham area, the key areas of townscape significance differentiated the edge of the pre-industrial settlement from phases of residential and commercial growth initiated by private landowners during the 18th and early-19th centuries, associated with the first phase of industrialisation and urbanisation. Four areas of plan creation were evident; early-18th century residential expansion creating Temple Row and Temple Street, mid-to late-18th century mixed residential and commercial expansion on the Colmore and Inge-Gooch estates, and early-Victorian commercial infill development creating Waterloo Street and Bennetts Hill.

The existence of a durable fixation line, in the case of the medieval walls in Bristol, and the rapidity of initial development and degree of control exerted by the landowners in the planned areas of expansion in both Bristol and Birmingham, imbued these areas with an initial morphogenetic homogeneity as units of townscape. However, the transformation of these areas into the commercial and administrative cores of both cities during the 19th

century, and accelerated commercial transformation in the post-war period, served to fragment this initial homogeneity, through plan alteration and building form replacement. Acknowledgement of the origins and timing of initial development phases was important in understanding how patterns of land holding, and the timing of lease renewal, subsequently influenced the impact of this commercial transformation, producing the particular patterns of remnant and redeveloped townscape evident in 1970, particularly building form variations. The nature, timing and extent of subsequent plot transformation and redevelopment, and building fabric replacement, were important in defining a number of intermediate townscape units, and particularly lower order units or morphotopes. Further to this, the transformation from residential to commercial use established new broad patterns of land utilisation in both areas, although in the Bristol area these made some reference to the pre-industrial legacy of occupational segregation. These land utilisation patterns were still in evidence in 1970, although the industrial component in both areas had declined, as a result of post-war economic change and land-use zoning policies. These land utilisation patterns formed a number of intermediate townscape divisions within the primary townscape units in both areas.

Morphogenetic analysis of the two study areas, and the delimitation of townscape units, clearly exposed the limitations of the initial character assessments provided for the two conservation areas prior to designation. In comparison to the morphogenetic analysis, it was apparent that both character assessments were based primarily on a static definition of townscape character, based on a limited identification of key buildings and building groups. These initial statements remained the principal official statements of area character. However, some additional material emerged in policy documents, such as the Docks Plan in Bristol, and the CALP, conservation area extension application and urban design initiative in Birmingham, and in appeal documentation in both areas. This situation reflects the observation of Larkham and Jones (1993) that few of the early designated conservation areas have had their characters reviewed, or assessed in detail retrospectively.

Significantly, the designation document for the City and Queen Square Conservation Area, Bristol, did demonstrate some awareness of differential

character resulting from phases of plan development, by identifying areas of differential townscape character that reflected the principal units identified by morphogenetic analysis. However, this primarily reflected the ease of identifying a clear boundary to the conservation area, and the ability to draw clear distinctions between the old town kernel, and the King Street and Queen Square expansion phases, evident in clear plan differences and building form variations. However, within these principal divisions, distinct areas created by the break-up of period homogeneity were not identified. Discussion of variations within these areas in LPA documentation centred on the consideration of particular architectural styles. This was particularly evident in the case of the medieval core, where the character assessment failed to reflect the heterogeneity of the area. The highly complex nature of the townscape in this area, created by transformation of the medieval plan frame and long-term building replacement, was revealed in the morphogenetic analysis, and was reflected in a large number of minor townscape units. The benefits of using a morphogenetic approach to character analysis in heterogeneous areas, moving beyond a vague description of differential character based on streets alone, were clear in this case. Also, importantly, it enabled the incorporation of greater historical depth, particularly the true depth of the medieval legacy, and a clear assessment of the dynamic nature of the townscape, both critical to a definition of the character of the area.

Within King Street and Queen Square, the reliance on discussion of architectural style to define character tended to give priority to the buildings from the initial period of development, downgrading later Victorian warehouse redevelopments, and providing a static and architecturally purist definition of character. However, the significance of these later additions as an expression of continuity in townscape development, reflecting the historical relationship between the development of King Street/Queen Square and the Docks, was clear in the morphogenetic analysis, which conceptualised the links between plan and building form changes and evolving land utilisation patterns in the 19th century. In Queen Square, by giving priority to a static 'Georgian' architectural character for the area, over an historical one, the potential for the loss of deeper historicity existed, echoing the concerns expressed by Jacobs (1992) in relation to Spitalfields.

Finally, the character assessment, at designation, for the City and Queen Square Area failed to adequately contextualise the townscape around Baldwin Street. Despite its incorporation, its special character status remained ambiguous, viewed principally as a means to bind together the core and King Street/Queen Square areas previously identified as Areas of Special Control. Its earlier omission was instructive of the lack of importance attached to Victorian commercial buildings during this period, the area having been zoned for comprehensive redevelopment. No evaluation of the area's origin as one of the first medieval extra-mural expansion areas, or as a key component of Victorian redevelopment inspired by Corporation 'civic gospel', revealed by morphogenetic analysis, was offered. This left the area without a character framework within which to assess townscape change. The problem of architectural, listed building-based character assessments in dealing with areas of Victorian commercial townscape at this time, evident in the case of the Baldwin Street area, reflected the character assessment problems evident on a larger scale in the Birmingham area.

Morphogenetic analysis of the Birmingham area revealed the paucity of information contained within the character assessment for the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area at designation. No distinct sub-areas were identified, only building groups, in contrast to the distinct sub-areas revealed by morphogenetic analysis. More significantly, morphogenetic analysis revealed the arbitrary nature of the original boundary designation, which merely enclosed the majority of listed buildings in the area, rather than distinct townscape areas. Critically, the areas of Victorian commercial fabric in retail use were omitted from the conservation area, although in morphogenetic terms they were part of the same commercial transformation as the civic and office areas included in the conservation area. However, few of the Victorian commercial buildings in the retail area enjoyed listed status, primarily due to their more domestic scale, in contrast to the grander banking buildings. Also, the poor quality modern shopfronts to many of these buildings limited their architectural impact in the townscape, weakening the case for their inclusion.

While the omission of the retail area was eventually rectified in 1982, with the extension of the conservation area, boundary problems in the north-



east corner of the conservation area remained. As in the case of the retail fabric, limited listing and post-war fragmentation led to the omission of an area of the Colmore Estate bounded by Edmund Street, Newhall Street, Great Charles Street and Livery Street. Here, there was a failure to recognise the contribution of Victorian industrial buildings to the historical character of the core area, omitting this component from the conservation area. The most critical omission from the area was that of Snow Hill Station, given its importance as a key symbol of the forces underpinning the transformation of central Birmingham in the mid-19th century. Even those industrial buildings included within the original area boundary were devalued by the focus on the professional office character of the area alone. In the absence of detailed analysis of the historical development and character of the conservation area, the LPA found it difficult to make the case for the inclusion of the rest of this area in the application to extend the conservation area's boundary. Only surviving Victorian commercial buildings in Edmund Street were added to the conservation area, in a move by the LPA to block their demolition when threatened by redevelopment in 1985. The poor boundary definition in this area clearly exposed the lack of reference to the town plan in the delimitation of many early conservation area boundaries, in this case a lack of understanding of plan development and transformation on the Colmore Estate. Again the lack of a deeper consideration of the historical relationships linking plan, building form and land utilisation in the expression of the character of the area provided the potential for the loss of historicity.

It is the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area that best exemplifies the benefits of a historico-geographical approach to the definition of area character. Given the uncertain status of Victorian architecture in terms of national worth, and listability, the clear articulation of the local importance of this townscape was critical. The benefits to the development of a strong local conservation framework of identifying the similar morphological and historical significance of the Council House and unaltered Victorian commercial blocks along Edmund Street, New Street and Corporation Street, as a reflection of 19th century redevelopment values, are clear. These buildings benefit from being considered as a unit, rather than as individual structures.

The delimitation of townscape units for the two study areas demonstrated the importance of the analytical framework, terminology and mapping techniques developed by Conzen in the plan analysis of central Newcastle (1962) to the identification of specific areas of townscape character within the cores of large cities. Although the hierarchy of townscape regions delimited for each area was complex, and the overall number of divisions large, the key townscape unit divisions in each case related to the plan. However, plan units must be combined with analysis of building form and land utilisation divisions in order to provide a full indication of the historical character of the townscape. Identification of morphotopes, based upon these other divisions, was important to locate individual buildings within the wider framework of the townscape's evolution and to provide a clear indication of the dynamism of the townscape. If townscape units are to be used as the basis for the identification of urban character for use in conservation management, character definition must clearly move from the primary consideration of buildings, to give more consideration to the plan in the delimitation of conservation areas.

With the delimitation of conservation areas in parts of their cores in the early-1970s, both LPAs signalled a clear shift in the focus of central area planning away from the promotion of widespread commercial redevelopment, which had dominated the planning climate of the 1960s in both cities (Punter, 1990; Cherry, 1994). For both study areas, the development of conservation concerns in the 1970s followed a similar general trajectory, under the influence of wider structural factors, principally fluctuations in the building cycle, national planning policy developments, and changes in dominant architectural styles. For both areas, 1974 proved to be a turning point in the development of conservation strategies. The collapse of the property development market, and general economic uncertainty, curtailed widespread redevelopment in the form of speculative office building, which had significantly altered the fabric of both areas previously. This was important in reducing the amount of new development applied for in both areas, allowing time for policy reassessment. Also, at this time LPAs gained demolition control powers over all buildings within conservation areas, enabling them to control fabric erosion resulting from demolition. However, in the adoption of conservation concerns following these wider structural changes, in both

cities vociferous local amenity opposition to comprehensive central area redevelopment schemes was a key factor. As a consequence of delays produced by this opposition, many redevelopment projects were abandoned after the 1974 crash. Those proposals that survived were subject to renegotiation by the new planning bodies set up following local government reorganisation in 1974, which adopted a stronger conservation focus.

Generally, the development of conservation concerns, represented in policy development in both cities, reflected a similar linear pathway of increasing control. However, at the level of the individual conservation area, the extent of previous building listing affected the impact of this wider conservation area control. Within the Bristol area, a longer standing tradition of conservation existed, with the widespread listing of the Tudor and Georgian fabric from the mid-1950s, and the identification of the two Areas of Special Control in 1966; City and Queen Square. The greater number of listed buildings, and the identification of the City and Queen Square areas as being 'outstanding', proved critical to the success of the Bristol LPA in developing conservation controls in the 1970s. Specifically this enabled the Bristol LPA to obtain funds from the HBMC to back a five year Conservation Programme from 1977 to 1982. Differences in the national value accorded to the fabric of the two areas, reflected in listing and funding, proved to be one of the key factors underpinning differential success in countering threats to character erosion, throughout the 1970s and early-1980s.

The main impact of the application of policies to preserve and enhance character in both areas in the 1970s was primarily evident in the changing style of new development. Reflecting the findings of other studies (Freeman, 1986; Larkham, 1986; Vilagrassa and Larkham, 1995), conservation area designation precipitated the adoption of contextual styles of new development in both areas. However, there were important differences in the nature of the contextual styles adopted, produced by local differences in the economic and policy situation. Within the Bristol area, there was widespread adoption of neo-vernacular styles for new building, whilst in the Birmingham area context was mainly provided by redevelopment behind retained façades, with some limited new building in a hybrid modern-vernacular style.

In the Bristol area, conservation concerns assumed a pre-eminence over commercial demands in major redevelopment in the late-1970s, with planning policy formation driven by the Conservation Programme. The importance accorded to conservation in the late-1970s demonstrated the value of combining the 'stick' of strong demolition controls with the 'carrot' of grant aid, in order to preserve and enhance area character. While a demand for accommodation from the expanding financial services sector remained post-1974 (Bateman, 1985), the moratorium on speculative office building in the core in the late-1970s (Punter, 1990) allowed the LPA to direct the development of office accommodation under the control of strict conservation criteria. The LPA were able to preserve area character by refusing developments involving listed building demolition, particularly in the core with its high numbers of listed buildings, directing development mainly towards the redevelopment of vacant and backland sites. Increased conservation funding allowed the LPA to offer refurbishment grants, and to develop detailed site briefs to direct development towards contextual solutions, particularly around the Docks. Significantly, as a consequence of this, local architects, involved in the early use of neo-vernacular styling in new building in the core and around King Street in the early-1970s, became increasingly involved in new building in the area, working in close association with the LPA. This relationship was instrumental in the development of the 'Bristol Docks Vernacular' style, which became primarily associated with conservation effort in this period.

The limited availability of development sites in the core, and in King Street and Queen Square, due to the high numbers of listed buildings, pushed new development towards opportunities around the dockside. Consequently, development in the Bristol Docks Vernacular became the principal form of new building, as the LPA sought to preserve and enhance the Docks character by enforcing the use of this style. This policy can be viewed as successful in preserving the historical character of the Docks area, by perpetuating the introduction of 'warehouses', continuing the style of the 19th century replacement of the townscape associated with the expansion of the Docks. However, this character preservation revealed a primarily architectural rather than a historical basis, with many of these new office buildings replacing 19th century warehouse buildings, further eroding the functional character of the area. The architectural emphasis of this policy was evident in the

application of this style to 'cloak' large office buildings. In particular the design of the Bristol and West Extension exposed the focus on architectural style, over a commitment to build on the morphogenetic legacy, leading to the continued erosion of the medieval plan legacy in this area. Contradictions in the efforts of the LPA to preserve the Docks character were also exposed by policy ambiguity regarding redevelopment in Queen Square. The static, Georgian architectural definition of character created problems as Victorian warehouses became pressured for redevelopment. Conflicting statements from the LPA regarding proposed developments highlighted the tensions that existed between design aims, which sought to promote architectural unity through pastiche development in place of the warehousing in the Square, and local amenity desires to maintain the façades of the warehouse buildings to provide a sense of historic continuity in the area.

Within the Birmingham area, economic circumstances limited the ability of the LPA to direct new development in order to protect and enhance character. Continued economic stagnation after 1974 (Spencer et al, 1986) limited the amount of new building in the conservation area in the 1970s. Without grant aid to enhance the profile of conservation concerns in major development, character preservation and enhancement remained solely dependent on the 'stick' of withholding demolition consent. The LPA were reluctant to deflect development by imposing stringent design and conservation controls, given wider stated aims to encourage business development. New development consequently remained largely driven by private development concerns, with the style of new commercial building, mainly around the Cathedral, remaining principally modern, although satisfying the minimum of contextual concerns in terms of height. However, on two developments, external architects did introduce neo-vernacular elements, namely mansard roofs and external detailing such as bays and arches, to comply with LPA height and detailing demands, developing a modern-vernacular hybrid style. With no explicit commitment to the preservation of the area's Victorian industrial heritage, neo-vernacular brick styles did not develop in the area. Further to this economic constraint, the ability of the LPA to control demolition of the Victorian fabric and encourage contextual design was also limited by the continued availability of development sites, without demolition control restrictions, just outside the conservation area. The uneven boundary in the north-east of

the conservation area served to reduce new development within the area, deflecting it just outside the boundary. Here the continuance of a large-scale comprehensive style of redevelopment continued to erode the Victorian commercial fabric, obliterating the plot pattern, building form and light industrial land uses.

Differences in the balance between conservation and redevelopment, and in the strength of conservation policies, that emerged between the two areas in the 1970s, were most clearly reflected in reactions to the use of façadism, as a means by which conservation and redevelopment demands could be satisfied. In both areas, late-Georgian and mid-Victorian buildings in office areas came under pressure for redevelopment behind retained façades in the 1970s. In the Birmingham area, in the absence of a clearly acceptable contextual style for new building, many developers sought to resolve the conservation dilemma by proposing façadism. As a new development type, the Birmingham LPA welcomed its use in providing 'context' and in reusing newly-listed late-Georgian and mid-Victorian buildings, marking a clear break with past redevelopment policies. However, the Bristol LPA was more aware of problems in its use. Its emergence in Queen Square in the late-1960s had highlighted the potential for the loss of interior detail, and they sought to contest its widespread adoption. In particular the Bristol LPA challenged its use within the Victorian commercial fabric of Corn Street in the medieval core. An important appeal victory for the LPA, upholding their refusal of a façadist scheme in Corn Street, effectively curtailed the use of façadism as a redevelopment option in the conservation area. Significantly, the LPA were able to utilise the 'outstanding' status of the conservation area to 'add value' to the Victorian commercial buildings in a broader areal context, increasing support for retention which did not exist for Victorian buildings at an individual level. In the Birmingham area, given the more pro-business commercial climate, and the lack of outstanding area status within which to 'add value' to Victorian commercial buildings, façadism remained an important development option, providing a superficial air of townscape stability. Without a morphogenetic framework within which to assess the significance of unaltered late-Georgian and Victorian street blocks in the area, these buildings and plot series remained vulnerable to erosion. Failure to act against this erosion represented a lost opportunity for the Birmingham LPA to enhance the

value of the local Victorian commercial fabric.

While the impact of area designation was evident in the changing style of major development within the study areas, the initial impact of designation in arresting character erosion through minor changes was more limited. Within both areas in the 1970s, enhancement policies were developed to counter minor erosion, namely through the removal of advertising clutter, landscaping improvements and building refurbishment. The problem for both LPAs was that conservation area designation offered no extra control over minor change. This limited the ability of both LPAs to control the accumulation of poor commercial changes and direct its style, with many smaller changes classed as permitted development not requiring permission. Success in controlling minor building changes was dependent on the number of listed buildings in the area on which extra control was offered, and on the availability of grant aid offered to offset commercial pressures and improve the design of signs and shopfronts. Consequently, the Bristol area enjoyed greater success in the application of sign and shopfront design guidance policies. However, both conservation areas experienced problems in the application of these sign policies, as a result of a failure to define distinct policy sub-areas. Ambiguity in both areas in the definition of the border between professional office and quasi-retail areas led to the mis-application of policies limiting advertising in professional office areas to those areas where offices were open to the public. Generally, policy was ineffective in countering poor signage in retail and quasi-retail areas, where particular problems existed. This was particularly evident in the Birmingham area, where limited listing made it difficult for the LPA to impose micro-level design controls in a commercial context.

The Bristol area also enjoyed greater success in area enhancement through landscaping and refurbishment. The availability of conservation funding was critical in enabling the LPA to initiate landscaping improvements around the Quays and along Corn Street, which acted as a 'pump-primer' to wider area refurbishment through the private refurbishment of buildings. In Birmingham, limited funding, and resistance from traders and highway engineers to pedestrianisation, restricted wider landscaping enhancements. However, within both areas, refurbishment of buildings was principally dependent on the

input of private funds. The desire by both LPAs for high-value uses, such as offices, to refurbish listed structures had important implications for land utilisation character in the two areas. The relaxation of land-use policies in favour of conservation concerns fuelled the incursion of office functions and quasi-retail uses into retail and mixed commercial zones, precipitating commercial gentrification. In particular, light industrial and warehouse functions were lost from these areas, increasing the pressure for change to their fabrics.

For both areas, the 1980s was a period of progression in conservation practice, building from the foundations laid in the 1970s. Both LPAs strengthened and formalised conservation controls, producing key conservation policy documents, reflecting the growing significance of conservation to urban planning generally. In Bristol this involved the codification of policy and practice developed during the 1977-82 Conservation Programme, while in Birmingham it involved the development of a tougher new agenda. The formal expression of conservation objectives proved timely for both areas in facing a rising tide of development, linked to increasing economic prosperity in the mid-1980s. The rising tension between conservation and increased development provided a key test of the effectiveness of these controls in preserving and enhancing character during this period.

During the 1980s, policy operation at the local level in commercial conservation areas was undoubtedly affected by the changing balance between planning and business at the national level, brought about by reappraisal of the role of planning in relation to the market undertaken by the Thatcher administration. Technically, development control in conservation areas was independent of moves to streamline the planning process by attempts to reduce the time taken to process applications and especially limit the involvement of LPAs in considering aesthetic matters. However, in practice within commercial conservation areas, where business and conservation concerns intersected, these moves had a clear impact on negotiation and the operation of policy. Assertive developers, attuned to a market orientated planning system, were quick to seek the speedy resolution of planning applications, putting pressures on LPA moves towards wider negotiation and scrutiny of applications. During the 1980s, the Bristol LPA experienced difficulties in



maintaining the intensive negotiating framework developed in the late-1970s. For the Birmingham LPA, these constraints on local autonomy limited their ability to build upon the new policy statements through the arena of application negotiation, as had been achieved in the Bristol area in the 1970s.

The local focus of conservation effort in both study areas was also, ironically, challenged by the increasing prominence of conservation concerns in development and planning practice. During the 1980s, developers were quick to appreciate the economic potential bound up with the increasing popularity of heritage motifs. There was a growing fusion of enterprise and heritage, and new commercial buildings rapidly adopted post-modern historicist, replica and pastiche styles. Developers were quick to adopt these styles, recognising their acceptability in meeting the basic legal requirements of conservation area development. In addition, many retail, quasi-retail, and leisure and tourist users adopted retro-shopfronts and signage, in an attempt to promote a 'traditional' image. However, with the domination of development and business concerns by large national, and international, operators, this historicist styling used in major and minor development reflected a bland universal heritage style of building design and detailing. Despite its seeming conservation focus, this 'heritage haze' continued the erosion of local character. In both areas, the use of this corporate heritage on public houses proved particularly problematic.

In the 1980s, both areas experienced a shift towards historicist styles for new building. However, this stylistic development had a differential impact on the two conservation areas. Within the Bristol area, the transition from neo-vernacular styles was more problematic. The increasing involvement of new architectural firms in the design of new buildings for the conservation area in the 1980s was instrumental in moving styling towards a more universal post-modern parody of the docks style and the greater use of pastiche, breaking with the traditions of the 1970s. Challenges to the length of time taken to process applications weakened the negotiating position of the Bristol LPA, limiting its ability to insist on the more localised docks vernacular style and allowing the transition to universal historicism. However, this stylistic transition was also indirectly encouraged by design guidance from

the LPA itself, which became increasingly based upon good urban design practice, rather than local historical continuity. This changing emphasis accelerated the erosion of local character, prompting comment from local amenity bodies that the area faced similar threats to those that prompted conservation action in the 1960s. Controversially, LPA design guidance for the replacement of the dockside transit sheds sanctioned the use of a universal dockside style and shape, rather than that of the locally specific sheds. Similarly pastiche Georgian and Tudor styles were approved in Queen Square and King Street respectively, where reference to the docks vernacular would have been more historically authentic, if not architecturally concordant. Historicist styling was also accepted on large office buildings in the area, which either replaced or reclad post-war modern buildings. The sculptural application of such styling to these large office buildings also proved controversial, drawing criticisms from local amenity bodies that paralleled those levelled at large office buildings utilising neo-vernacular styling in the 1970s. While appearance may have been enhanced by these developments, the wider character of the area was not, clearly illustrating the dilemma for conservation practice in distinguishing character and appearance, and taking them both into consideration when determining applications.

Within the Birmingham area the move to historicist styles was largely beneficial, allowing new buildings to draw historical reference from eclectic Victorian architectural styling in the area. The negotiation efforts of the LPA with local architects were critical to this development, in moving design on from the modern-vernacular hybrid of the late-1970s, and in stemming the use of inappropriate pastiche classical styling. Demolition control over buildings in the conservation area, and the wider listing of the Victorian fabric, was critical to the development of the LPAs negotiating position, tipping the balance from commercial to conservation considerations. The benefits of this, in allowing planners to control the style of commercial development, were evident in the style of development occurring in the north-east corner of the Colmore estate, outside the conservation area. Here tall office buildings in a late-modern style continued to replace the un-listed Victorian fabric. However, the benefits of stylistic enhancement in new building had to be obtained at the expense of continued erosion of the

Victorian fabric through demolition. Economic arguments for increasing floorspace efficiency, and the uncertain value attached to Victorian buildings at the national level, continued to place these buildings under threat from complete or façadist redevelopment, which the LPA could do little to resist. With neither grants to aid large-scale refurbishment, nor the notion of outstanding status evident in the Bristol area, nor morphogenetic analysis within which to contextualise these buildings, LPA attempts to stem this erosion by seeking to limit demolition foundered; at appeal national heritage and economic values were asserted over local concerns. Appeal decisions against the LPA desire to curtail façadist redevelopment around Colmore Row had important long-term implications for local conservation policy. Principally, appeal losses perpetuated the use of façadism in the area, against the LPA's wishes, and continued the undervaluation of the Victorian townscape. The Birmingham area's experience in the 1980s particularly demonstrated the differential vulnerability of townscapes to the superficial stability offered by façadism.

During the 1980s, micro-scale, mundane minor alterations also expressed the keenly fought battle between conservation and commercial concerns. There was rising pressure for minor change in both areas, particularly for shopfronts and signs, precipitated by rapid business change, corporate house-style developments, the introduction of ATMs and other services, and the development of leisure functions. In addition, as many heritage orientated businesses sought to exploit older buildings, their interiors came under increasing pressure for alteration. In addition to well established pressures from retail and office users, public house and other leisure users moved increasingly to adopt open floor plans, threatening original interior features. In both areas, internal alterations to public houses and restaurants generated significant controversy throughout the 1980s.

At the micro-level, the boundaries between conservation and commercial concerns remained blurred. While both LPAs sought to develop greater control over minor change, this met with resistance from business concerns. In the Birmingham area, increased listing of the retail fabric, and the availability of grant money as a 'carrot' to improve design, provided the impetus for shopfront improvements along the retail streets, bolstering the retail

character of the area. However, the ability of the Birmingham LPA to initiate enhancements, even with grant money, continued to be limited by the permitted nature of many sign changes. Additionally, the Birmingham LPA's attempts to apply enhancement schemes to blocks of Victorian commercial buildings foundered through the lack of co-operation of businesses whose 'house-style' did not fit the 'traditional' shopfront image, and through the reluctance of the private landowners of these blocks to refurbish rather than redevelop. Private ownership of open land also limited the ability of both LPAs to develop landscaping strategies and remove parking in the conservation areas. Within the Bristol area, the decreasing amount of grant money available pushed the LPA into greater use of private funding through the 'conservation-gain' concept, in order to obtain landscaping improvements and building refurbishment. Key strategies were the use of applications for increases in office floor space in Queen Square as a lever to remove forecourt parking, and the use of change of use applications generally as a lever to obtain façade improvements. However, a number of commercial applicants were reluctant to provide these gains, challenging the policy in the appeals process. Here, amid the pro-business climate of the 1980s, appeals frequently went against the LPA, restricting its ability to channel private money into refurbishment.

Generally, despite the designation of the conservation areas covering the commercial cores of Birmingham and Bristol as areas of special character, to be preserved or enhanced, success in developing and implementing conservation policies has remained largely determined by building listing in these areas. Where conservation area control has been 'successful' has been in the development of contextual styles of new building which have enhanced these areas, by providing added protection against building demolition. Yet the increasing use of formulaic styles, particularly historicist and façadist styles, has called into question the adequacy of conservation control in protecting local character. The production of development briefs for new building, based on character rather than design and appearance, could be useful in countering this problem. In the development of area policies to protect character by controlling minor changes, and to enhance character by landscaping improvements and building refurbishment, greater success has been evident where high numbers of listed buildings have existed in an area. Greater listing has provided extra control over minor changes, and hence a

basis for negotiation, and greater access to grant funding in order to develop enhancement programmes. It is this factor that differentiates the comprehensive policy development of the Bristol area of the late-1970s from the less successful situation in the Birmingham area.

Suggestions to tackle the deficiency in the control afforded by conservation area designation have centred on the extension of Article 4 rights to all conservation areas. However, the blanket extension of rights of control to cover all but the most minor changes could potentially create increased problems for commercial conservation areas in particular, given the large number of minor changes occurring in these areas. What this research perhaps indicates is that selective monitoring and control of minor changes might be more appropriate, particularly of interior alterations and changes of use. At present much of this change remains unmonitored, leading to continued incremental character erosion. Internal changes provide the biggest threat to fabric erosion within commercial areas, as their accumulation often forms the precursor to more fundamental internal redevelopment. Also, the identification of buildings with frequent changes of use can provide useful evidence of increasing functional non-conformity or neglect, particularly where short leaseholds operate prior to proposals for major redevelopment. However, in commercial areas it is clear that increased control is most effective in providing enhancements when combined with the 'carrot' of grant aid. Without this, policy and change becomes largely driven by the demands of the private sector, as in the late-1980s, leading to fabric erosion, corporate heritage, and commercial gentrification.

Yet, control and funding are both ineffective in preserving and enhancing character if not combined with a clear appreciation of the character of the area to be protected. Amid the growing corporatisation of heritage, the importance of highlighting area specificity in conservation policy has never been greater. Increasingly, the appeals process has drawn attention to the need for the identification of sub-areas within heterogeneous conservation areas (Millichap, 1993), such as those found in many city centres. As noted by Conzen, sub-areas have a clear structure within the townscape, based on the impulses for urban development and change. Detailed morphogenetic analysis of the evolution of the townscape can then clearly provide the basis for the

identification of these sub-areas. Morphogenetic analysis would also enable LPAs to contextualise all buildings in the townscape, and identify the symbolic quality of these buildings. This would enhance their ability to identify those buildings of significance to the area, which may not correspond to those identified as significant under listed building criteria. This would add to the LPAs ability to sustain character-based decisions, given the continued exposure of the limitations of local character assessments at appeal. Presently, owing to weaknesses in character assessment, it is frequently the outcome of the appeals process that has, in reality, been shaping the cores of our historic cities, rather than any conservation planning policy.

It is clear that conservation practice remains based on an incomplete understanding of the psychological and social significance of historic townscapes. Aesthetic considerations predominate. The challenge for those engaged in the management of the historic urban fabric still reflects that identified by Whitehand (1987):

"If a key concept for future research is to be singled out..then the prime consideration should be given to the townscape as the 'objectivation of the spirit of a society', viewed not as a moment in time but as a historical phenomenon." (p.269)

However, considerable academic work remains to be carried out in developing the theoretical practical basis for this consideration, before it can be applied to planning practice. Detailed morphogenetic analyses of urban areas continue to be limited in number. However, currently within urban geography, the urban landscape has again become a key focus of study. Considerable scope exists for a reassessment of the ideas concerning 'objectivation' expressed by Conzen, and his techniques for the analysis of the townscape, in conjunction with urban landscape study rooted within new cultural geography and semiotics. However, if the cause of conservation practice at the practical level is to be furthered by such study, then the usefulness of this approach needs to be demonstrated. This requires more work at the interface between research in urban geography and that on planning practice; research which would consider the operation of conservation policies in a variety of locations, based on thorough morphogenetic analyses.

## APPENDIX ONE : INFORMATION FROM PLANNING FILES INCLUDED ON THE COMPUTER SPREADSHEET

There are eleven sections of coded information on the spreadsheet, related to the information on page one of the data form. Data sections on the computer are:

**Basic data:** Address and application number. This information is for organising the database, to prevent errors of omission and duplication, and to aid sorting and to identify important sites.

**Dates:** Dates when an application was received and determined, and the time span between these. The date of submission rather than the decision date was used to indicate the year in which a particular development was proposed. The date of completion was often a number of years later, principally for large developments. Date of decision is included, in order to record the time periods for consideration of applications, in relation to the DoE eight week (56 days) target date for determination.

**Function:** Use of the building at the time of application. This is useful in showing the types of building/function susceptible to a certain type of redevelopment pressure.

**Agents:** The postcodes of the applicant and agent submitting the planning application, used as an indication of residence of the initiator, with postal sector being a clear alpha-numeric method of location. The occupation or status of the initiator and agent is also recorded and coded where this is given on the planning application, or is known from other sources, in order to provide some indication of the main developers in the redevelopment of city centre conservation areas. This section also contains details of the owner of the freehold of the site if given.

**Type of development:** Details of the nature of the application. The numerous categories used for the coding of the types of development for which planning permission is sought are based on previous studies by the UMRG, specifically Larkham (1986). This contrasts with studies of purely residential districts (Jones 1991), where change in the areas could be encapsulated in four categories; new dwellings, minor change, change of use and refurbishment. Categorisation of the type of development is a key part of the analysis, as it provides expression to the form of development occurring in the study areas.

**Type of permission sought:** All types of planning application were consulted, including full applications, outline applications, advertisement consent, listed building consent.

**Application consultation Officer/LPA/External organisations:** Includes the officer recommendation (approve, refuse, or defer) and the reasons for this. It also includes the recommendations of the other LPA sections consulted, and their decision to approve or refuse. Furthermore, it includes the comments and recommendations of any external organisations consulted, such as national heritage organisations or local amenity societies, or local occupiers. While all recommendations made by the case officer are recorded, only the main recommendation of the consultees is given, due to the large number of consultees and recommendations on many applications.

**Amendments and decision:** General data on the number of times the application was amended during discussion. These are the major amendments to applications, involving the submission of new plans, as minor amendments to plans resulting from negotiation may not be recorded. The decision to approve, refuse or defer the decision is also recorded.

**Conditions and Reasons:** These are the conditions attached to the approval of an application by the LPA, and the reasons for these, or reasons for refusal of an application. Many conditions used are fairly standard, as the result of DoE guidance. Categories for refusal are more specific, and in this study are related to the refusal categories used by Larkham (1988); namely, detriment to conservation area character, detriment to building character, conflict with policy, detriment to neighbours amenities, physical planning constraints, design, technical, undesirable precedent, other. However, this study not only looks at refusal but also at approval with conditions, which makes analysis more complex, requiring the further amalgamation of reasons used in applications (see Jones, 1991). Using purely the number of conditions alone is a poor indicator of the operation of policy, as it is acknowledged that the number of conditions has changed over time as conservation policy has become more rigorous. It is the form of these conditions that is most significant.

**DoE:** Details of any DoE involvement, either referral or appeal, and the DoE decision date and decision.

**Implementation:** The final section records whether development was implemented or not (refused, withdrawn/superseded, not undertaken). This is based on development control files, site visits to those site where applications for major changes was made, knowledge of planning officers and lack of subsequent applications.



## APPENDIX TWO : FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

### 1; Department of the Environment, 1987.

Class A1; Shops. Use for all or any of the following purposes - for the retail sale of goods other than hot food; as a post office; for the sale of tickets or as a travel agency; for the sale of sandwiches or other cold food for consumption off the premises; for hairdressing; for the direction of funerals; for the display of goods for sale; for the hiring out of domestic or personal goods or articles; for the reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired, where the sale, display or service is to visiting members of the public.

Class A2; Financial and professional services. Use for the provision of - financial services, or professional services (other than health or medical services), or any other services (including use as a betting office) which it is appropriate to provide in a shopping area, where the service are provided principally to visiting members of the public.

Class A3; Food and drink. Use for the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises or of hot food for consumption off the premises.

Class B1; Business. Use for all or any of the following purposes - as an office other than a use within class A2 (financial and professional services), for research and development of products or processes, or for any industrial process, being a use which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

Class B2; General industrial. Use for the carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within class B1 or within B3 to B7.

Class B3; Special Industrial Group A. Use for any work registrable under the Alkali, etc. Works Regulation Act 1906(a) and which is not included in any of classes B4 to B7.

Class B4; Special Industrial Group B. Use for metal processing (eg. smelting, forging or casting metals, recovering scrap metal, galvanizing, plating).

Class B5; Special Industrial Group C. Use for burning bricks or pipes; burning lime or dolomite; producing zinc oxide, cement or alumina; foaming, crushing, screening or heating minerals or slag; processing pulverised fuel ash by heat, producing carbonate of lime; producing inorganic pigments by calcining, roasting or grinding.

Class B6; Special Industrial Group D. Use for distilling, refining or blending oils (ex. petroleum); producing or using cellulose; boiling linseed oil; processing involving bitumen; stoving enamelled ware; producing organic compounds and plastics; producing rubber from scrap; other organic chemical processes.

Class B7; Special Industrial Group E. Use for processing of animal products.

Class B8; Storage or distribution. Use for storage or as a distribution centre.

Class C1; Hotels and hostels. Use as a hotel, boarding or guest house or as a hostel where, in each case, no significant element of care is provided.

Class C2; Residential institutions. Use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within class C3 (dwelling houses)); use as a hospital or nursing home; use as a

residential school, college or training centre.

Class C3; Dwelling houses. Use as a dwellinghouse (whether or not as a sole or main residence) by a single person or by people living together as a family, or by not more than six residents living together as a single household (including a household where care is provided for residents).

Class D1; Non-residential institutions. Any use not including a residential use - for the provision of any medical or health services except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner; as a crèche, day nursery or day centre; for the provision of education; for the display of works of art (otherwise than for sale or hire); as a museum; as a public library or public reading room; as a public hall or exhibition hall; for, or in connection with, public worship or religious instruction.

Class D2; Assembly and leisure. Use as - a cinema; a concert hall; a bingo hall or casino; a dance hall; a swimming bath, skating rink, gymnasium or area for other indoor or outdoor sports or recreations, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms.

**2; Barrett, 1989 (after Potter, 1981).**

1; Food: butcher, baker, greengrocer, confectioner, fishmonger, off licence, tobacconist, public house, restaurant, cafe, fried/take away food.

2; Professional and financial: bank, post office, estate agent, building society, insurance, professional service.

3; Household: decorating supplies, hardware/gardening, china/glass, furniture, gas/electricity showroom, T.V./radio/electrical, antiques/secondhand, carpets, lighting, timber/glass/DIY, drapery/fabrics, office equipment, plumbing/heating.

4; Sports and recreational: sports equipment, pet stores, fishing tackle, photographic equipment, toys and games, bookshop, musical equipment, records, travel agents, amusement arcade.

5; Miscellaneous: florist, greetings cards, betting office, optician, dry cleaners, launderette, luggage/leather goods, stationary/art supplies, newsagent, cycles, giftshop, charity shop, other specialist.

6; Clothing: women's/men's/children's clothing, footwear, shoe repair, wool/needlework.

7; Large retail outlets: supermarket, department store, large variety store.

8; Personal: hairdressers/barber, chemist, medical/surgical, jewellery.

9; Motor: car/motorcycle sales and repair, motor spares/accessories, garage.

10; Vacant.

11; Public buildings: council buildings, museum, religious buildings.

APPENDIX THREE : LIST OF PLAN, BUILDING FORM AND LAND UTILIZATION  
UNITS IN THE BIRMINGHAM AND BRISTOL STUDY AREAS

PLAN UNITS

COLMORE ROW AND ENVIRONS CONSERVATION AREA, BIRMINGHAM

- I **Western edge of Birmingham's built up area at the beginning of the Eighteenth century**
- A Post-war redevelopment  
i; Augmentative redevelopment of Nineteenth century plots (Commercial Union/Martineau Sq)  
ii; Adaptive redevelopment of Nineteenth century plots (Warwick Passage/New Street)  
iii; Adaptive redevelopment (New Street Station)  
iv; Adaptive redevelopment of Nineteenth century plots (Bull St./North Western Arcade)
- B Interwar redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (King Edward House)
- C Nineteenth century redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots  
i; Late-Victorian augmentative redevelopment (Corporation St.)  
ii; Georgian plot remnant  
iii; Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment (City Arcade)
- D Eighteenth century plot series legacy  
i; Cleared plots; urban fallow (Cannon St.)  
ii; Hypometamorphic plots (Cannon St./Needless Alley)
- E Inter-war redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots  
i; Redevelopment of metamorphosed plots (Bull St.)  
ii; Cleared plots; urban fallow (Bull St.)
- F Eighteenth century plot series legacy; hypometamorphic (Temple Row/Colmore Row)
- II **Early Eighteenth century residential expansion (Temple St./Temple Row)**
- A Early Eighteenth century plot series legacy  
i; Orthomorphic plot (Cathedral churchyard)  
ii; Metamorphic plots (Temple St.)  
iii; Hypometamorphic plots (New St.)
- B Post-war adaptive redevelopment (Rackhams)
- III **Mid Eighteenth century residential expansion (The Colmore Estate)**
- A Early Nineteenth century adaptive redevelopment (The Town Hall)
- B Mid-Victorian augmentative redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Council House/School Board Offices)
- C Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots  
i; Adaptive redevelopment (Council House Extension/Cornwall St.)  
ii; Inter-war redevelopment of Victorian plot series (Gt. Charles St.)
- D Mid-Eighteenth century plot series legacy  
i; Hypometamorphic plots (Colmore Row/Newhall St.)  
ii; Post-war redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Newhall St.)  
iii; Cleared metamorphic plots; urban fallow (Colmore Row)  
iv; Metamorphic plots (Colmore Row)

- E Mid- to Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots  
 i; Mid-Victorian redevelopment (Snow Hill Station/Grand Hotel)  
 ii; Late-Victorian redevelopment (Edmund St.)  
 iii; Late-Victorian redevelopment (Edmund St.)
- F Mid-Eighteenth century plot series legacy  
 i; Metamorphic plots (Edmund St.)  
 ii; Orthomorphic plots (Livery St.)
- G Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots  
 i; Late-Victorian redevelopment (Cornwall St./Church St.)  
 ii; Post-war redevelopment of late-Victorian plot series (Gt. Charles St.)
- H Partial post-war adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots  
 i; Post-war redevelopment (Church St.)  
 ii; Remnants of Eighteenth century plot series (Edmund St.)  
 iii; Post-war redevelopment (Edmund St.)
- IV Mid Eighteenth century residential expansion (The Gooch and Inge Estates)**
- A Mid-Eighteenth century plot series legacy  
 i; Metamorphic plots (Paradise St.)  
 ii; Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Suffolk St.)
- B Late-Victorian redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots  
 i; Adaptive redevelopment (Post Office)  
 ii; Augmentative redevelopment (Stephenson St.)
- C Mid-Eighteenth century plot series legacy  
 i; Hypometamorphic plots (New St.)  
 ii; Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Woolworths)  
 iii; Metamorphic plots (Lower Temple St.)
- D Mid-Victorian redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Midland Hotel)
- V **Early to Mid-Nineteenth century commercial expansion (Bennetts Hill)**
- A Late-Victorian redevelopment of Eighteenth century plot (Galloway's Corner)
- B Early-Victorian plot series legacy  
 i; Hypometamorphic plots (Colmore Row/Bennetts Hill)  
 ii; Metamorphic plots (New St.)
- C Metamorphic early-Victorian plot series (Temple Row West/Waterloo St.)
- D Mid-Victorian plot series legacy  
 i; Metamorphic plots (Waterloo St./New St.)  
 ii; Orthomorphic plots (Bennetts Hill)  
 iii; Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Nineteenth century plots (New St.)
- E Mid-Victorian plot series legacy  
 i; Hypometamorphic plots (Bennetts Hill)  
 ii; Metamorphic plots (Bennetts Hill/Waterloo St.)

**CITY AND QUEEN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA, BRISTOL**

**I Part of the built up area of Late Medieval Bristol**

**A Late Medieval plot series legacy**

- i; Hypometamorphic plots
  - (a) Remnant hypometamorphic plots (Broad Street/John Street)
  - (b) Post-war adaptive redevelopment of late-Medieval plots
  - (c) Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of late-Medieval plots
  - (d) Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century augmentative redevelopment
  - (e) Inter-war adaptive redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Baldwin Street)
  - (f) Post-war adaptive redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Baldwin Street)
  - (g) Remnant hypometamorphic plots (Baldwin Street)
- ii; Mid-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of late-Medieval plots
  - (a) Mid-Victorian adaptive redevelopment (Grand Hotel)
  - (b) Inter-war adaptive redevelopment of Nineteenth Century plots
- iii; Eighteenth Century augmentative redevelopment of late-Medieval plots
  - (a) Eighteenth Century augmentative redevelopment (Market)
  - (b) Post-war redevelopment of Eighteenth Century plots
- iv; Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Post Office, Small Street)
- v; Metamorphic plots

**B Inter-war and Post-war Redevelopment**

- i; Adaptive post-war redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Wine Street/Pithay)
- ii; Augmentative post-war redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Fairfax Street)
- iii; Adaptive inter-war redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Employment office)
- iv; Adaptive post-war redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Nelson Street)
- v; Adaptive inter-war redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Colston Av.)

**C Late Medieval plot series legacy**

- i; Remnant metamorphic plots (Broad Quay)
- ii; Adaptive post-war redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Bristol & West)
- iii; Remnant metamorphic plots (Broad Quay)
- iv; Adaptive post-war redevelopment of late-Medieval plots (Alliance House)

**D Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century redevelopment of Late-Medieval plots**

- i; Late-Victorian redevelopment (Baldwin St./Queen Charlotte St.)
  - (a) Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment (Baldwin St.)
  - (b) Late-Victorian augmentative redevelopment (Telephone Av.)
  - (c) Post-war adaptive redevelopment of late-Nineteenth century plots (Baldwin St.)
  - (d) Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment (Baldwin St./Queen Charlotte St.)
  - (e) Post-war adaptive redevelopment of late-Nineteenth century plots (Queen Charlotte St.)
  - (f) Post-war adaptive redevelopment of late-Nineteenth century plots (Queen Charlotte St.)
  - (g) Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment (Queen Charlotte St.)
- ii; Eighteenth Century augmentative redevelopment
  - (a) Eighteenth Century augmentative redevelopment (Clare Street)
  - (b) Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots

- (Colston Avenue)
- iii; Inter-war and Post-war redevelopment of Nineteenth century plots
  - (a) Post-war adaptive redevelopment (Marsh Street)
  - (b) Inter-war adaptive redevelopment (Telephone Exchange)
- iv; Remant plots from Mid-Victorian adaptive redevelopment

## **II Early Seventeenth Century residential expansion (King Street)**

- A Early Seventeenth Century plot series legacy
  - i; Orthomorphic plots (King Street)
  - ii; Metamorphic plots (King Street)
  - iii; Metamorphic plots (Theatre Royal)
- B Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Seventeenth century plots (Prince Street/King Street)
- C Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Seventeenth century plots (King St.)
- D Post-war development and redevelopment of Seventeenth century plots
  - i; adaptive redevelopment of Seventeenth century plots (King Street)
  - ii; Post-war development (Dockers Club, Welsh Back)

## **III Eighteenth Century residential expansion (Queen Square and Prince Street) and Docks development**

- A Eighteenth Century residential expansion (Queen Square/Prince Street)
  - i; Orthomorphic and hypometamorphic plot series legacy
  - ii; Metamorphic plots (Queen Square)
  - iii; Metamorphic plots (Prince Street)
  - iv; Metamorphic plots (Bush Warehouse)
  - v; Mid-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Queen Square)
  - vi; Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Queen Square)
  - vii; Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Queen Square)
- B Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots (Co-operative Building)
- C Post-war redevelopment of Eighteenth century plots
  - i; Augmentative redevelopment (Narrow Quay House)
  - ii; Adaptive redevelopment (Pearl Assurance House)
  - iii; Adaptive redevelopment (Unicorn Hotel)
- D Inter-war Docks development
- E Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Docks developments
  - i; Mid-Victorian transit shed development (Welsh Back)
  - ii; Post-war adaptive redevelopment of Nineteenth century warehouse plots
  - iii; Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment of early-Victorian warehouse plots (Welsh Back)
  - iv; Mid-Victorian transit shed development (The Grove)
  - v; Post-war dock building development
  - vi Urban Fallow (cleared Nineteenth century transit sheds)
  - vii; Post-war dock building development

## BUILDING FORM UNITS

### COLMORE ROW AND ENVIRONS CONSERVATION AREA, BIRMINGHAM

- A Early Georgian/Baroque (Cathedral)
- B Late Georgian (Town Hall)
- C Phase of early- to mid-Victorian building replacement  
i; Mid-Victorian civic building (Council House)  
ii; Mid-Victorian commercial buildings (Colmore Row)  
iii; Mid-Victorian civic/commercial buildings (Snow Hill/Great Western Arcade)  
iv; Late-Victorian commercial buildings (Colmore Row)  
v; Late-Victorian and Twentieth century building replacement  
    (a) Late-Victorian commercial buildings (Temple Row)  
    (b) Inter-war commercial replacement of Victorian fabric (Colmore Row)  
vi; Post-war commercial replacement of Victorian fabric (Edmund St./Newhall St.)
- D Phase of Late-Victorian building replacement  
i; Late-Victorian commercial buildings (eclectic styles) (Colmore Estate)  
ii; Twentieth century commercial replacement of Victorian fabric  
    (a;c;e) Inter-war commercial buildings (Gt. Charles St.)  
    (b;d;f) Post-war commercial buildings (Gt. Charles St.)  
iii; Post-war replacement of Victorian fabric (Cornwall St.)  
iv; Inter-war replacement of Victorian fabric (Livery St.)
- E Mixed Victorian commercial buildings and Twentieth century replacements  
i; Mixed Victorian commercial buildings  
    (a) Late-Georgian/Early-Victorian office buildings (Waterloo St.)  
    (b) Early/Mid-Victorian bank buildings (Bennetts Hill)  
    (c) Early/Mid-Victorian commercial buildings (Bennetts Hill/Temple Row West)  
ii; Mixed Victorian commercial buildings  
    (a) Late-Victorian commercial buildings (New St./Corporation St.)  
    (b) Mid-Victorian commercial buildings (New St.)  
    (c) Mid-Victorian commercial buildings (New St.)  
    (d) Urban Fallow (Cannon St.)  
    (e) Late-Victorian commercial buildings (Cherry St.)  
iii; Late-Victorian commercial buildings with Post-war replacement  
    (a) Late-Victorian buildings (Temple Street)  
    (b) Post-war replacement of Nineteenth century fabric (Waterloo St.)  
    (c) Late-Victorian commercial buildings (Temple Row West)  
iv; Inter-war replacement of Victorian fabric (Colmore Row)  
v; Twentieth century commercial replacement of Victorian commercial fabric  
    (a) Inter-war replacement (Waterloo St./New St./Bennetts Hill)  
    (b) Inter-war replacement (Waterloo St.)  
    (c) Inter-war replacement (Temple St.)  
    (d) Post-war replacement (Temple St.)  
    (e) Post-war replacement (New St.)  
vi; Twentieth century commercial replacement of Victorian commercial fabric  
    (a) Inter-war replacement (Paradise St.)  
    (b) Post-war replacement (Paradise St.)
- F Inter/Post-war commercial buildings  
i; Post-war commercial replacement of Victorian fabric (Corporation St./New St.)

ii; Inter-war commercial replacement of Victorian fabric (New St.)

**CITY AND QUEEN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA, BRISTOL**

- A Queen Anne/Georgian residential buildings with Victorian and Twentieth Century commercial replacements
- i; Queen Anne/Late Georgian residential buildings (Queen Square)
  - ii; Victorian and Twentieth century replacement of Eighteenth century residential fabric (Prince Street)
    - (a) Post-war commercial replacement
    - (b) Late-Victorian commercial replacement (CWS Building)
    - (c) Inter-war commercial replacement
    - (d) Late-Victorian commercial replacement
  - iii; Late-Georgian warehouse buildings with Victorian and Twentieth century warehouse replacements (Narrow Quay)
    - (a) Late-Georgian warehouses (Bush Warehouse/Narrow Quay)
    - (b) Late-Victorian warehouse replacement
    - (c) Inter-war warehouse replacement
  - iv; Mid-Victorian warehouse replacement of Eighteenth century residential fabric (Queen Square)
  - v; Late-Victorian commercial replacement of Eighteenth century warehouse fabric (The Grove)
  - vi; Twentieth century replacement of Eighteenth century residential fabric (Queen Square)
    - (a) Post-war commercial replacement
    - (b) Inter-war commercial replacement
  - vii; Victorian and Twentieth century replacement of Eighteenth century residential fabric (Queen Square/Welsh Back)
    - (a) Mid-Victorian commercial replacement
    - (b) Late-Victorian commercial replacement
    - (c) Post-war commercial replacement
  - viii; Victorian and Twentieth century replacement of Eighteenth century residential fabric (Queen Square/Welsh Back)
    - (a) Post-war commercial replacement
    - (b) Late-Victorian commercial replacement
    - (c) Post-war commercial replacement
    - (d) Late-Victorian commercial replacement
  - ix; Victorian replacement of Eighteenth century fabric (Little King Street)
    - (a) Mid-Victorian warehouse replacement
    - (b) Late-Victorian warehouse replacement
    - (c) Mid-Victorian warehouse replacement
  - x; Post-war commercial replacement of Eighteenth century fabric
- B Victorian and Twentieth Century dock buildings and building replacements
- i; Post-war commercial buildings (The Grove)
  - ii; Inter-war commercial buildings (The Grove)
  - iii; Post-war warehouse/dock buildings (The Grove)
  - iv; Mid-Victorian Transit shed (Welsh Back)
  - v; Late-Victorian Transit shed replacement of mid-Victorian warehouse (Welsh Back)
  - vi; Post-war Transit shed replacement of mid-Victorian warehouse (Welsh Back)
  - vii; Mid-Victorian Transit shed (Welsh Back)
  - viii; Late-Victorian Transit shed replacement of mid-Victorian warehouse (Welsh Back)
  - ix; Inter-war warehouse/dock buildings (Welsh Back)
  - x; Post-war dock buildings (Welsh Back)
  - xi; Mid-Victorian Transit shed (Welsh Back)



- C Elizabethan/Jacobean (Seventeenth century) buildings with Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth century replacements
- i; Remnant Seventeenth century residential fabric (Merchant Venturers Almshouses)
  - ii; Mixed period replacement of Seventeenth century fabric
    - (a) Post-war commercial and warehouse replacements (Prince Street)
    - (b) Mid-Victorian warehouse replacements
    - (c) Late-Victorian warehouse replacements
    - (d) Late-Georgian civic and residential replacements
  - iii; Remnant Seventeenth century residential fabric (King Street)
  - iv; Mixed period replacement of Seventeenth century fabric
    - (a) Mid-Victorian warehouse replacements
    - (b) Post-war commercial replacements
    - (c) Late-Victorian warehouse replacements
    - (d) Late-Georgian civic replacements (Theatre Royal)
  - v; Remnant Seventeenth century residential fabric (King Street)
  - vi; Georgian residential replacement of Seventeenth century fabric
  - vii; Post-war warehouse replacement of Seventeenth century fabric
- D Twentieth century commercial buildings with Nineteenth century remnants
- i; Post-war commercial replacement of Nineteenth century fabric (Baldwin Street, Queen Charlotte Street)
  - ii; Remnant Nineteenth century fabric and Twentieth century replacements
    - (a) Late-Victorian warehouse remnants (Queen Charlotte St.)
    - (b) Inter-war commercial replacement of Nineteenth century fabric (Queen Charlotte Street)
  - iii; Inter-war commercial replacement of Nineteenth century fabric (Telephone Exchange)
  - iv; Post-war commercial replacement of Nineteenth century fabric (Marsh Street, Broad Quay)
  - v; Remnant Nineteenth century fabric
    - (a) Remnant late-Georgian fabric (Broad Quay)
    - (b) Remnant late-Victorian fabric (Broad Quay, Marsh Street)
    - (c) Remnant late-Victorian fabric (Marsh Street)
  - vi; Post-war commercial replacement of Nineteenth century fabric (Baldwin Street)
- E Phase of Late-Victorian commercial building replacement of mixed fabric, with earlier fabric remnants and Twentieth century commercial replacements
- i; Late-Victorian buildings (Baldwin Street)
  - ii; Earlier fabric remnants and Twentieth century building replacements
    - (a) Remnant mid-Victorian commercial buildings (Baldwin Street)
    - (b) Post-war building replacement (Baldwin Street)
    - (c) Inter-war building replacement (Baldwin Street)
  - iii; Late-Victorian buildings with Twentieth century replacements
    - (a) Late-Victorian buildings (St. Nicholas St., St. Stephen's St.)
    - (b) Inter-war building replacements (St Stephen's Street)
  - iv; Inter-war building replacement (Baldwin Street, Marsh Street)
  - v; Late-Victorian buildings, with earlier fabric remnants and Twentieth century commercial replacements
    - (a) Late-Victorian buildings (Baldwin Street, Clare Street)
    - (b) Remnant mid-Victorian commercial buildings (Clare Street)
    - (c) Post-war building replacement (Clare Street)
    - (d) Inter-war building replacement (Clare Street)
    - (e) Remnant Georgian commercial buildings (Clare Street)
    - (f) Remnant mid-Victorian commercial buildings (Clare Street)
  - vi; Late-Victorian buildings, with earlier fabric remnants and Twentieth century commercial replacements
    - (a) Late-Victorian buildings (St. Stephen's Street)

- (b) Post-war building replacement (St. Stephen's Street)
- (c) Remnant Late-Medieval fabric (St. Stephen's Church)
- (d) Post-war building replacement (Colston Avenue)

F Phase of Mid-Victorian commercial building replacement of mixed fabric, with earlier fabric remnants and later commercial replacements

- i; Mid-Victorian buildings (Corn Street)
- ii; Georgian building remnants and Late-Victorian commercial replacements
  - (a) Late-Victorian replacement (Corn Street)
  - (b) Georgian building remnant (Small Street)
  - (c) Late-Victorian replacement (Broad Street)
- iii; Inter-war building replacement (Corn Street)
- iv; Georgian building remnants and Twentieth century commercial replacements
  - (a) Inter-war building replacements (Corn Street)
  - (b) Post-war building replacement (Corn Street)
  - (c) Georgian building remnant (Corn Street)
- v; Mid-Victorian buildings with Seventeenth century remnants
  - (a) Mid-Victorian buildings (Guildhall)
  - (b) Seventeenth century residential building remnant (Broad St.)
  - (c) Mid-Victorian buildings (Broad Street)
- vi; Mid-Victorian buildings (Corn Street, Grand Hotel)
- vii; Inter-war building replacement (Grand Hotel)

G Phase of Late-Victorian commercial building replacement of mixed fabric, with earlier fabric remnants and post-war commercial replacements

- i; Late-Victorian buildings with Georgian fabric remnants
  - (a) Late-Victorian buildings (Post Office, Small Street)
  - (b) Georgian commercial remnant (Small Street)
- ii; Late-Victorian buildings with post-war commercial replacements
  - (a) Post-war building replacements (Leonard Lane)
  - (b) Late-Victorian buildings (Broad Street)
  - (c) Late-Victorian buildings (Small Street)

H Phase of Georgian commercial building replacement of mixed fabric, with earlier fabric remnants and later commercial building replacements

- i; Georgian buildings
- ii; Late-Medieval fabric remnants and Nineteenth and Twentieth century building replacements
  - (a) Late-Medieval building (All Saints Church)
  - (b) Inter-war building replacement (High Street)
  - (c) Mid-Victorian building replacement (High Street)
  - (d) Inter-war building replacement (High Street)
  - (e) Late-Victorian replacement (All Saints Lane)
  - (f) Mid-Victorian replacement (St Nicholas Street)
  - (g) Post-war building replacement (High Street)

I Area of mixed fabric

- i; Mid-Victorian commercial buildings (John Street)
- ii; Mixed remnant and replacement fabric (Broad Street)
  - (a) Late-Medieval building (St John's Church)
  - (b) Post-war commercial building replacement
  - (c) Georgian building
- iii; Georgian commercial buildings (Broad Street, Tailor's Court, John Street)
- iv; Mixed Nineteenth and Twentieth century commercial building replacement (John Street)
  - (a) Post-war building replacment
  - (b) Late-Victorian building replacement
  - (c) Mid-Victorian building replacement

- v; Mixed remnant and replacement fabric (Broad Street)
  - (a) Late-Victorian commercial building replacement
  - (b) Mid-Victorian commercial building replacement
  - (c) Remnant Seventeenth century residential fabric
  - (d) Post-war commercial building replacement
  - (e) Inter-war commercial building replacement

- J Phases of Inter/Post-war commercial building replacement of mixed fabric
  - i; Post-war building replacement (Wine Street, The Pithay)
  - ii; Inter-war building replacement (Employment Office, Nelson Street)
  - iii; Post-war building replacement (Nelson Street)
  - iv; Inter-war building replacement (Colston Avenue)

#### LAND UTILISATION UNITS

##### **COLMORE ROW AND ENVIRONS CONSERVATION AREA, BIRMINGHAM**

- A Institutional (Cathedral)
- B Institutional/Civic/Public
  - i; Civic area (Council house, Town Hall, etc.)
  - ii; New Street Station
  - iii; Snow Hill Station
- C Mixed commercial; secondary office/retail area
  - i; Paradise Street.
  - ii; Edmund Street/Livery St.
- D Primary office area
  - i; Post Office
  - ii; Bennetts Hill/Colmore Row/Newhall Street
  - iii; St Philips Place
- E Primary retail area (New Street/Corporation Street)

##### **CITY AND QUEEN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA, BRISTOL**

- A Old City Core - mixed retail, civic and office use
- B Primary Office Area
  - i; Baldwin Street/Corn Street/Nelson Street/The Pithay
  - ii; Queen Sqaure/Prince Street
- C Mixed commercial; secondary retail area with encroaching office use (Broad Quay)
- D Mixed use; commercial/residential/warehouse use (King Street)
- E Warehouse use
  - i; Prince Street/Narrow Quay
  - ii; Welsh Back

**APPENDIX FOUR : LIST AND PLATES OF TOWNSCAPE UNITS  
IN THE BIRMINGHAM AND BRISTOL STUDY AREAS**

**LIST OF UNITS**

**COLMORE ROW AND ENVIRONS CONSERVATION AREA, BIRMINGHAM**

- I**     **Edge of Birmingham's built-up area at the beginning of the Eighteenth century**
- A**     Post-war commercial redevelopment of the Victorian commercial townscape  
      (a) Adaptive retail redevelopment (Warwick Passage)  
      (b) Augmentative retail redevelopment (Martineau Sq.)  
      (c) Adaptive retail redevelopment (N.W. Arcade)
- B**     Inter-war commercial redevelopment of the Victorian commercial townscape
- C**     Late-Victorian augmentative retail redevelopment (Corporation St.)
- D**     Urban Fallow (clearance of Georgian plan and Victorian fabric)
- E**     Victorian retail buildings on early-Georgian plots  
      (a) Mid-Victorian buildings (New St.)  
      (b) Late-Victorian buildings (Cannon St.)
- F**     Mid-Victorian retail adaptive redevelopment (Great Western Arcade)
- G**     Inter-war commercial redevelopment of the Victorian commercial townscape  
      (a) Inter-war redevelopment (Bull St.)  
      (b) Urban Fallow
- II**    **Early Eighteenth century residential expansion (Temple Street and Temple Row)**
- A**     Remnant Eighteenth century civic legacy (The Cathedral)
- B**     Commercial redevelopment within early-Georgian plot series  
      (a) Inter-war office redevelopment (Prudential House)  
      (b) Late-Victorian office redevelopment (Temple Row)
- C**     Post-war adaptive redev. of Victorian commercial townscape (Rackhams)
- D**     Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment within early-Georgian plot series (Cherry St.)
- E**     Mixed period commercial redevelopment within transformed early-Georgian plots  
      i; Twentieth century commercial redevelopment on metamorphic plots  
          (a) Inter-war offices (Temple St.)  
          (b) Post-war offices (Temple St.)  
          (c) Inter-war offices (Temple St.)  
      ii; Late-Victorian office redevelopment on hypometamorphic plots (Temple St.)  
      iii; Post-war office redevelopment on metamorphic plots (Temple St.)
- F**     Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment within transformed early-Georgian plots  
      (a) retail redevelopment on metamorphic plots (Temple St.)  
      (b) retail redevelopment on orthomorphic plots (Temple St.)  
      (c) retail redevelopment on metamorphic plots (Temple St.)

- III Mid-Eighteenth century residential expansion (The Colmore Estate)**
- A** Late-Georgian adaptive civic redevelopment of early-Georgian townscape (Town Hall)
- B** Mid/Late-Victorian augmentative civic redevelopment of mid-Georgian townscape  
 i; (Council House)  
 ii; (Council Offices/Art School)
- C** Late-Victorian augmentative civic redevelopment of mid-Georgian townscape (Council House Extension/Birmingham Midland Institute)
- D** Late-Victorian/Inter-war commercial redevelopment of mid-Georgian townscape  
 i; Inter-war redevelopment (Gt. Charles St.)  
 ii; Late-Victorian redevelopment  
 (a) Post-war office replacement (Gt. Charles St.)  
 (b) Inter-war office replacement (Gt. Charles St.)  
 (c) Late-Victorian offices (Cornwall St.)
- E** Mixed period commercial redevelopment within transformed early-Georgian plots  
 i; Metamorphic plots  
 (a) Mid-Victorian office buildings (Colmore Row)  
 (b) Post-war office redevelopment (Edmund St./Newhall St.)  
 ii; Hypometamorphic plots  
 (a) Late-Victorian office buildings (Newhall St.)  
 (b) Post-war office buildings (Newhall St.)  
 (c) Late-Victorian office buildings (Newhall St.)  
 (d) Inter-war office building (Gt. Charles St.)  
 (e) Late-Victorian office buildings (Cornwall St.)  
 (f) Post-war office building (Gt. Charles St.)
- F** Post-war commercial redevelopment with remnant Georgian plots and Victorian fabric  
 i; Post-war office redevelopment (Edmund St.)  
 ii; Late-Victorian offices on hypometamorphic plots (Edmund St.)  
 iii; Post-war office redevelopment (Edmund St.)
- G** Late-Victorian redevelopment of Georgian townscape  
 (a) Late-Victorian offices (Cornwall St.)  
 (b) Post-war redevelopment of Victorian townscape (Gt. Charles St.)
- H** Late-Victorian redevelopment of Georgian townscape  
 i; Late-Victorian redevelopment in mixed commercial use (Church St.)  
 ii; Post-war redevelopment of Victorian townscape (Livery St.)
- J** Mixed period commercial redevelopment within metamorphic Georgian plots  
 i; Mid-Victorian office buildings (Edmund St.)  
 ii; Late-Victorian mixed commercial buildings  
 (a) Late-Victorian buildings (Edmund St.)  
 (b) Inter-war replacement of Victorian fabric (Livery St.)  
 (c) Late-Victorian buildings (Livery St.)
- K** Mid-Victorian redevelopment of Georgian townscape  
 i; Late-Victorian fabric in mixed commercial use (Edmund St./Barwick St.)  
 ii; Mid/Late-Victorian fabric  
 (a) Mid-Victorian building in civic use (Snow Hill Station)  
 (b) Late-Victorian buildings in mixed commercial use (Livery St.)  
 (c) Mid-Victorian commercial building (Grand Hotel)

- IV Mid-Eighteenth century residential expansion (The Gooch and Inge Estates)**
- A Post-war comprehensive redevelopment (New Street Station)
- B Mid-Victorian adaptive commercial redevelopment of Georgian townscape (Midland Hotel)
- C Late-Victorian augmentative commercial redevelopment of Georgian townscape (Stephenson St.)
- D Mixed period commercial redevelopment within transformed Georgian plots  
 i; Late-Victorian retail buildings on metamorphic plots (New St.)  
 ii; Post-war retail redevelopment (Woolworths, New St.)  
 iii; Mid-Victorian retail buildings on hypometamorphic plots (New St.)
- E Late-Victorian adaptive commercial redevelopment of Georgian townscape (Post Office)
- F Mixed period commercial redevelopment within metamorphic Georgian plots  
 i; (a) Mid-Victorian buildings in mixed commercial use (Paradise St.)  
 (b) Inter-war buildings in office use (Paradise St.)  
 ii; Post-war mixed use, adaptive commercial redevelopment (Paradise St.)
- V Early- to Mid-Nineteenth century commercial expansion (Bennetts Hill)**
- A Late-Victorian adaptive commercial redevelopment of Georgian townscape  
 i; Buildings in retail use (Galloway's Corner)  
 ii; Buildings in office use (Galloway's Corner)
- B Mixed period office redevelopment within transformed early-Georgian plots  
 i; Hypometamorphic plots  
 (a) Late-Victorian buildings (Colmore Row)  
 (b) Late-Georgian buildings (Waterloo St.)  
 ii; Inter-war buildings on metamorphic plots  
 (a) Buildings in office use (Waterloo St.)  
 (b) Buildings in retail use (New St.)
- C Mixed period commercial redevelopment within transformed mid-Victorian plots  
 i; Inter-war buildings on metamorphic plots  
 (a) Buildings in office use (Waterloo St.)  
 (b) Buildings in retail use (New St.)  
 ii; Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (New St.)  
 iii; Hypometamorphic plots  
 (a) Mid-Victorian bank building (Bennetts Hill)  
 (b) Inter-war building in office use (Bennetts Hill)  
 (c) Late-Victorian building in retail use (New St.)
- D Mixed period commercial redevelopment within metamorphic late-Georgian plots  
 (a) Mid-Victorian bank building (Waterloo St.)  
 (b) Inter-war buildings in office use (Waterloo St.)  
 (c) Post-war buildings in office use (Waterloo St.)  
 (d) Late-Victorian buildings in office use (Temple Row West)  
 (e) Mid-Victorian buildings in office use (Temple Row West)  
 (f) Inter-war buildings in office use (Colmore Row)

- E Mixed period commercial redevelopment within transformed mid-Victorian plots  
 i; Hypometamorphic plots  
 (a) Inter-war buildings in office use (Bennetts Hill)  
 (b) Mid-Victorian buildings in office use (Bennetts Hill)  
 ii; Inter-war office buildings on metamorphic plots

**CITY AND QUEEN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA, BRISTOL**

**I Part of the built up area of Late Medieval Bristol**

- A Mixed period redevelopment within the Late-Medieval plot series  
 i; Georgian redevelopment, with some subsequent commercial redevelopment, within the Late-Medieval plot series  
 (a) Georgian commercial and civic buildings (Bristol Cross)  
 (b) Mid-Victorian commercial redevelopment (Broad Street)  
 (c) Late-Medieval civic legacy (All Saints Church)  
 (d) Inter-war commercial redevelopment (High Street)  
 (e) Mid-Victorian office redevelopment (All Saints Lane)  
 (f) Late-Victorian office redevelopment (All Saints Lane)  
 (g) Georgian commercial buildings (Market)  
 (h) Inter-war commercial redevelopment (High Street)  
 ii; Georgian augmentative redevelopment  
 (a) Georgian augmentative retail redevelopment (Market)  
 (b) Mid-Victorian commercial redevelopment of Georgian townscape (St. Nicholas Street)  
 (c) Georgian civic redevelopment within transformed Late-Medieval plots (St. Nicholas Church)  
 iii; Post-war office redevelopment of Georgian townscape (High Street)  
 iv; Mixed Nineteenth and Twentieth century commercial redevelopment within the Late-Medieval plot series  
 (a) Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment (Baldwin Street)  
 (b) Late-Georgian commercial redevelopment (St. Nicholas Street)  
 (c) Mid-Victorian commercial redevelopment (Baldwin Street)  
 (d) Post-war commercial redevelopment (Baldwin Street)  
 (e) Inter-war commercial redevelopment (Baldwin Street)  
 (f) Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment (Baldwin Street)  
 v; Georgian and Victorian commercial redevelopment within transformed Late-Medieval plots  
 (a) Georgian commercial redevelopment (Exchange Avenue)  
 (b) Mid-Victorian commercial redevelopment (St. Nicholas Street)  
 (c) Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment (St. Nicholas Street)  
 vi; Mid-Victorian commercial redevelopment, with some subsequent commercial redevelopment, within transformed Late-Medieval plots  
 (a) Mid-Victorian office redevelopment (Corn Street)  
 (b) Late-Victorian office redevelopment (St. Nicholas Street)  
 (c) Inter-war office redevelopment (Corn Street)  
 (d) Inter-war office redevelopment (Corn Street)  
 (e) Post-war office redevelopment (Corn Street)  
 (f) Remnant Georgian civic redevelopment (Commercial Rooms)  
 (g) Late-Victorian office redevelopment (Corn Street)  
 (h) Remnant Georgian commercial redevelopment (Old Post Office)  
 (j) Late-Victorian office redevelopment (Corn Street)  
 (k) Mid-Victorian office redevelopment (Corn Street)  
 vii; Late-Victorian office redevelopment, with some subsequent Twentieth century office redevelopment within the Late-Medieval plot series  
 (a) Late-Victorian redevelopment (St. Stephen's Street)  
 (b) Inter-war redevelopment (St. Stephen's Street)  
 (c) Late-Victorian redevelopment (St. Stephen's Street)  
 (d) Post-war redevelopment (Corn Street)  
 (e) Late-Victorian redevelopment (St. Stephen's Street)

- (f) Remnant Late-Medieval townscape (St. Stephen's Church)
- (g) Post-war redevelopment (Clare Street)
- (h) Late-Victorian redevelopment (Clare Street)
- viii; Victorian commercial redevelopment within transformed Late-Medieval plots
  - (a) Late-Victorian adaptive redevelopment (Post Office, Small St.)
  - (b) Late-Victorian redevelopment (St. Stephen's Street)
  - (c) Mid-Victorian redevelopment (St. Stephen's Street)
  - (d) Late-Victorian redevelopment (St. Stephen's Street)
- ix; Late-Georgian and Victorian redevelopment within transformed Late-Medieval plots
  - (a) Mid-Victorian civic redevelopment (Guildhall)
  - (b) Late-Georgian commercial redevelopment (Small Street)
- x; Nineteenth and Twentieth century adaptive commercial redevelopment
  - (a) Mid-Victorian redevelopment (Grand Hotel)
  - (b) Inter-war redevelopment (Grand Hotel)
- xi; Mixed period fabric within the Late-Medieval plot series
  - (a) Georgian commercial redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (b) Mid-Victorian commercial redevelopment (Small Street)
  - (c) Remnant Seventeenth century townscape (Small Street)
- xii; Victorian and Post-war office redevelopment within the Late-Medieval plot series
  - (a) Post-war redevelopment (Bell Lane)
  - (b) Post-war adaptive redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (c) Late-Victorian redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (d) Late-Victorian redevelopment (Small Street)
  - (e) Post-war redevelopment (Small Street)
  - (f) Remnant Eighteenth century townscape (Small Street)
- xiii; Nineteenth century mixed commercial redevelopment, with some subsequent Twentieth century redevelopment, within the Late-Medieval plot series
  - (a) Late-Georgian redevelopment (Albion Chambers)
  - (b) Late-Victorian redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (c) Mid-Victorian redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (d) Mid-Victorian redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (e) Inter-war redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (f) Post-war redevelopment (Grand Hotel Annex)
  - (g) Remnant Seventeenth century townscape (Broad Street)
  - (h) Late-Victorian redevelopment (Broad Street)
- xiv; Mixed period fabric, predominantly in office use, within the Late-Medieval plot series
  - (a) Georgian office redevelopment (Tailor's Court, John Street)
  - (b) Post-war adaptive redevelopment (John Street)
  - (c) Late-Victorian office redevelopment (John Street)
  - (d) Mid-Victorian office redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (e) Mid-Victorian commercial redevelopment (Bell Lane)
  - (f) Georgian commercial redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (g) Post-war office redevelopment (Broad Street)
  - (h) Remnant Medieval townscape (St Johns Church)

**B** Inter/Post-war commercial redevelopment of the Medieval city core

- i; Post-war office redevelopment
  - (a) Adaptive redevelopment (Wine Street, The Pithay)
  - (b) Augmentative redevelopment (Pithay Court, Tower House)
- ii; Post-war commercial redevelopment (Fairfax Street Car Park)
- iii; Inter-war civic office redevelopment (Employment office)
- iv; Post-war office redevelopment (Nelson Street)
- v; Inter-war office redevelopment (Colston Avenue)



- C Late-Georgian and Victorian redevelopment within the Late-Medieval plot series, with Post-war redevelopment
- i; Late-Georgian and Victorian commercial redevelopment
    - (a) Late-Georgian redevelopment (Broad Quay)
    - (b) Late-Victorian redevelopment (Marsh Street)
  - ii; Post-war mixed adaptive commercial redevelopment (Baldwin Street)
  - iii; Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (Bristol and West House)
  - iv; Late-Georgian and Victorian commercial redevelopment
    - (a) Late-Georgian redevelopment (Broad Quay)
    - (b) Late-Victorian redevelopment (Marsh Street)
- D Victorian and Twentieth century commercial redevelopment of the Medieval city core
- i; Victorian and Twentieth century commercial redevelopment within a Georgian augmentative plot series
    - (a) Late-Victorian mixed commercial redevelopment (Clare Street)
    - (b) Mid-Victorian mixed commercial redevelopment (Clare Street)
    - (c) Remnant Georgian commercial townscape (Clare Street)
    - (d) Inter-war office redevelopment (Clare Street)
    - (e) Mid-Victorian office redevelopment (Clare Street)
  - ii; Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (Colston Avenue)
  - iii; Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (Marsh Street, Telephone Exchange)
  - iv; Inter-war adaptive office redevelopment (Telephone Exchange)
  - v; Late-Victorian and Twentieth century commercial redevelopment
    - (a) Late-Victorian adaptive commercial redevelopment (Baldwin St.)
    - (b) Inter-war commercial redevelopment of the Victorian townscape (Baldwin Street)
    - (c) Late-Victorian adaptive commercial redevelopment (Telephone Avenue)
    - (d) Late-Victorian augmentative commercial redevelopment (Telephone Avenue)
  - vi; Twentieth century redevelopment of Victorian commercial townscape
    - (a) Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (Baldwin Street)
    - (b) Post-war redevelopment within a Late-Victorian augmentative plot series (Baldwin Street)
    - (c) Post-war redevelopment within a Late-Victorian adaptive plot series (Post Office Depot)
    - (d) Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (Queen Charlotte Street)
    - (e) Remnant Late-Victorian commercial townscape (Queen Charlotte Street)
    - (f) Inter-war redevelopment within a Late-Victorian adaptive plot series (Queen Charlotte Street)
    - (g) Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (Queen Charlotte Street)
    - (h) Post-war redevelopment within a Late-Victorian adaptive plot series (Queen Charlotte Street)
  - vii; Post-war commercial redevelopment, with remnant Victorian townscape
    - (a) Post-war adaptive mixed commercial redevelopment (Bridge House)
    - (b) Remnant Late-Victorian townscape (Queen Charlotte Street)
    - (c) Post-war warehouse redevelopment within a Late-Victorian adaptive plot series (Queen Charlotte Street)
    - (d) Post-war adaptive warehouse redevelopment (Queen Charlotte Street)
    - (e) Post-war adaptive warehouse redevelopment (Welsh Back)
  - viii; Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment (Baldwin Street)
  - ix; Remnant Mid-Victorian transit shed development (Welsh Back)

**II Early Seventeenth Century residential expansion (King Street)**

- A** Seventeenth Century townscape legacy with mixed period redevelopment within the Seventeenth century plot series  
i; Seventeenth century townscape and subsequent mixed period commercial redevelopment within the Seventeenth century plot series  
    (a) Seventeenth century residential townscape (Merchant Venturers Almshouses)  
    (b) Georgian civic and commercial redevelopment (Library, King Street)  
    (c) Seventeenth century residential townscape in commercial use (King Street)  
    (d) Mid-Victorian warehouse redevelopment (King Street)  
ii; Victorian commercial redevelopment within transformed Seventeenth century plots  
    (a) Mid-Victorian warehouse redevelopment (King Street)  
    (b) Late-Victorian office redevelopment (King Street)  
iii; Georgian commercial redevelopment within transformed 17th century plots (Theatre Royal)  
iv; Post-war adaptive commercial redevelopment (King Street)  
v; Seventeenth century townscape and subsequent mixed period commercial redevelopment within the Seventeenth century plot series  
    (a) Seventeenth century residential townscape in mixed use (King Street)  
    (b) Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment (King Street)  
    (c) Post-war warehouse redevelopment (Queen Charlotte Street)  
    (d) Georgian commercial redevelopment (King Street)
- B** Post-war adaptive commercial redevelopment of the Seventeenth century townscape  
    (a) Office redevelopment  
    (b) Warehouse redevelopment
- C** Post-war development and redevelopment of the Seventeenth century townscape  
    (a) Warehouse redevelopment of the Seventeenth century townscape  
    (b) Dock building development

**III Eighteenth Century residential expansion (Queen Square and Prince Street) and Docks development**

- A** Queen Anne/Georgian townscape legacy with mixed period redevelopment of the Eighteenth century townscape within the Eighteenth century plot series  
i; Queen Anne/Georgian townscape with mixed period redevelopment within the Eighteenth century plots  
    (a) Eighteenth century residential townscape legacy in office use (Queen Square)  
    (b) Post-war office redevelopment (Prince Street)  
    (c) Post-war office redevelopment (Prince Street)  
    (d) Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment (The Grove)  
    (e) Post-war office redevelopment (The Grove)  
    (f) Post-war office redevelopment (Queen Square)  
    (g) Inter-war office redevelopment (Queen Square)  
    (h) Post-war office redevelopment (Queen Square)  
    (j) Post-war retail redevelopment (Welsh Back)  
    (k) Mid-Victorian warehouse redevelopment (Welsh Back)  
ii; Late-Georgian redevelopment within transformed early Eighteenth century plots (Bush Warehouse)  
iii; Mid-Victorian adaptive warehouse redevelopment (Queen Square)

- iv; Twentieth century commercial redevelopment within transformed Georgian plots
  - (a) Inter-war office redevelopment (Prince Street)
  - (b) Post-war office redevelopment (Prince Street)
- v; Mixed commercial/residential Eighteenth century townscape with mixed period redevelopment within the Eighteenth century plots
  - (a) Eighteenth century townscape legacy (Prince St., Narrow Quay)
  - (b) Mid-Victorian warehouse redevelopment (Prince Street)
  - (c) Post-war warehouse redevelopment (Prince Street)
  - (d) Late-Victorian civic and warehouse redevelopment (Prince Street)
  - (e) Inter-war warehouse redevelopment (Farr's Lane)
- vi; Victorian warehouse redevelopment within the Eighteenth century plots
  - (a) Mid-Victorian redevelopment (Little King Street)
  - (b) Late-Victorian redevelopment (Little King Street)
  - (c) Mid-Victorian redevelopment (Queen Charlotte Street)
- vii; Nineteenth and Twentieth century redevelopment within transformed Eighteenth century plots
  - (a) Post-war office redevelopment (Queen Sqaure/Welsh Back)
  - (b) Late-Victorian warehouse redevelopment (Queen Sqaure/Welsh Back)
  - (c) Post-war warehouse redevelopment (Welsh Back)
  - (d) Post-war office redevelopment (Queen Sqaure)
- viii; Late-Victorian office redevelopment within transformed Eighteenth century plots (Queen Square)
- ix; Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (Queen Square)
- x; Post-war adaptive office redevelopment (Queen Square)

**B** Late-Victorian commercial redevelopment of the Eighteenth century townscape

- C** Post-war commercial redevelopment of the Eighteenth century townscape
- i; Post-war office redevelopment
    - (a) Augmentative redevelopment (Narrow Quay House)
    - (b) Adaptive redevelopment (Pearl Assurance House, Prince Street)
  - ii; Post-war commercial redevelopment (Unicorn Hotel)

- D** Twentieth Century commercial development
- i; Post-war mixed commercial dockside redevelopment of inter-war townscape
    - (a) Warehouse and industrial redevelopment (The Grove)
    - (b) Office redevelopment (The Grove)
  - ii; Inter-war office development (The Grove)

**E** Urban Fallow (clearance of Victorian dockside fabric)

- F** Victorian dock townscape with Twentieth century developments
- i; Post-war light industrial development (The Grove)
  - ii; Mid-Victorian transit shed development (The Grove)
  - iii; Late-Victorian adaptive warehouse redevelopment of Mid-Victorian townscape (Welsh Back)
  - iv; Post-war adaptive warehouse redevelopment of Mid-Victorian townscape (Welsh Back)
  - v; Victorian warehouse development
    - (a) Mid-Victorian transit shed development (Welsh Back)
    - (b) Late-Victorian transit shed redevelopment within the Mid-Victorian plots
  - vi; Inter-war warehouse development (Welsh Back)

PLATES SHOWING THE TOWNSCAPE WITHIN THE BIRMINGHAM UNITS

Plate A4.1



Plate A4.2



Plate A4.3



Plate A4.4



Plate A4.5



Units IC & IEa

Plate A4.6



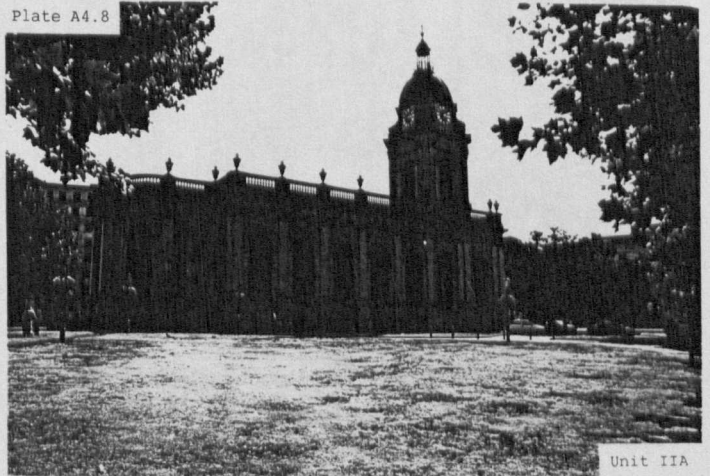
Unit IEb

Plate A4.7



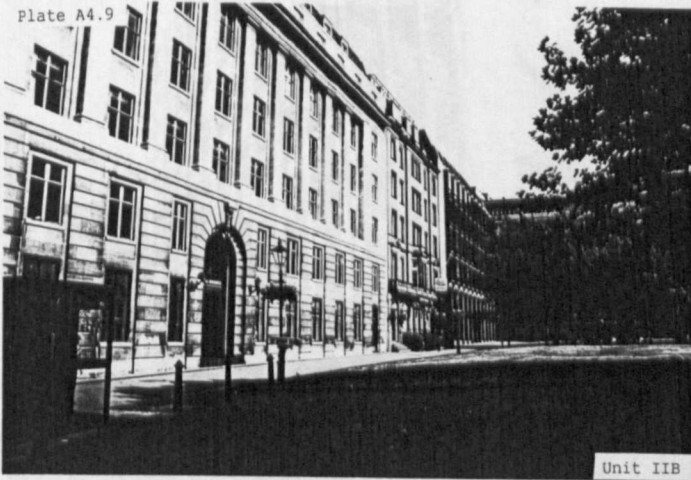
Units IF & IG

Plate A4.8



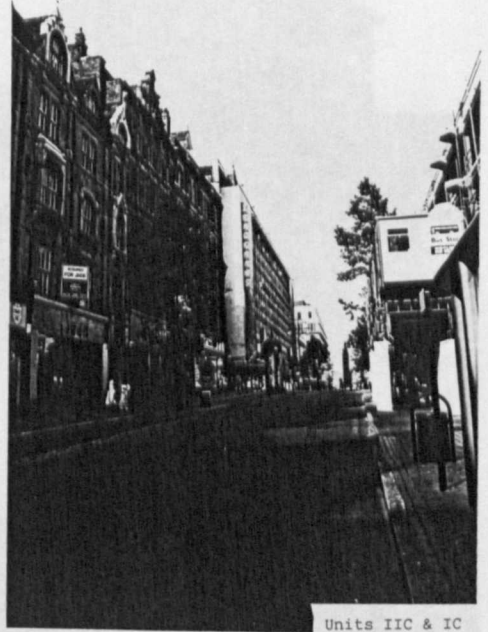
Unit IIA

Plate A4.9



Unit IIB

Plate A4.10



Units IIC & IC

Plate A4.11



Units IIE & IIF

Plate A4.12



Unit IIEii

Plate A4.13



Plate A4.14



Plate A4.15



Plate A4.16







Plate A4.21

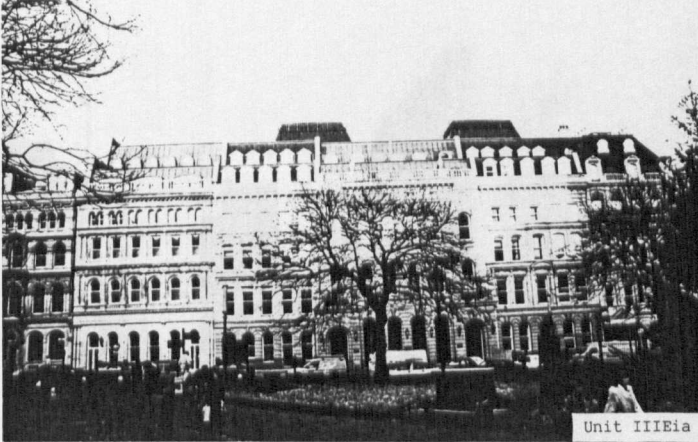


Plate A4.22



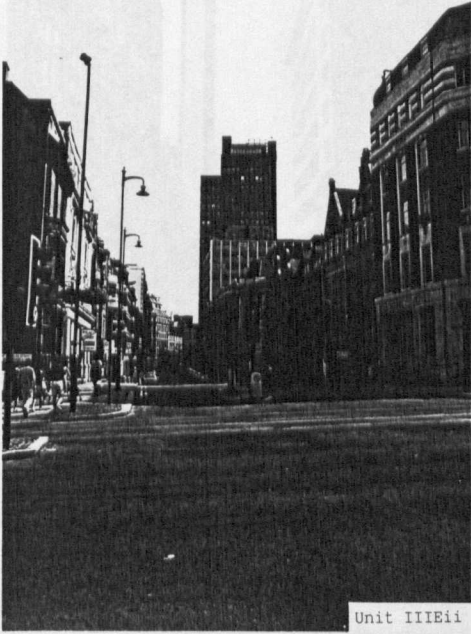
Plate A4.23



Plate A4.24



Plate A4.25



Unit IIIEii

Plate A4.26



Unit IIIF

Plate A4.27



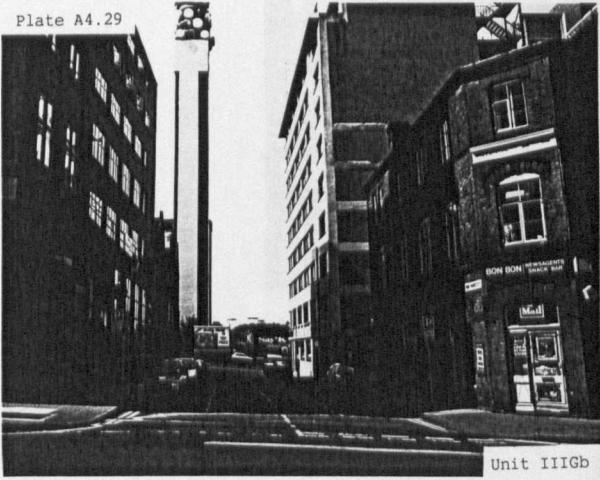
Unit IIIGa

Plate A4.28



Unit IIIGa

Plate A4.29



Unit IIIGb

Plate A4.30



Unit IIIHi

Plate A4.31



Units IIIJi & IIIJia

Plate A4.32



Unit IIKi

Plate A4.33



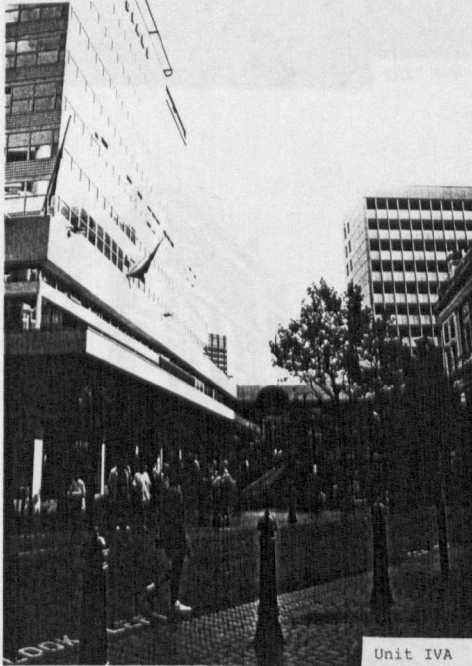
Unit IIKii

Plate A4.34



Unit IIKiia  
(source Birmingham CC, 1989)

Plate A4.35



Unit IVA

Plate A4.36



Unit IVB

Plate A4.37



Unit IVC

Plate A4.38



Unit IVDiii

Plate A4.39



Units IVDi & IVDii

Plate A4.40



Unit IVE

Plate A4.41



Unit IVE  
(source Birmingham CC, 1989)

Plate A4.42



Unit IVF

Plate A4.43



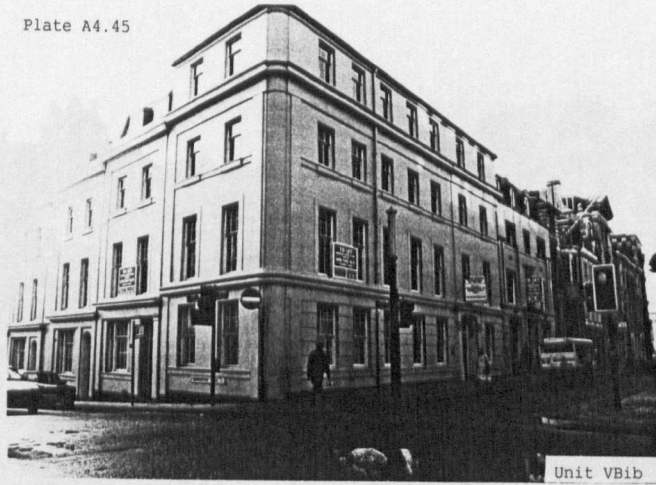
Unit VA  
(source Birmingham CC, 1989)

Plate A4.44



Unit VBia

Plate A4.45



Unit VBib

Plate A4.46



Unit VBib

Plate A4.47



Units VBii & VCI

Plate A4.48



Unit VCia

Plate A4.49



Unit VCiii

Plate A4.50



Unit Ciic

Plate A4.51



Units VDa,b,c

Plate A4.52



Units VDe,d,e,f



Plate A4.53



Unit VE

Plate A4.54



Unit VEii

PLATES SHOWING THE TOWNSCAPE WITHIN THE BRISTOL UNITS

Plate A4.55



Plate A4.56

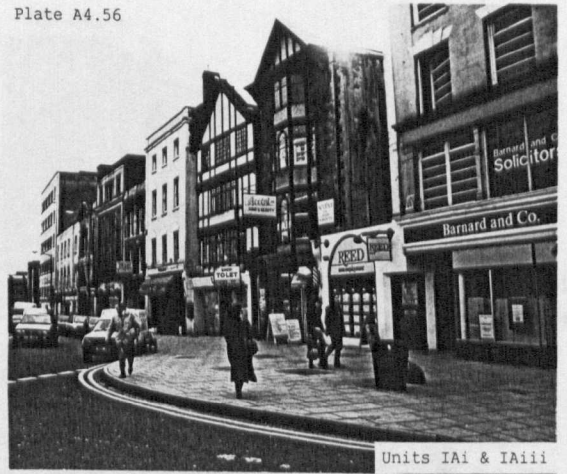


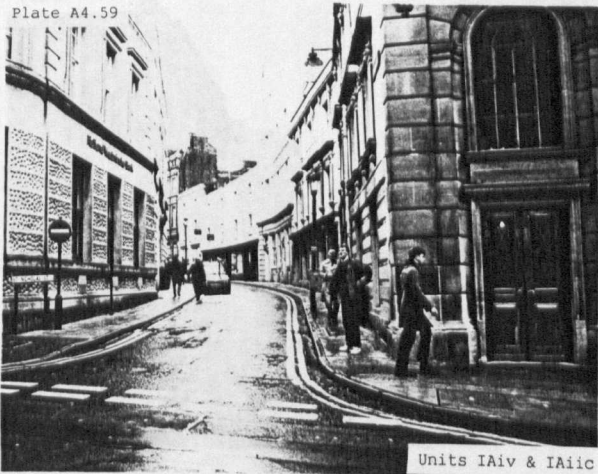
Plate A4.57



Plate A4.58



Plate A4.59



Units IAiv & IAic

Plate A4.60



Unit IAiv

Plate A4.61



Unit IAiv

Plate A4.62



Unit IAiv

Plate A4.63



Unit IAvi

Plate A4.65



Unit IAvii

Plate A4.64



Unit IAvi

Plate A4.66



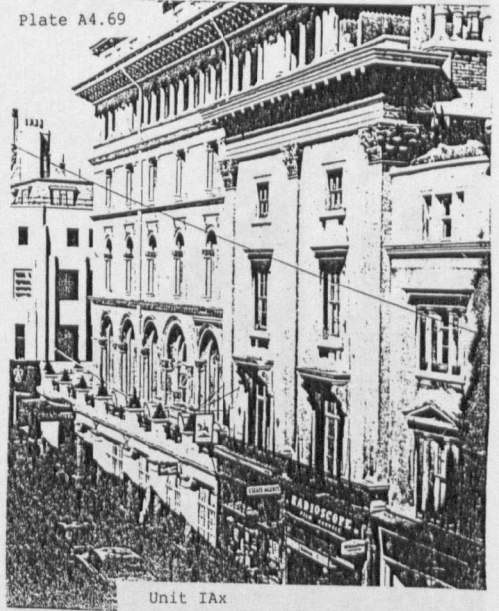
Unit IAvii

Plate A4.67



Unit IAviia

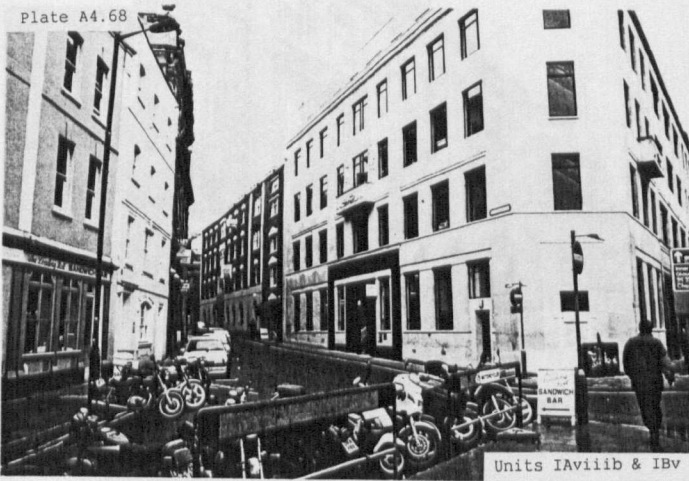
Plate A4.69



Unit IAx

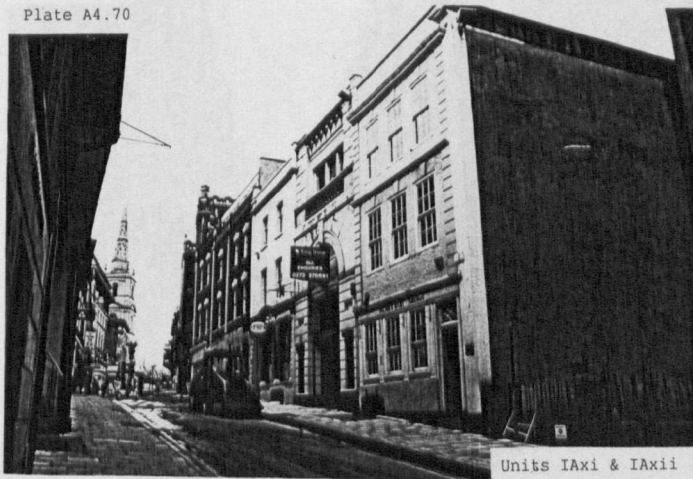
(source Bristol CC planning files)

Plate A4.68



Units IAviib & IBv

Plate A4.70



Units IAxI & IAxii

Plate A4.71



Unit IAxi

plate A4.73



Units IAxiii & IAxiv

Plate A4.72



Units IAix & IAxiii

Plate A4.74



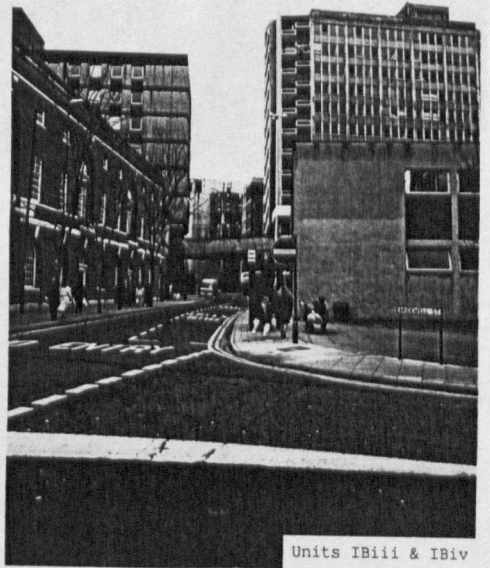
Units IAxiv a&g

Plate A4.75



Unit IBi

Plate A4.77



Units IBiii & IBiv

Plate A4.76



Unit IBii

Plate A4.78



Unit IBv

Plate A4.79



Units ICia & ICii

Plate A4.80



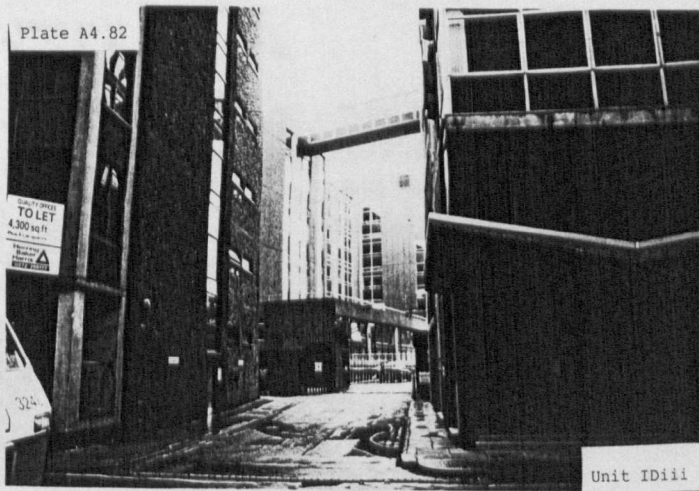
Unit IC

Plate A4.81



Unit IDi

Plate A4.82



Unit IDiii



Plate A4.83



Units IDiv, IDvd & IDvic

Plate A4.84



Unit IDv

Plate A4.85



Unit IDv

Plate A4.86



Units IDvi & IDvii

Plate A4.87



Unit IDvig

Plate A4.88



Unit IDviii

Plate A4.89



Unit IIA

Plate A4.90



Unit IIAva

Plate A4.91



Unit IIC

Unit IIIAia

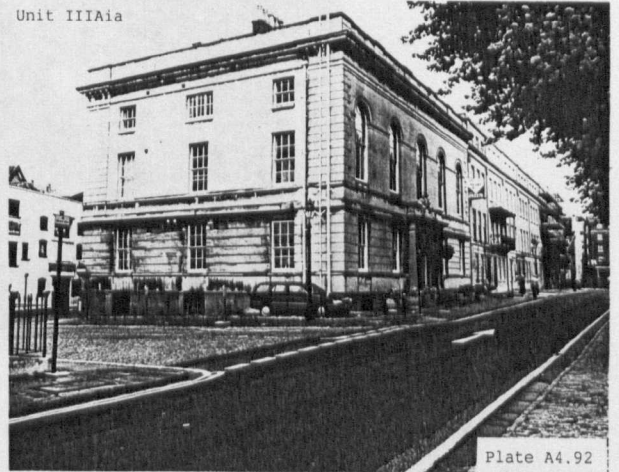


Plate A4.92

Plate A4.93



Unit IIIAia

Plate A4.94



Units IIIAia & IIIAvii

Plate A4.95



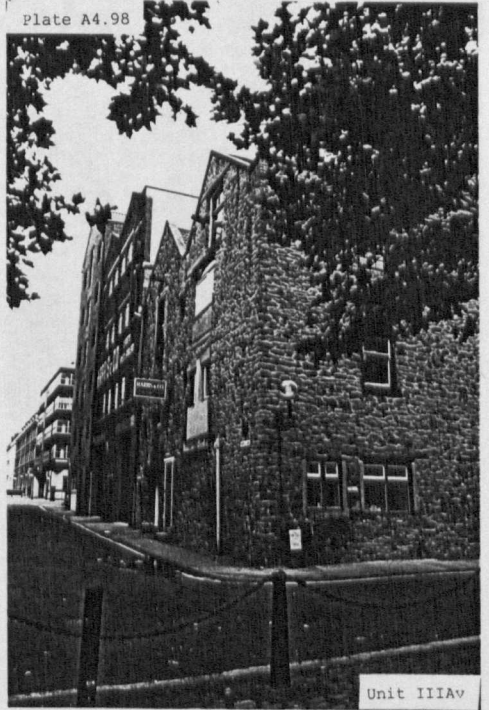
Units IIIAia,g,h

Plate A4.96



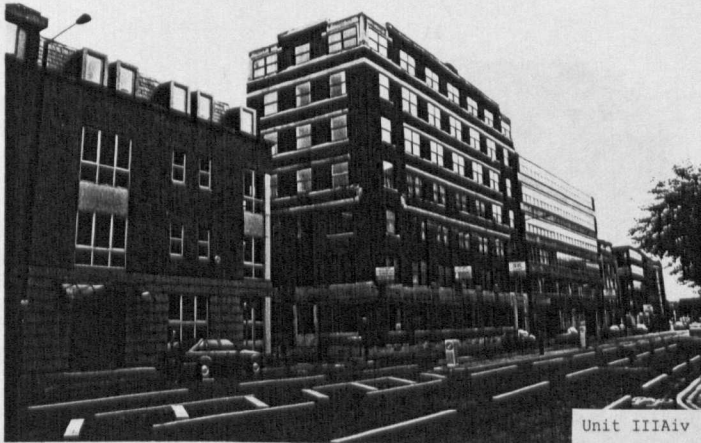
Units IIIAij&k & IIIAix

Plate A4.98



Unit IIIAv

Plate A4.97



Unit IIIAiv

Plate A4.99



Units IIIAv & IIIAii

Plate A4.100



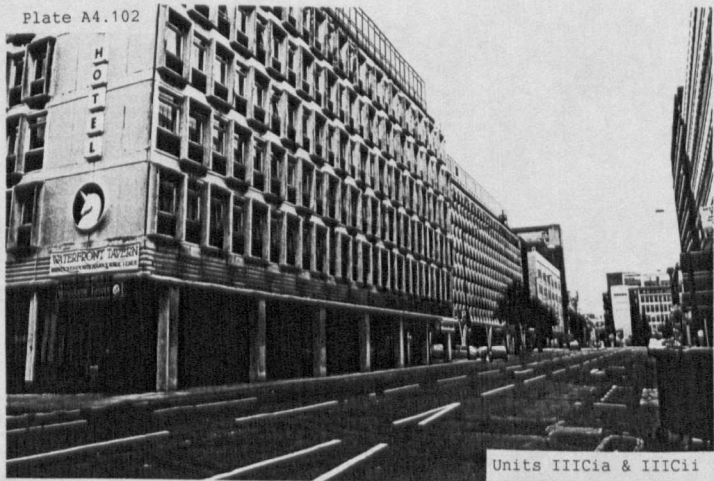
Unit IIIAvic

Plate A4.101



Units IIIAvii & IIIAviii

Plate A4.102



Units IIICia & IIICii

Plate A4.103



Plate A4.104



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