**Announcements**

“The 21st Century City: Dimensions and Directions”
Seventh Australasian Urban History/Planning History Conference February 2004

This is an advance notice for the 7th Australasian Urban History/Planning History Conference for 2004. Bringing together Australian, New Zealand and international delegates, the conference will be held in Geelong, a regional Victorian city near the state capital of Melbourne, from 11 to 14 February 2004. It will be hosted by the School of Architecture and Building at Deakin University.

The conference themes are again diverse but will centre around the conditions and challenges of the city of the twenty-first century and will explore and debate issues, ideas and viewpoints from a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary approaches. The conference will thus continue the tradition to create opportunities for national and international academics, practitioners, or researchers in urban history and planning history, and the many associated disciplines, to engage in critical discourse.

The main conference venue is the Waterfront campus of Architecture and Building is located in an historic Woolstores building that has been adapted for reuse as part of an ongoing major downtown foreshore redevelopment.

Geelong is a regional city situated about 75 km southwest of Melbourne on Corio Bay, near the Great Ocean Road, the famous Surf Coast, several celebrated wineries, and other attractions easily reached by train or road.

For more information, suggested contributions, themed sessions, or other enquiries please contact:

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**A REQUEST TO THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNING HISTORY SOCIETY:**

The Anglo Iranian Oil Company towns and settlements in Khuzistan (1908-1951): models, counter-models or experiments without hereafter?

The Anglo Iranian Oil Company built several towns and smaller settlements in Khuzistan between 1908 when oil was found in commercial quantities in Southern Iran, and 1951 when the oil industry was nationalised and the British expelled. As large scale experiments in town planning, these company towns were amongst the earliest modern industrial towns in the Middle East. They grew under near colonial conditions in a physically hostile environment, amidst a rural and traditional society which was gradually getting to grips with industrial development and the birth of a nation-state.

I am trying to articulate a history of the way these oil towns were planned, built, administered, and inhabited. I am particularly interested in these towns given their place within the context of industrial and colonial town planning, given their importance as textbooks for the study of the social history of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (A.I.O.C.), and given their role in the development of modern Iran.

In order to help me investigate the links between the local urban history of these towns and the wider issues of modernisation and nationalism, I am looking for monographs or articles about the history of oil towns in the near-colonial environments of the Middle East and Latin America, or in both company and state-run oil industries in the United States, Russia and Romania. More generally, I am looking for studies into the modernising influence of new industrial towns, particularly company towns, in under-developed countries.

Many thanks in advance for your suggestions.
Pauline Lavagne d`Ortigae
Email : pauline.lavagne@free.abs let.fr
14 rue Hittorf, 75100 Paris.

**Workshop on**

THE REBUILDING OF BRITISH CITIES IN CONTEXT
Exploring the post-Second World War reconstruction

Monday May 12th, 2003
University of Central England
TIC, Millennium Point
Birmingham

Organisers: Peter Larkham and Joe Nasr, UCE

10:00-10:30 Welcome: Alan Middleton, Joe Nasr and Peter Larkham
(University of Central England)

10:30-12:00 First session:
Planning the British reconstruction
The reconstruction plans
The reconstruction planners
Discusant: Anthony Stanif (University of Nottingham)

12:00-13:30 Lunch and walking tour of city centre of Birmingham

13:30-15:00 Second session:
Producing and consuming the British reconstruction
Designing the rebuilt city
Experiencing the rebuilt city
Discusant: Patricia Garside (University of Salford)

15:00-15:30 Break

15:30-17:00 Third session:
Situating the British reconstruction
Linkages across reconstructions
Comparisons across reconstructions
Discusant: Stephen Ward (Oxford Brookes University)

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in interest in the reconstruction after the Second World War - and in post-catastrophe rebuilding more generally. Country-specific conferences have been held over the past two decades overseas, but not in the UK. Continuing detailed research has uncovered much more about the number and type of reconstruction plans, and about how individual places undertook such plans, publicised them, and implemented them. Yet much more remains unknown. Did this outpouring of planning represent a "new paradigm"? How did consultants become involved? Were plans too visionary, too prescriptive? How did citizens go through and shape the reconstruction process, and why was public reaction predominantly negative? How do these built cities compare with other post-war reconstructions? And, half a century later, how are these rebuilt cities perceived and valued, and how are they changing?

This workshop aims to develop our understanding in this area of planning history. It does not intend to reiterate the details of recent research projects. Instead, key speakers will highlight important facts, issues and themes, with the intention of generating discussion and debate. What links can be made between recent research initiatives, and between disciplines? Future collaborations or other research ideas will be explored.

Please contact: bullecreconstruction@uwe.ac.uk; or to Mrs Pat Wheeler, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of Central England, Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2SU; (021) 331-6231.
Artic les

Anglo-Japanese Exchanges in Town Planning:
The Case of Tama New Town in the 1960s, and William A. Robson

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Abstract
The new town idea originated in Britain but has since been taken up by governments and planning authorities around the world. The post-war planning in Tokyo provides a case in point. Its planners looked to Britain for a lead in their early effort to relieve problems of population growth and urban congestion in the Tokyo metropolitan region. William Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan (1945) in particular acted as a major influence. Out of this interest in British planning came Tama New Town, which was begun in the early 1960s and promoted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG). Situated some 20 miles south-west of Tokyo, with a proposed area of 3,000 hectares and a population target of 300,000, it became Japan’s largest public development project. Yet initially Tama was to be a largely dormitory town.

William A. Robson, professor of public administration at the London School of Economics between 1947 and 1962 and a lifelong Fabian, was a leading expert on London and metropolitan government. His Japanese students included several from the TMG who went on to executive positions in the administration. The Tokyo Institute for Municipal Research, which had a close relation with the TMG, was a longstanding think-tank focused on planning and local government issues. As such, it took great interest in Robson’s work, having published a Japanese version of his Great Cities of the World. These links led him to act as consultant to the TMG on Tokyo government in the late 1960s, just as the Tama project was getting underway.

This paper examines Robson’s involvement in the planning of Tama New Town and suggests how his views may have intersected with the intentions of Japanese planners. On his second visit to the capital in 1969, Robson undertook a review of Tama at the specific request of the new socialist governor of Tokyo. His report took a very critical view, calling it ‘a fundamentally misconceived project’ and recommending changes in the arrangements and policies surrounding the planning of Tama. The planners in Tokyo were thus confronted with the British idea of new towns in which self-sufficiency was a key factor and had to reflect on the decisions taken to develop Tama as ‘a mainly residential town for commuters’. The episode was widely reported in the press at the time and brought into sharp relief the divergent ideas informing the planning of new towns in the two countries.

Introduction
The new towns idea, drawing on the earlier garden city ideal, originated in Britain. It has since been taken up by governments and planning authorities around the world. Japan was no exception. After 1945 its civil servants and town planners avidly followed the pioneering development of British new towns. William Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan (1945) provided the main model in an early effort to relieve problems of population growth and urban congestion in the Tokyo metropolitan region. Tama New Town, which grew out of this interest in British town planning, was started in the early 1960s by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG), the governing body of the capital city, and the government-sponsored Japan Housing Corporation. Situated some 20 miles south-west of Tokyo, with a proposed area of 3,000 hectares and a population target of 300,000, it became Japan’s largest public development project. Yet initially Tama was to be a largely dormitory town.

William A. Robson, professor of public administration at the London School of Economics between 1947 and 1962, may have seemed an unlikely protagonist in the new town movement, but it took place in 1956 in Japan to publically question the basic premise of the project. This paper explores this important but somewhat forgotten episode in the early planning of Tama New Town. It will look briefly at the origins of Tama New Town and its early planning, the circumstances which led to William Robson’s involvement, and how his views may have intersected with the intentions of the planners in Tokyo. The episode offers an interesting case study in the evolution and adaptation of the new towns idea in Japan.

The background and origins: British influences on the post-war planning of Tokyo
The origins of Tama New Town lay in planners’ reactions to the failure of post-1945 planning in the Tokyo metropolitan region. The course of post-war planning in Tokyo showed an underlying influence of the British garden city tradition stretching back to the early part of the century when the idea was first introduced to Japan.1 Its devotees included Issai Imamura, the doyen of Japanese town planning and a longstanding president of the City Planning Association of Japan.2 Eiyo Ishikawa, a leading planner of the time who was responsible for the war damage rehabilitation plan for Tokyo (1946), had long championed the idea of planned decentralisation. And when Japanese planners and government officials, while still somewhat ambivalent, yet small in number, started to travel abroad in the period after 1945 to study latest developments in planning, Britain and her new towns figured prominently on their itinerary. Often they established contacts with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) through their visits to Letchworth and Welwyn.3 Journals such as Shinsho [New City] (published by the City Planning Association of Japan) and Toshimondai [Urban Problems] (published by the Tokyo Institute for Municipal Research) diligently followed developments in Britain. The City Planning Institute of Japan was established in 1950 as a professional body representing the planning profession worldwide, largely thanks to its journal, Toshikibako [Planning Review], carried notes on the British new towns and William Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan.4

Of all the cities in Japan, Tokyo suffered most from enemy bombing in the Second World War: approximately 100,000 people killed, a further 130,000 injured and 712,000 housing units destroyed. Its population was 3.5 million in 1945, down from the pre-war peak of 7 million. Following the British example, a series of predominantly government-led projects were started, including that at the time as an ‘annual addition of what amounts to the entire population of Providence, Rhode Island, or New Brunswick’.5 The projected 1975 population for the whole capital region had been surpassed by 1958, 260,000 people had been accommodated in the planned satellite developments.6

Origins of Tama New Town
Although some progress was made in designing and developing these satellite towns, the ambitious Capital Region Development Plan failed to cope with the pressures of unprecedented growth. Tokyo’s population was growing at an annual rate of 300,000 by the end of the 1950s; an increase described by Japan Architect at the time as an ‘annual addition of what amounts to the entire population of Providence, Rhode Island, or New Brunswick’.5 The projected 1975 population for the whole capital region had been surpassed by 1958, 260,000 people had been accommodated in the planned satellite developments.6

In the face of this rapid urbanisation, meeting the housing shortage while avoiding the worst of the urban sprawl increasingly became a priority of official planning policy. The semi-governmental Japan Housing Corporation (set up in 1955, to provide housing for middle-income families living in major urban centres) was actively engaged in planning and developing housing estates in suburban locations around Tokyo. The idea of a new town in the Tama district of Tokyo, part of the ill-fated green belt area,
was first mooted in 1960. The main aim was to relieve the acute housing shortage in Tokyo. By providing a large-scale planned residential community, it was also hoped to stem the spread of scattered development affecting the area. The project took shape under the New Residential Town Development Act (1963) which empowered public authorities to acquire and develop extensive areas for housing purposes.

Tama New Town on the south-western edge of Tokyo, some 20 miles from the centre, was designated in 1965. It was undertaken by the TMG and two public corporations, namely, the Tokyo Metropolitan Housing Supply Corporation and the Japan Housing Corporation. The master plan, commissioned by the TMG, was drawn up by a special committee of the City Planning Institute of Japan. It provided for an ultimate population of 300,000 on a 3,000-hectare site, measuring 9 miles from east to west and 1.5 to 3.5 miles from north to south, and covering parts of four local authorities. The majority of the new residents would be commuters and their families moving from the overcrowded central areas of Tokyo. The neighbourhood unit was the organising principle. Thus the new town would be divided into 23 neighbourhood units, each with a population of about 12,000 people and its own social and community facilities. Several of these neighbourhoods combined to form a district served by a district centre, containing more facilities, while there would be a new town centre with offices, banks, libraries and department stores. Housing provided would be mostly in the form of low- to medium-rise flats. Two private railway companies would build extensions to the site, linking the new town with central Tokyo. Though provision was made subsequently to attract certain types of employment, Tama was to be a largely dormitory town (Fig. 1).

William A. Robson and the new town movement

As a pioneer in the study of public administration in Britain, Robson taught at the London School of Economics almost uninterrupted from 1926 to 1980, during which time he was the first professor of public administration (1926) and of local government (1962). One of his most significant contributions was to show that administrative law and tribunals, far from being a danger to individual liberty, were an effective way of getting public control over government. Robson also co-founded an influential journal, Political Quarterly, in 1930 and remained its joint editor until 1975. He was also a strong believer in local self-government. Influenced by the Weberists and himself a lifelong Fabian Society member, Robson became interested in the study of local government, especially the government and planning of large cities. London was his special concern. In his Government and Misgovernment of London (1939), Robson showed how London's growth had exposed the shortcomings of existing local authorities and argued the case for a Greater London government, a single elective authority to provide certain services more effectively for the whole of the London metropolitan region. He later formed the Greater London Group whose influential evidence went to the Royal Commission on Government in Greater London (1957-60) led to the creation of the Greater London Council (1963).

Robson's reformist outlook also led him to take a particular interest in town and country planning. For Robson, town planning, which was given a huge boost in the Second World War, was a new problem of government, and he emphasised the need for the proper organisation of planning authorities at various levels. Nevertheless, post-war was a time when the study of public administration was still in its infancy. But above all, he saw it as a way of improving people's lives, by providing an attractive setting in which they could live and work. He may have had disagreements with Frederic Osborn, a pioneer of town planning and the author of the Town Planning Commission Act 1932, on the rivalry between central and local government. However, he could appreciate that Robson was an effective way of getting public control over government.
The Tama project, in Robson's view, was unsatisfactory in several respects. Its location was not far enough from central Tokyo for a proper satellite and was not near enough to achieve short journeys to work. In view of the relatively high price of land in and around the new town site, it was unlikely that much industry would be attracted. It was also unlikely that the research centres or universities which it was hoped to attract would provide enough local employment. Hence the Tama project would only intensify the commuting problem in Tokyo. Responsibility for the new town was divided between the Japan Housing Corporation, the TMG, the Tokyo Metropolitan Housing Supply Corporation, four local authorities and a consortium to build and manage the town centre. There was further division of authority at the national level between the ministries responsible for particular components of the plan. The involvement of so many bodies was likely to result in lack of coordination and unity, and slow progress. It led to complicated financial arrangements making it extremely difficult to distinguish the distribution of costs among these bodies. Another adverse factor was the division of the new town among four local authorities. It produced differences in social service provision and was detrimental to the development of civic identity among its residents.

Robson's misgivings embraced other Japanese new towns too. Senn New Town in Osaka, developed by the Osaka Prefecture Government and the Japan Housing Corporation, was similar in concept to Tama. It was 'essentially a mammoth housing estate equipped with municipal services and shopping facilities for its residents'. Likewise the Osaka Prefecture Government was planning Sennoku New Town on similar lines as 'a large-scale housing estate for commuters'. Robson did see some sense in developing what became Tsukuba Science City, a new town being planned some 40 miles north-west of Tokyo for universities and research institutes relocating from the metropolis.

On the basis of his review of Tama, Robson's main advice to the TMG was a rather chastening one: In my opinion the whole financial and political responsibility for constructing new towns should be borne by the central government and administrative responsibility be delegated to a development corporation. But if T. M. G. is to participate in the construction of new towns it should at least have a more significant role which reflects its status as the governing body of the capital city and of the prefecture.

At the same time, the lessons of Tama New Town should be learnt thoroughly, and nothing of a similar kind should be accepted or supported in the future.

Reactions: Japanese idea and approach to new towns

Robson's forthright views on Tama inevitably attracted attention of the media and were widely reported in the press. Manchichi Shimban, for instance, typically captured the Robsonian tone with its headline which read "Tama New Town Misconceived. Housing estates storing up double trouble". On the other hand, Nisshin Keizai Shinbun wondered whether some of his points had much relevance on the future of Tama once it had been planned as a dormitory town. "Governor Minobe, who publicly shared Robson's views on the need for greater self-sufficiency, did endeavour to get the TMG to assume the initiative in the planning of Tama."

Robson's review of Tama brought two practical results, one immediate and the other more long-term. Towards the end of 1969, the agreement had been reached between the authorities concerned to set up a Tama New Town development liaison council. The TMG would then take the initiative on the council to coordinate activities in developing the new town. It went some way to meeting Robson's criticism on the lack of unified responsibility. The TMG also took the lead from the early 1970s to develop Tama New Town as part of a cluster of four cities which between them would plan for self-sufficiency with their own shopping, services and industry. Tama in this overall scheme would attract universities and research centres relocating from central Tokyo as well as provide much needed housing in a planned setting.

Despite these developments, the fact remained that Japanese new towns were, on the whole, dormitory towns. There were wide reports in the media and were widely reported in the press. The Japan Housing Corporation, along with large metropolitan authorities, proved to be the main instrument for carrying out this policy. So in the case of Tokyo, the line of reasoning was that the Greater London Plan in its self-contained new towns was an ideal that could not be sustained in the face of rapid urbanisation. Masao Yamada, director of the bureau of planning at the TMG, who was instrumental in abandoning the green belt concept and giving the go-ahead to Tama New Town, expressed it in its most extreme form. For him, the Capital Region Development Plan was an unmitigated disaster because it tied the hands of planning authorities while unplanned building proceeded in the designated green belt area.

The green belt proposal in Tokyo is denounced as lacking in an understanding of the potential of growth of the giant city like Tokyo. Even around London what is needed is a strong metropolitan authority with large metropolitan authorities, proved to be the main instrument for carrying out this policy. So in the case of Tokyo, the line of reasoning was that the Greater London Plan in its self-contained new towns was an ideal that could not be sustained in the face of rapid urbanisation. Masao Yamada, director of the bureau of planning at the TMG, who was instrumental in abandoning the green belt concept and giving the go-ahead to Tama New Town, expressed it in its most extreme form. For him, the Capital Region Development Plan was an unmitigated disaster because it tied the hands of planning authorities while unplanned building proceeded in the designated green belt area.

The publication of Robson's report did not bring about any debate on the nature of Tama New Town by Japanese planners, planners being more interested in the course of post-war urban planning in Japan. Japanese planners looked to Britain for ideas in their effort to relieve problems of population growth and urban congestion. The Capital Region Development Plan modeled on the Greater London Plan was their answer. But from the late 1950s an influential line of thinking emanated from planners of the Building Research Institute at the Ministry of Construction. Led by Tadashi Higasa, they argued that, though ideal, neither inner city redevelopment nor the building of self-contained satellites, both essential components of metropolitan planning in London, had any chance of success in containing the unprecedented growth of cities in post-war Japan. Instead, they actively promoted the idea of a "new residential town", well connected to the city centre on which it was dependent for jobs and more sophisticated services. The New Residential Town Development Act of 1963, sponsored by the Ministry of Construction, had the explicit aim of facilitating the building of these planned residential communities. The Japan Housing Corporation, along with large metropolitan authorities, proved to be the main instrument for carrying out this policy. So in the case of Tokyo, the line of reasoning was that the Greater London Plan in its self-contained new towns was an ideal that could not be sustained in the face of rapid urbanisation. Masao Yamada, director of the bureau of planning at the TMG, who was instrumental in abandoning the green belt concept and giving the go-ahead to Tama New Town, expressed it in its most extreme form. For him, the Capital Region Development Plan was an unmitigated disaster because it tied the hands of planning authorities while unplanned building proceeded in the designated green belt area.

In this sense, it is a tragedy that the planning technique of the Greater London Plan was adopted for the regional plan of Tokyo and its environs. At any rate, a mere static town planning is quite inefficient and ineffective in dealing with the growing challenges of "expanding city" like Tokyo.

It is still a moot point whether the green belt concept in Japan broke down under the pressure of population growth or because of a lack of legislative support. Asked to comment on the Robson verdict, another senior planning officer of the TMG said: The choice is, do you leave the families to rot, whilst you build an ideal new town, or do you find them somewhere reasonable to live and solve what you can at the end." Robson measured Tama New Town against the British idea of new towns as places of work as well as living and was disappointed by what he saw as a huge dormitory town for commuters. But planners in many countries in the post-war period came to the view that the British solution of self-contained new towns was, if not unique, certainly extraordinarily difficult to replicate elsewhere. In Japan, a conscious decision was taken by planners to avoid planned suburban residential communities in place of self-contained new towns. This idea influenced the planning of a whole generation of Japanese new towns starting with Senri in Osaka which was begun in 1958. We still need to explore whether there were other models or examples informing the work of Japanese planners in their quest to evolve and adapt a new town suited to Japan.

Notes

2. The City Planning Association of Japan was a semi-governmental body set up in 1946, to undertake research and promote good practice in planning, and counted local authorities and their planning officials among its main membership. Inuma, whose international reputation was built on his work in the City Planning Association of Japan, was instrumental in hosting the Tokyo Congress of the International Federation for Housing and Planning in 1966. See correspondence between Inuma and Osborn in Sir Frederic Osborn Archive, Welwyn Garden Library, Welwyn Garden City [hereafter FOA]; B2 Miscellaneous correspondence 1-17 1943-1978.
3. Toshiki Inouye was another leading figure in post-war Japanese town planning, an ardent advocate of the land readjustment method, whose early visits also led to a long association with Osborn and British town planning. See correspondence between Inouye and Osborn in, FOA; B2 Miscellaneous correspondence 1-26 1943-1978.
5. Osborn's course of post-war planning in Tokyo, see Ishida, Nihon kindai toshikkeikaku kenkyu, ch. 11: Ishizuka, H. & Ishida, Y. (eds) 1988, Tokyo Urban Growth and Planning 1968-1988, Centre for Urban Studies, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, pp. 24-35, 54-68; Tokyo Metropolitan...
Articles

Great Cities of the World. William A. Robson Papers, Archives Division, London School of Economics, London [hereinafter WAR]: 23. Tsujii to Robson, 11 Sept. 1961. Kiyuki Tsujii, professor of public administration at Tokyo University, was another Japanese academic who knew Robson well, having spent some time at the LSE.

20. On both occasions, Robson was accompanied by his wife, Juliette Alvin, an accomplished cellist and a pioneer of music therapy for children with learning difficulties.


22. Tajima and Katsuhiko Onogi were respectively president and Managing Director of the Tokyo Institute for Municipal Research. It was Tsujii, at the time staying in London, who first suggested the idea of inviting Robson to Tokyo.


24. See also Robson’s affectionate letter to Minohe on his retirement as governor in: WAR: 313, Robson to Minohe, 10 Apr. 1979.


28. Ibid., p. 33.

29. Ibid., p. 35.

30. Ibid., pp. 43-45.


32. Ibid., p. 38.

33. Ibid., p. 45.


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45. See Katakuse, T. 1981, Jikkenshi: Senri ryu taun no iken bukuroretaka [Experimental City: How Senri New Town was Built], Shakai shiso sha, Tokyo.

Fig. 1 The Basic Conception of Tama New Town

Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1983, City Planning of Tokyo, TMG, Tokyo, P. 124
The Origins of Urban Historiography

A. Almendoz (AA): Was economic and social history the mainstream from which urban history grew in Britain?

Anthony Sutcliffe (AS): Yes, it was. What happened was that a great leader in this area, Professor H.J. Dyos, started in the early 1960s to bring together colleagues who were attending the annual meeting of the Economic History Society to spend a few hours discussing urban history. Elsewhere, we found that there were already historians of whom Asa Briggs was perhaps the most important, who were working on individual towns, but the idea that organisation become a process is what the economic historians brought forward. On the whole the political historians were interested in points at which towns influenced history or in biographies of towns, so they selected the most interesting towns just as they would select the more interesting people about whom to write biographies. So it was the economic historians with their idea of process who really started urban history in the 1960s.

AA: Was there any criticism about the emerging field of urban history? And I ask you this while thinking, for instance, of Philip Abrams's position in *Towns in Society*, where he seemed to call into doubt the validity of the city to become the subject of a specific historical domain.

AS: This was indeed Abrams's position. But you know, ever since the 1860s up till now we've had historians who said that just to single out the city as a factor in the historical process is not valid and this was true about Abrams, as you say, but I think he contributed a lot. The other big critics of urban history were the great mass of historians who thought that anything new that was put forward as some kind of special approach to history, had to be unacceptable. That was where, I think, the main opposition to urban history came in the 1960s. Traditional historians said: I'm not interested in hearing about cities changing things, I believe that great men or social classes change things or government has changed things or administration has changed things, but not the city as such.

AA: How was the relationship with the approach based on architectural variables? I'm thinking, for instance, of A.E.J. Morris's *A History of Urban Form Before the Industrial Revolution*. I mean, this kind of approach was more focused on the patterns of cities, physical typologies, etc.

AS: You have to remember that in British historiography there was a strong emphasis on cooperation between disciplines and when Jim Dyos launched the Urban History Group in 1963, he wanted other disciplines' interest in towns to come in and join in a combined enterprise. Morphology, however, was really a matter for the geographer. But most geographers did not join in. There was work on urban morphology and in geography carried on by Professor Conzen, at the University of Newcastle, and Conzen was interested in fortification lines and their effect on urban growth, but none of this was brought into the urban history group. They did this on their own. As for the urban historians, they did not try to work on urban morphology, or on architecture. They were more interested in economic factors affecting growth and any social factors leading to conflict within the towns. And as the 1960s moved on, the growing number of left wing historians argued that the main interest of the towns was for the revolution building up within them, and this became the main social tendency along with the economic one. So the study of towns reflected the general tendencies of British social history. How poor were the people? Did they suffer greatly from disease? What was the police and army contribution to towns? This growth left little room for morphology in the 1960s.

AA: And how was the relationship with the emerging field in America, taking for example the newspaper reported in a book like *The Historian and the City*, edited by Handlin and Burchard in 1963?
sociology in history. This was a locally induced thing: citizens wanted a history of their town. American urban history carried on quite independently of the British school, until Dyos started inviting some of these people over to England. Handlin is a fine example of this, and his work on immigration was much respected in Britain. Dyos at that time saw the international cooperation mainly in terms of cooperation with the Americans, but this was almost entirely because he could only speak English and he couldn’t even read the work produced on the continent of Europe and in South America anywhere else. So he used to lean towards these American historians. The Americans could obtain big resources to study cities and in the 60s and 70s they had a number of big projects like the Philadelphia Socialist History Project, which was an early computerised project. It eventually failed because they couldn’t computerise all the history of Philadelphia. So that fell away in the late 1970s and urban history did less well in the States after that except that a number of new people set up the *Journal of Urban History* in the late 70s, and this has been going very well ever since. It has a good circulation. But like many journals of urban history, it includes a lot of things that you and I wouldn’t really think of being urban history. They are social history, really. But I should also say that the *American Urban History Association* was revived in the 1990s.

AA: Was there any influence in Britain from the urbanists’ approach, namely the organisation and evolutionism epitomized in the works by Guston Bardet, Marcel Poëte or Patrick Geddes?

AS: British interest in theory, especially that generated by foreigners, is very limited. Bardet and Poëte were never translated into English.

AA: But Geddes wrote in English.

AS: Yes, but he was not a historian. He’s only influential in the sense that he was very interested, as you say, in organic forms, but British economic historians are not interested in organic processes, they want the market, land values, migration, investment, and so on. Geddes has had little attention by historians, apart from the work of Hellén Meller. I’m not saying that culturalism in England had not recognised Geddes as a very important influence, but the urban historians cannot handle that. And Geddes is Scottish. Poëte was a French writer, who never wrote about England.

### Urban History and Planning History

AA: I would like to talk now about the distinction between urban history and planning history. Do you think that the latter is a sort of urban history with an emphasis on physical form, as you suggested in a 1981 interview with Stave?

AS: These definitions and distinctions are very difficult. Let me tell you a story about Jim Dyos again. I once said to him: ‘The trouble with you, Jim, is that you think everything is urban history; and he said: ‘So it is.’ I went on: ‘Do you think the history of agriculture is urban history?’; and he said: ‘Of course it is, because that is the food supply for the city.’ Now, this imperialistic attitude can damage your scholarly credibility, but we’ve never been able to find an accepted definition of urban.

So, is planning history, a part of urban history? Well, I would say that both of them are part of History and I would say we’ve gone too far in splitting up history into these different compartments, because people are constantly arguing for their own area. When I was a student at Oxford, I learnt that the historian could study anything using his comprehensive historical training. This would mean that planning was simply one more historical field. And the same would be true of urban history, of course. To claim to be a distinct ‘history’ you need a distinct theory and methodology, and neither planning history nor urban history have them. Instead, they continue almost entirely on empirical lines. I’m beginning to feel that we would be better off if we were just historians. As you know, I have always preferred to speak of ‘history of planning’, rather than ‘planning history’.

AA: Do you think that planning history, or history of planning, as you have just said, has been more influenced by architectural history?

AS: Yes, but in Britain less than other countries. It is mainly about assigning functions to land and adjusting the structure of the city. Planning, in my opinion, is essentially a question of public control of land. So private land developments are not regarded as planning – that is ‘development’.

AA: When I posed the question I was thinking of key figures in the field outside Britain, such as Leonardo Benevolo and Paolo Sica in Italy, or Françoise Choay in France. They seem to have contributed, from the 1960s, to define the field of planning history as a neighbouring area of the history of architecture.

AS: Their work is very important and even essential. In Britain we have not studied architecture as part of planning history. When Jeremy Whitehead, who is a historical geographer at Birmingham, set up his urban morphology group, he invited the Italian morphologists to his meetings. They stressed that they were interested in three-dimensional urban morphology, including architecture, and it took some time for Whitchard to find common ground with them. Personally, I think it’s very important to include architecture in the study of planning and cities. That is partly why I’m writing a book on architecture now.

AA: What do you think of today’s urban history panorama in Britain?

AS: I don’t know what it is. I look at the programmes of the meetings for the (British) Urban History Group – which Dyos and I successfully chaired from 1963 to 1985 – and I don’t know what on earth they do. It seems to me that a part of that, on any topic, there’s no focus at all. I don’t think it’s in a very good phase at the moment, though it should be said that the best efforts of British urban historians now seem to be devoted to the European Association of Urban Historians.

AA: So, in the end, you feel that the history of planning has been more focused than urban history has.

AS: Urban history is very little different from social history. Above all, urban historians lack clear definitions of ‘town’, ‘city’, ‘urban’, and ‘urbanisation’. So I think that they have distributed themselves too widely. Planning history concentrates on the public control of private land – it is much more precise. However, planning history, with its big, broad international conferences, may be going the same way as urban history. But I begin to realise that all this is not a justification of mainly advocacy – in a few years we shall employ lawyers to do it!

AA: But if one looks at that in terms of, let us say, current organisations or institutions that received that legacy from the 1960s and 1970s, it seems that the International Planning History Society (IPHS) is very healthy in terms of the kind of events they organise and the kind of people they can gather. At the same time, the Centre for Urban History (CUH) and the European Association for Urban Historians (EAUH), they have nowadays a lot of success in the international context, or in the European one at least. Although you think they are not focused, they have contributed to the international structure of urban and planning history.

AS: Yes, but I think that we are getting obsessed by numbers of papers (whatever their subject and quality), exotic destinations, and Power Points. It is the new ‘747 history’. ‘Let’s discuss it at the airport!’ We should remember that the future lies with young students. Dyos, Gordon Cherry and I understood this in the 1970s. Now it is: ‘I hope to prepare a few words on the plane’.

AA: I think you are very keen on the possibility that Latin America and other regions of the world could be incorporated into this planning history movement. So, you have to sort of reconcile these international events with national ones within the same organisations.

AS: A national programme is more likely to attract students and young researchers. Yes, I like the idea of international conferences, but I know from experience that you cannot get them planned in two years. I would favour three years as a minimum, because you need at least the first year to plan each international conference. And we must remember that scholarly journals are a world network for the exchange of knowledge. Yes, I would be in favour of more national meetings for the reason I said earlier: When he started the Urban History Group, Jim Dyos made big efforts to get students in. He said: ‘Write to me and tell me what you’re doing and you can come to the annual conference and it won’t cost you anything’.

### Latin America’s Urban Historiography

AA: Well, now that we’ve talked about Latin America, something I currently try to do is to frame the emergence of the urban historiography in the region, within the international context, because there must be some influences. If we talk about urban history in Latin America, the first reference is Jorge Hardoy. How did you meet him?

AS: I met him first in America at one of the American planning conferences and then he asked me to Buenos Aires, after they had recovered from Galtieri. He was a very charismatic academic leader and he’s suffered under the ‘generals’. He organised a big conference in Buenos Aires to celebrate that he and free Argentine scholarship were back in action. I saw him as a towering figure in Latin America in both planning and urban history and I think that everyone would say that, who knew him or knew his work. He was a generous leader.
and creative man, who was much loved—and not only in Latin America.

AA: Were you in contact with other urban historians in Latin America apart from Hardy? Have you met any others?

AS: There were some who wanted to submit articles to Planning Perspectives, about five or six I’ve been in touch with, but this was all done by mail. I did meet many of them of course at Buenos Aires. From what I’ve seen from South America—you might confirm this—what comes to me is often derived from the *Leyes de las Indias* tradition. Of course, work on plans and layout is extremely interesting. I’ve published in Planning Perspectives two or three articles by South American authors and I’m prepared to translate more, if necessary, to get them in. And I can tell you, when I was editor if I got an e-mail from South America saying: ‘I’d like to do a paper. What do you think?’ I’d reply immediately, saying: ‘Yes, please do it. This Let me know’. Because it’s a big area, a big continent. I hope that the 2004 conference in Barcelona will make the whole world aware of the importance of Latin America for the history of urban planning. It is much more than ‘Le Corbusier came here and gave some lectures’.

AA: I think that, to some extent, that relative absence also affects Spain, since it is partly caused by the language. Urban studies is in a different position, because it is in the European Union, but at the same time belongs to the Spanish-speaking world, which has its own agenda. With all our urban historians and planning historians, it’s like there was a gap between the two worlds. I mean the English and the Spanish-speaking.

AS: Yes, but once the papers arrived with me at Planning Perspectives, I could almost find a place for them. I never thought: ‘Oh, this is in a different world, it’s not addressing our issues’. I could make good use of a Latin American article because it showed there’s a very different approach in Latin America.

AA: How do you see the future of Latin America in an organization such as the IUP? I mean, there isn’t an really a great participation in terms of members from Latin America there, not even from Spain.

AS: No. Nevertheless, I would assert that to stimulate study you should begin on a Latin basis. There’s no need to say: ‘We must follow the European and American example because we are so retarded’. Spanish and Portuguese are great world cultural languages. Remember that Europe speaks about twenty languages. Your Iberian heritage gives you a unique basis for cooperation and communication. But you are doing things in South America aren’t you, Arturo, to bring people together?

AA: Yes, I think that, to some extent, that is my role...

AS: I see you as the successor of Hardy, and I’ve told you this. I know you’re very modest about this, but he did get people together and it really worked when he got them together. I see you in the same role, in the first three decades of the new century.

**Urban Cultural History**

AA: Finally, I would like to talk about the domain or the new field of so-called urban cultural history. How would you characterize that field, if that’s possible? My impression is that it was anticipated in a book such as *Metropolis*, 1890-1940.

AS: No it wasn’t anticipated there. I think your ‘urban culture’ was something that we had really not yet reached and I would be all in favour of it. I’m not too sure though whether an input from cultural studies, which is so meaningful rather than confused by the literary idea that you imagined by the author. But the cultural idea that you can evaluate your own view of the city. Once they understand the potential of film, they don’t say: ‘Oh it’s a silly old black-and-white film. We’ll go back to taking notes from the book’. They say, ‘Yes, I have been to New York in 1939’. Surely this is a type of historical understanding that we want to encourage in our students.

AA: Thanks very much indeed.

**Notes**

1 This interview was conceived as a part of my current post-doctoral research “On Latin America’s Urban History, 1960-2000. An Epistemological and International Approach”, Centro de Investigaciones Postdoctorales (CIPOST), Central University of Venezuela, Caracas. The interview took place in Place, on 9 July 2002. I want to thank Professor Roberta St. Louis of the Modern Languages Department, Simon Bolivar University, Caracas, for transcribing the tape into the first version of this text. This version was revised by Professor Sutcliffe during the VII Seminario de Historia del Urbanismo e de Urbanismo, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, 15-18 October 2002, in which we were guest speakers.


Satcliffe is currently working on an architectural history of London. He has already published Paris: An Architectural History, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, which was awarded a Best Book prize by the American Association of Publishers.


I have tried to approach the subject in 'Comments on Urban Cultural History: A Latin American Perspective', Urban Perspectives (in press)


Arturo Almandoz, Ciudad y cultura en la primera industrialización. Caracas: Fundarite, 1993


A paper given at VII Brazilian Conference on the History of the City and Urban Planning, Salvador, 15-18 October 2002

History is probably the biggest area of scientific knowledge in Britain. In the early summer of 2002, Professor David Cannadine, Director of the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, told the nation on the radio that more British people were studying history than ever before. This was mainly because the number of students on history courses at university had increased, but he could also have referred to the impressive number of expensively produced television programmes devoted to historical topics, such as Simon Schama’s multi-part History of England in 2001.

Meanwhile, heritage sites like the Tower of London attract growing numbers of visitors and more and more guides to historic buildings and sites are published or revised. With a continuous history of 2000 years, and an equally venerable building heritage, Britain enjoys a rich historical tradition which sustains a wide range of research. All this has made history a valued university discipline since the eighteenth century and historians are respected figures in Britain. They and their writings are not associated with major changes of regime or periods of national failure or controversy. Their judgements are rarely doubted. Most historians come from the middle and upper classes and they paint a picture of national progress and success, together with a gradual improvement in popular well-being. With Britain’s emergence by 1900 as the world’s first fully urbanised nation, and a pioneer of urban and regional planning (if not the founder of modern planning), it is not surprising that many British historians have been attracted to the history of towns, cities, and urbanisation (‘urban history’), and to the history of urban and regional planning (‘planning history’).

Historians in many parts of the world, including South America, see the city as a dynamic or even disruptive force for change, a seat of conflict and new ideologies, a spatial system for the exchange of ideas, or as the locus of cultural creation or reinforcement. British urban and planning historians, on the other hand, have generally conform to the ‘progressive-national tradition’ which marks most British historiography. The cities form part of a national society and change slowly in the context of a progressive equilibrium. Contrasts between town and country, and conflicts of interest between them, are not greatly emphasised. In the study of planning history, influences and contributions from outside Britain are not prominent (but see Satcliffe 1991) and Harrison (1993). Little attempt is made to develop theory, except by historical geographers who in any case see themselves more as geographers than historians (but see Taylor 1999; Ward 1999; Vigar 2001). Importantly, theory of neo-marxist, phenomenological or culturalist origins was gaining a degree of respect by the 1970s but since then it has faded under the influence of Britain’s tougher economic and political climate. Narrative exposition—stated, as they are sometimes called these days—is more much common than analysis, and this approach stimulates an awareness of progress among the educated public. On the other hand, British planning historians have a strong sense of place and are aware of the physical manifestations of cities and the spatial and physical aspects of plans.

Most of the British historians who are interested in towns, cities and planning fall into two self-aware groups. The urban historians, for their part, first started to meet in 1963 under the chairmanship of H.J.Dyos, an economic historian at the University of Leicester. The planning historians’ activities, on the other hand, date from 1974 under the chairmanship of Gordon Cherry, a professor of planning at the University of Birmingham. These developments reflected the distinctively English enthusiasm for scholarly meetings which the small size of the country, and the absence of major political or personal divisions among the historians, makes possible.
1. Organic growth

Until the 1980s students of towns and town planning used to make a fairly simple distinction between ‘planned’ towns and the natural or evolutionary growth of towns (organic growth). This distinction was fundamental to the training of town planners who were led to believe that planning involved the creation of a physical order determined by rational principles and the latest scientific knowledge. Geographers, meanwhile, worked steadily on the processes involved in ‘organic’ growth, drawing partly on their general notions of environmental change.

This simple antithesis was undermined by new concepts of urban planning which began to circulate in the 1980s. Planning ceased to be seen as mainly the authoritarian or technocratic imposition of physical order, and the emphasis became one of observational and processual elements in a process or series of processes of urban change. This new perception coincided with a growing lack of confidence in the post-1909 style of planning which had centred on ‘planning’ or ‘planned’. Meanwhile, the geographers, and especially those interested in the ‘urban morphology’ — were reviewing the whole concept of ‘organic growth’ by conducting street plan and site plan analysis of medieval, mainly English towns (Whitehand 1987:1-11). They pointed to groups of sites and streets, which were laid out by landowners such as bishops or abbots in order to increase their revenue. Some of these layouts, as at Salisbury, were based on a grid plan, or at any rate they generated a clear pattern of streets and sites. The street plans of some of these areas were distorted by the passage of time, but once the geographers had begun to detect them, they were recognised as a widespread phenomenon, though disagreements persisted between scholars who insisted on finding documentary evidence, and those who relied on ‘reading’ a plan and on physical survivals (e.g. Lilley 2001). Some geographers have gone on to suggest that the creation of small groups of sites or even individual sites requires ‘planning’. There was a danger that the ‘garden gnome’ definition of planning — ‘choosing a site for your garden gnome is a significant planning decision’ — would come into play here, but the urban morphologists have clearly asked some important questions of the ‘old’ organic school.

This review of ‘organic growth’ and ‘planning’ has coincided with the great surge of the British urban conservation movement since the 1970s, and the growth of ‘post-modern’ concepts and practice in urban design. Winding streets and small sites are now often valued, both in surviving parts of old towns, and in the layout and design of new ones. Historical study of the fabric of older towns helps in the formulation of conservation policy, and in the design of new, conforming structures. Historians help the planners to understand the economic and social factors which helped create the old townscapes. Participation and consultation become easier because the issues relate to established towns and well-known buildings. Historians involved in these new tasks value their responsibilities, while planning students cannot ignore the work of the historians. With conservation and rehabilitation admired by all social classes throughout Britain, and pursued even by individual house owners, the historian can be proud of his skills.

2. Workers’ housing in early industrialisation

British urban planning was historically launched by economic historians and workers’ housing became a major topic of study from the 1960s. The distinctive English type, back-to-back housing (1780-1900s), attracted much research.

Scottish tenement housing was less studied until the 1990s, reflecting the more limited development of Scottish urban history. However, both types showed how mass housing demand from people living at subsistence level tended to produce standardised and repetitive housing and streets, which were laid out by landowners such as bishops or abbots in order to increase their revenue. Some of these layouts, as at Salisbury, were based on a grid plan, or at any rate they generated a clear pattern of streets and sites. The street plans of some of these areas were distorted by the passage of time, but once the geographers had begun to detect them, they were recognised as a widespread phenomenon, though disagreements persisted between scholars who insisted on finding documentary evidence, and those who relied on ‘reading’ a plan and on physical survivals (e.g. Lilley 2001). Some geographers have gone on to suggest that the creation of small groups of sites or even individual sites requires ‘planning’. There was a danger that the ‘garden gnome’ definition of planning — ‘choosing a site for your garden gnome is a significant planning decision’ — would come into play here, but the urban morphologists have clearly asked some important questions of the ‘old’ organic school.

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3. Early suburbs

Thanks to the early leadership of H.J.Dyson, English urban historians were fascinat.

mainly a middle- and upper-class phenomenon. No agreement defined of ‘suburb’ ever emerged, but this lack of precision was typical of British urban history. As suburbs represented peripheral growth, geographers were very interested and dozens of theses appeared on the topic, many of the drawn on Chicago School theory. The geographers tried harder to develop definitions, in order to allow scientific comparisons between cities. On the whole, however, they added little to the understanding of urban growth or of the structure of urban society. Recently, however, the urban morphologists led by Jeremy Whitehand, followed on from Whitehand’s earlier work on ‘fringe belts’ have shown how plots have influenced the built form, and how builders and developers have created suburban environments (Whitehand and Carr 1999).

4. Origins of urban planning

British urban planning was derived mainly from the suburban layouts generated by Victorian prosperity, public health policy, and institutions of public order (see Edwards 1981; Gaskell 1981; Miller and Gray 1992). Additionally, Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City idea — initially an anti-urban concept — helped the gardening movement of the 1890s, an ostensibly ‘grass-roots’ phenomenon, had some impact on the layout and design of public housing (Morris 1997:209–11).

There has been some interest in urban planning as a profession (e.g. Hawtree 1981) but this has not extended far beyond the Royal Town Planning Institute and the State and local government employees engaged under statutory planning (e.g. Cherry 1974). However, British historians have written a number of biographies of planning pioneers. These stress the experimental nature of early planning, and in summarising much pioneer advocacy they bring of some of the typical characteristics of urban planning to the fore more clearly than in the ‘statutory’ accounts, which often assume that the case for planning does not need to be made (e.g. Cherry 1981; Simpson 1985 (Thomas Adams); Meller 1990, Welter and Lawson 2000 (Patrick Geddes); Miller 1992 (Raymond Unwin); Cherry and Penny 1995 (W.G.Bolitho)).

This later interpretation (see e.g. Cherry 1974, 1982, 1988) has come under pressure since the 1970s, when liberal-socialist assumptions about the value and practicality of urban planning came under attack in a new economic and ideological climate. At first, most of this new wave of thinking was derived from the oil shock of 1973, when confident assumptions about the
growth that had previously underlain planning could no longer be made. Gradually, however, slow economic growth and the ideal of conservation generated new concepts of the urban environment which stressed humanity, participation, and history (see e.g. Ward 1984, 188-259; Cherry 1996, 169-210). This debate, which largely continued, brought the established, linear history of planning into question. Non-statutory initiatives, such as nineteenth-century estate development in the West End of London, private architectural schemes, and the ‘amurich’ Docklands developments were now often acknowledged as planning, and the definitions of planning which historians would accept – insofar as they, as British empiricists, had ever been interested in definitions – broadened and splintered. The rise of that unique post-modernist pursuit, cultural studies, with its preoccupation with the urban experience, further called into question the rationality of planning.

For all this, statutory urban planning survived in Britain. Although the Thatcher era appeared at first to threaten its complete destruction, all the major institutions and practices, and most of the ideology, were left in place. This was because British planning preserved property values and provided a secure context for development, just as planning always has (see Meller 1997). As Barry Cullingworth put it a few years ago, ‘there has been no fundamental change since the inception of the system’ (with the sole exception of the repeal of the compensation and betterment provisions of the 1947 Act) (Cullingworth 1991 277). So the role of the planning historian has also survived.

5. Planning myths

Myth and history are, in theory, very different, but much British planning history – especially as taught to trainee planners and related students – includes myth. The biggest and most pervasive myth is that Britain invented urban and regional planning in about 1900 and went on to be a leader and example into the 1970s, when growing confusion worldwide about the nature and goals of planning undermined the linear approach so favoured in Britain. The acknowledged importance of the statutory basis of British planning meant that planning students spent the early days of their courses learning long lists of Acts of Parliament. This process of accumulation allowed nineteenth-century interventions in the environment, many of them local or voluntary, to be built in to what became a long historical process. Given that Britain became the world’s most advanced industrialising – and therefore urbanising – nation from about 1750, and by 1900 headed the world’s biggest empire – nearly one-quarter of the world’s land surface according to some calculations – this national perspective on planning was perhaps not surprising.

Students of British planning were also told that much of the rest of the world had followed the British example. This claim certainly applied to the rest of the Empire, where the origins of planning can be dated back to about 1850. It did not apply, however, to Europe, the US, Central and South America, and the advanced parts of Asia. Planning in these regions, which often had followed a very distinctive course – beginning in many cases long before 1900 – was little known in Britain. Students learned about the medieval bastides in south-western France, Hanssman (who was dismissed as ‘not a real planner’), American grid plans (dismissed as ‘crude’ and ‘not real planning’). Even these few foreign examples were often used to demonstrate how superior British planning was.

Some British innovations, such as ‘development control’, which sprang from the application of pre-application of development plans under the Planning Act of 1909, have gained worldwide credibility as well as myth (see Booth 1999). Others were concepts which were not fully applied but which built up a mythical status as applied planning fell short of the ideal. The best known of these was the Garden City and its statutory successor, the New Towns.

The planning of a completely new urban settlement, as at Brasilia and Chandigarh, is often accepted as a persuasive example of planning in action. Although the post-1946 New Towns differed in many respects from Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept of 1898, and from the two examples built under Howard’s guidance, Letchworth (1902) and Welwyn Garden City (1919) (i.e. Millard had already demonstrated the continuity to allow observers of British planning to detect a powerful, independent planning tradition within the national urban and regional planning structure.

After 1946, the Garden City/New Town became very much an ‘icon’ of British planning showing, more clearly perhaps than any other feature, how Britain had led the world. Other countries were denied for adopting the term ‘Garden City’ but failing to build completely independent settlements on the lines proposed by Howard. However, a growing body of historical work has shown that, from the start, Howard’s concept was subject to modification in response to changing conditions and the incorporation of broader planning principles (Beever 1988; Sutcliffe 1999). As for the New Towns, policy changes greatly altered the original concept until the programme was run down and finally abandoned from the 1970s (see Aldridge 1979; Hardy 1991a). These changes reflected changing circumstances and were part of effective planning, but they weakened the concept of the ‘planning ideal’ as an effective force (Sutcliffe 1978).

One of the least studied features of Howard’s Garden City was the Green Belt. This developed from the outer ring of the Garden City estate to a planning constraint on rural land surrounding even the largest cities. The leading Garden City pioneer, Raymond Unwin, became an influential advocate of the Green Belt after the First World War, and London and other large cities started to buy agricultural land to form green belts in the 1930s. A London green belt was a basic element in Sir Patrick Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan of 1944. The New Towns strategy embodied in radical new legislation in 1946 also included green belts (see Cullingworth 1979). In 1955 a large number of statutory green belts were established in the context of the sweeping national planning powers contained in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947.

Green belts were a response to the peculiarly English form of urban growth, which since the eighteenth century had seen the richer elements of the urban population moving out of the city and building there at very low densities (suburbs). By the end of the nineteenth century part of the working classes were also normally housed in the outer districts. The twentieth century saw a great surge of outward growth, by which time these spreading towns and cities had begun to come into conflict with another English myth, that of a romantic and beautiful countryside. This myth had developed during the nineteenth century when the middle classes began to take over the aristocratic ideal of a rural existence (Meacham 1999). The idea of a ring of open countryside around the city thus responded to uniquely English conditions and perceptions at a time when Britain was the world’s most heavily urbanised country (Shillitoe 1993). Britain’s National Parks policy emerged from a similar perception of the role of the countryside in a heavily urbanised society (see Cherry 1975).

The Green Belt thus became a foundation stone of British planning history (see Thomas 1970; Hall 1973). However, given that the green belts have become reality, their status as myth does not lie in their unattainability so much as in the general British lack of awareness that they have rarely ever been adopted outside the United Kingdom. On the contrary, most British planning students assume that this great British innovation has been generally adopted.

British planning historians have done very little to provide a context for the British green belts by studying approaches to constraint, or the results of lack of constraint, in other countries. So the myth survives as a national belief or faith. Let it be said however, that the green belts justify themselves in terms of their environmental result, which is unique in the world.

6. International diffusion of planning

British planning historians led the way from the 1970s in setting up a world-wide structure (Planning History Group, 1974, later International Planning History Society, 1993) for the study of planning history. These personal and scholarly links helped extend British interest, and sympathy for, approaches to planning in other countries. Planning Perspectives, the journal of planning history founded by Cherry and Sutcliffe in 1986, devotes most of its space to articles and book reviews dealing with planning outside Britain. From the 1980s British historians such as Sutcliffe (1981) and Cherry (1984) became interested in the ways in which planning ideas, and individual planners, were transferred from one country to another, and elements of international consensus or common practice were built up. Ward has constructed a model of international planning exchange which is very influential, at least among writers in English.

One aspect of international exchange has become a field of study in its own right – colonial and imperial planning. It interests historians in all former colonial nations, and notably in France, but Britain has at least one noted practitioner, Robert Home. He works mainly on Africa, but India has attracted a number of authors (e.g. Tysoott 1947). Reach into the Middle East is expanding (see e.g. Crittin 1992). In the Empire, British administrators had extensive powers but experienced town planners were few. Motives were very different from Europe. For instance, the creation of a European quarter in the cities, the definition and application of rudimentary standards for the administrative areas (mainly designed to protect the European districts from disease and fire), autocratic methods, and the separation of ethnic groups, meant that the political context of planning was completely different (Home 1997). Also different was the atmosphere in which British historians sometimes had to work when searching in the field.

Imperial planning was linked to imperial symbolism in...
planners, architects and politicians have been unable to see beyond their own areas of participation. High rise and its related planning idea, mixed development, were introduced carefully and sensitively in the late 1860s and the early 1860s. By the Mids, however, a broader application in the context of the reinforced green belts and a wave of slum clearance, together with industrialised building methods, produced a great surge of high-rise building. Accumulating structural and social problems led to a radical reassessment in the late 1960s, when the partial collapse of a London tower block (Roan Point) in 1969 helped to bring the whole programme to a halt and led to progressive demolitions which still continue today. This ‘planning disaster’ undermined the whole concept of progress and competence on which British planning history had been based (see Dunleavy 1981). Hall’s theories stimulated much historical work on the episode, while Allison Ravetz, a planning historian who specialised in public housing [Ravetz 1974], went on to identify a number of ways in which theoretical rigidity, preconceptions, and inflexible institutions had undermined and distorted post-war British planning (Ravetz 1980). Thus history made a big contribution to the new debate on the value of planning which set in in the 1980s.

Conclusion

The conclusions of this paper are here presented in summary form:

1. Urban planning and history are closely associated in Britain.
2. The historians’ contribution to planning and planning debates relate very largely to Britain.
3. With the exception of a number of Americans, non-British historians have not made a significant contribution to British planning history.
4. Theory has played only a minimal part in British planning history.
5. British historians have played a bigger role than those of any other country in promoting the international study of planning history.
6. Much planning history, including international and non-British planning, is published in Britain where publishers take advantage of English as the world scientific language.

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The reconstruction of bombed cities attracts many planning historians. New powers, the successive official and unofficial plans, the role of the ‘planner’, local and national planning debates, contextual issues, and the eventual realizations, while of interest in themselves, often reflect broader historical questions such as advanced planning techniques, the state of public opinion, and the strength of cautious or conservative forces in both government and business. Conflicts between professional planners and other interests, including provincial and central government, are easy to observe and understand. The visual presentation of the proposed architecture and laid-out plans in books, pamphlets and articles is generally of a high standard, suggesting a better world to come. The values of modernity and conservatisms are generally so well expressed that both can be persuasive, though historians generally side with the visionaries. The conservative forces are usually the property owners, the finance ministers, and the city treasurers, often in various forms of disguise. The contrast between the plans and the often depressing reality of rebuilding seems to confirm that the planner will never get through.

In Britain, historians often associate this failure with a betrayal of socialism. Overall, ‘a great opportunity was lost’ is the historian’s frequent conclusion. The possibility that a victory for the ‘planners’, in the form of sweeping reconstruction according to plans drawn up in the first year or two after the war, might have been an even bigger environmental disaster is, in the experience of this reviewer, never considered. We know, however, that this victory never occurred. Nor did the ‘planners’ triumph in Germany, where war damage was comparable to Japan’s yet the structure of urban government and planning was the best in the world. Perhaps the ‘great opportunity’ should be seen instead as an unprecedented urban challenge in circumstances of unique difficulty, a challenge which needed much more than attractive and idealistic plans, and which was never likely to result in the golden city promised in wartime.

Professor Tiratsoo’s efforts to rewrite the social history of the British war years have reached a broad readership and an even bigger audience on British television. He believes that the debated and exploited experience of the masses has been distorted by historians who tamely accept the propaganda line of the time. In the evacuation comedy, Coot and Daisy’s Weekend (1941), the two Waters sisters bowl out the rousing song, ‘We’ll all have a party when it’s over’, which includes the line ‘We’re all in this together’, but Professor Tiratsoo portrays the workers as cheated by ‘the toffs’ but ready to fight back with mutter and strikes, even at the expense of ‘Victory V’.

In the book under review, he and his co-authors retain much of this interpretation, with the masses in both countries cheated of proper planning by a number of negative forces of which the ‘machinations of governments’ (p. 93) are the most insidious and sinister. In the British section of this book the authors develop this line. Rather surprisingly, property owners are let off the hook for the most part, but government takes a beating while mass participation is seen as essential to quality planning. ‘Planners’ are allotted a heroic or even angelic role, as the main source of environmental and social truth and, above all, as the advocates of modernism. 27 The opponents of planning are mainly local versions of the ‘toffs’, denying the workers what they had won through their wartime efforts, and sticking to their conservative ideals’. Not surprisingly, this perception is difficult to apply to Japan, but the authors emphasise mass participation in planning whenever there is evidence for it. Wartime visions are discreetly curtailed off, except in the photograph of the loyal imperial planner, Hideaki Ishikawa, sitting proudly (one assumes) in front of his plan for the reconstruction of Shanghai in 1938 (unnumbered plate). The axial approach and linked grids recall Daniel Burnham
experience of other Axis-occupation planning would suggest that this is the Japanese sector of Shanghai. Ishikawa was a leading Tokyo planner during the war and in the early post-war years, but the excellent selection of plates does not include examples of his Tokyo plans. Ishikawa was aware of American and European practice, but this book does not allow us to establish the degree of continuity between his wartime plans for Tokyo and his post-war approach. It seems unlikely, however, that mass participation played a part in any of this.

The authors’ quest for a mass experience is expressed most fully in the local case studies. It also seems to have distracted them from central government activities and national policies, even though the limited results of planning, as agreed by the authors, were largely a result of central economies and the perceived need to restore national economic strength (‘machinations’, we conclude). The masses, in both countries, certainly made their views known from 1945 onwards but the constraints above all was how to avoid, not the latest trends in planning. In different ways, the central governments of both countries concealed the case for urgent housing provision and the replanning of cities, but not too fast. The same was true of Germany, where ‘missed opportunities’ abounded in the field of urban planning. More than ‘machinations’, surely, are at work here.

The authors’ treatment of British reconstruction is able to draw on an extensive historical literature and on numerous planning publications during and after the war. Japan offers much less. Until recently the Japanese reconstruction experience was virtually closed to western historians. In America, Jeffry Dieferdorf has inspired some useful research on the Japanese case, while Nick Taturoo has done a similar job in Britain. It is now possible to compare the Japanese and the European experience, although Japanese bombing and reconstruction as a mass phenomenon still cannot be perceived as readily as in Britain. Underlying these varying perceptions is the absence of democracy in Japan from 1930 to the early years after the occupation. Indeed, the plenipotentiary Germany was not very different, leaving Britain as the main source of a comprehensive reconstruction story.

Wiseira Taturoo and his associates have limited their European input to Britain. However, in excluding Germany they have set aside a country whose destruction experience, and status as a defeated and occupied belligerent, made it more comparable to Japan than Britain was. Britain’s replanning opportunity was mainly located in the city centres. In Japan and Germany it was mainly in residential districts stretching out from the city centres and reaching, in some directions, as far as the edge of the built-up area. Little was left of the city centres but some of the stronger pre-war堤防, survival the raids, and in Germany, in the devastated areas. The persistence of modern, steel-framed buildings was especially a feature of Japanese cities, where the Americans had relied on incendiaries rather than high explosives.

The London blitz created a number of areas of destruction outside the centre, mainly in the East End and on the South Bank. However, the main areas suitable for comprehensive reconstruction were in the City. In the provinces, a ‘doughnut effect’ was produced, except that in the big seaports the destruction often stretched from the city centre to the docks. The centrality had already been seen as a planning problem in the 1930s, mainly in relation to traffic congestion, and some replanning had been done on paper under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932. Sheffield had prepared a new city centre plan by 1939, and a new road plan for London, based on the Bressay Report of 1937, was in serious preparation. Most other towns and cities, sensibly awaiting firm decisions on the basis for their compensation costs, were not so advanced, but the MARS Group’s presentation of modernist ideas on urban planning from 1933 encouraged national interest. Meanwhile, the Royal Academy had commissioned an architectural scheme for the new junctions envisaged in the Bressay Report.

Because Britain fought the war as a democracy, and commercial services and materials were not seriously curtailed, the night bombings of 1940–41 encouraged a public debate on urban reconstruction in the context of a government-led consideration of the broader ‘Reconstruction’ of the nation as a whole. The proceedings of Women’s Institutes, debating societies, school parliaments, and churches have not always survived but newspapers, magazines, books and radio programmes bear witness to the intensity and quality of the debate. Heavy raids ceased after May 1941 when most German bombers were moved to the East, and the V1 and V2 attacks in 1944–45 did not destroy large areas of London as conventional raids, with their numerous incendiary bombs, had tended to do in both London and the provinces. This meant that the areas potentially available for replanning in British cities were visible to all from 1941, when work started on removing the ruins and creating temporary accommodation for displaced people. The ‘Bomber raids’ in 1942 cleared further areas, notably at Canterbury and Exeter, but the character and extent of the reconstruction task was largely amalgamated between 1940 and 1945. This allowed Parliament to pass two important Acts of replanning legislation during the war, in 1943 and 1944. After the war came the greatest piece of planning legislation of all time, the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, and the related measure, the New Towns Act of 1946. Britain thus created the world’s finest foundation for post-war reconstruction, and one that did not lack in ‘socialist’ qualities.

Japan’s experience was very different. Heavy US raids on Japanese cities did not begin until early 1945 and the areas in Japanese cities subjected to ‘Bomber raids’ in 1943–44 included their bombers (the carrier-launched 1942 raid on Tokyo being purely symbolic). The filmic structure of most Japanese buildings tempted the Americans to use large proportions of incendiaries. These were increased by napalm bombs – the horrific equivalent of the phosphorus used by the RAF in Germany. Fires spread over large areas, with little to stop them except fire breaks provided by rivers, canals, and gaps blasted by the Japanese army. The devastated areas were comparable in area and degree of destruction to those of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where radiation created additional problems.

With Japan ruled by an American military administration until 1951, a full debate on planned reconstruction could not flourish, especially in view of Japan’s lack of a democratic tradition, the popular tendency to accept decisions given from above, and an anarchic tradition in the detail of street, alley and house building. Reconstruction moved ahead nevertheless, mainly on the basis of unauthorised rebuilding, much of it self-build, on the devastated sites. The national tradition of fimm building was largely maintained (though temporary materials and methods were encouraged to a much greater extent than before the war), and low houses again covered most of their sites and, together with other buildings, most of each block. Residential streets, though often designated for substantial rebuilding, were planned usually ended up little wider than in the past owing to national reductions in requirements or ad hoc decisions by the municipal or prefectoral planning committees.

Alleys within the blocks remained narrow and tortuous. Private gardens, though carefully planned and tended, were minute and hemmed in by buildings. This was reconstruction without effective town planning, though a number of cities made gestures such as huge central squares or long ‘hundred-metre wide streets’ running straight through the city centre. However, most of the ‘hundred-metre wide streets’ planned shortly after the war fell victim to some economy drive or other. Hence Nagoya’s pride in its impressive hundred-metre-wide street, now a monument of planning history.

Taturoo and his fellow authors, who write as if they have compiled with considerable depth to our understanding of urban reconstruction planning. Their plates alone provide a rich portrait, with many original or rarely seen items. They have chosen a case-study approach linked to two national ‘overviews’. Three cities are studied in each part in each country. Tokyo is one of the Japanese cities (with Osaka and Maebashi). London figures only in the form of Lansbury, the main area of destruction in the East End, but this focus is justified by the limited attention given by historians hitherto to the replanning of residential areas. Coventry has been studied before but as one of the world’s finest examples of post-war planning it merits its place here – another great monument of planning history. Portsmouth is a good example of the ‘conservatism’ detected by the authors throughout the British planning story. This reviewer would have liked to hear more about Plymouth, where sweeping powers were used, with the approval of Patrick Abercombie, to create a Beaux Arts city centre. Where did the ‘conservatism’ lie here? But there is plenty of time to look at this one.

Three issues have been selected for special attention: (i) the extent and nature of the destruction, and its possible impact on rebuilding; (ii) the identity and influence of the professional planners, and (iii) the political context at all levels of government.

The British section contains war-time enthusiasm for planning with the post-war results. It was wisely assumed during the war that replanning would be comprehensive and that large areas would be taken into public ownership. High aesthetic standards were associated with the planners were expected but not the, main role. The authors detect (pp.8-9) a decline in enthusiasm between 1942 and 1945 at all levels of society and activity as the practical difficulties became clearer, but they appear to neglect the prolific work of Abercombie across the country, the rapid development of the New Town ideas, and the impressive legislation of the war years – an achievement which far surpassed the fascist, utterly
conservative, Japan and Germany. All of these were promoted by central government, beginning with the legendary visit of the Coventry councillors to John Reith in 1940. Given that the comprehensive planning hailed by the authors relied on the public acquisition of large areas of land, it is not surprising that little progress could be made until the basis for compensation was incorporated in national legislation. Also needed were universal controls over development. When these were provided, principally in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, effective decisions could be made about the cleared areas. It is true that, as the authors emphasise, this radical statute, together with the New Towns Act of 1946, was passed under a Labour administration, and was therefore vulnerable to Conservative indifference after 1951, but that is what they call democracy, chips!

If reconstruction, whether modern or traditional, planned or piecemeal, was legally possible from 1947 onwards, what was the result? The authors rightly point to the state of a British economy in which Government planning gave a low priority to residential and commercial construction. Essential rebuilding was to the state of a British economy in which Government had already been able to relocate to converted houses and flats on the edge of the city centres after the major raids. All the bombed cities had their new 'West Ends' of this type, beginning to be created in the early 1950s, under Ichizo Kobayashi, stressed the importance of local initiative. With such large areas to be rebuilt, presumably at lower densities, the agenda included the restriction of the growth of the largest cities, green belts, satellite towns, garden cities, and land readjustment schemes (merging of ownerships to create planned sites and streets) which had already been under way before the war. With the idea of a national plan also in circulation in the press, the reconstruction of bomb damage clearly formed a large part of total urban and national planning policy, in contrast to the limited British 'dou unhunt' task.

Not surprisingly, Tokyo was the centre of national interest, and Hideaki Ishikawa's initial plans stressed the importance of garden cities and green belts there. An alternative, Corbusian model was generated in western Japan. Professor Takizawa of the Kobe College for Technology was the leader here, and his work in mega-dense central and inner Osaka was much admired. As early as 1946, however, a distrust of civil servant planning built up in the press as planning, much of it rudimentary and in character crude and repetitive, speedily followed.

Total destruction offered a big opportunity for land readjustment. Some progress had been made here before the war on the lines pioneered in Germany from the early 1900s (lex Adicke) and the first large-scale government programme was that local associations of property-owners would pool their ownerships, allowing the rational replanning of sites and thoroughfares and the eventual restoration to the owners of their legally-determined share of the total area. The municipalities and prefectures exercised oversight and, after the war, the central government subsidised the work. However, government efforts to reduce the national deficit from 1949 ("Dodge Line" - we would have valued some explanation of this phrase) led to a reduction of the area of land earmarked for readjustment schemes, with Tokyo hit hardest. Many planned parks and wider roads, including the 100-metre-wide streets dreamed of in many cities, fell victim to these economies. Meanwhile, largely uncontrolled rebuilding by private owners, squatters, and even public housing agencies, was difficult to discourage, even in planned areas. Even housing daydreams' (temporarily (normally thirty years) seemed likely to remain for some decades longer (the 'prefab' law, once again!).

A classic problem in work of this type is to relate the planning of devastated areas and sites to the parallel planning of the cities in which they lie. The authors face the problem squarely but their relative neglect of central government creates problems for them. Throughout the book, the authors are clearly looking for public participation and democracy. They are often disappointed, especially in the Japanese case, though it appears that the Japanese press could be forthright at times, and officials could be more outspoken than their British equivalents. On the other hand, it would appear that a large number of senior officials and politicians chose to resign from planning posts between 1945 and 1948 because they expected to be charged with war crimes. Here and elsewhere, the reader can sense a Japanese context which is very different from the British experience. The Japanese authors, nevertheless, have faced up to this problem and the western reader is offered a good deal of guidance on the Japanese context, especially in the case studies.

The authors' interest in identifying 'planners' who can be praised, or blamed where necessary, is less relevant in Japan than in Britain. While the authors often seek key British planning legislation, they do detect large numbers of British 'actors' who have a planning qualification, or who exercise functions created by the planning Acts. In Japan, the 1919 planning Act was the only piece of national planning legislation until 1968. Most of the advisory planning schemes drawn up for Japanese cities in 1945 and 1946 appear to have been the work of architects, and to have been based on the assumption that the necessary planning powers would be provided somehow.
Book Reviews and Notices


The central assumptions on which this book is based are summed up in the Preface.

During the period 1800-1914, the Arts and Crafts conception of a vernacular, common-place design -- representing a material-based design philosophy co-operatively instigated -- developed nationally into a baroque, art nouveau individualistic design that bore stylistic similarities to the Arts and Crafts but which negated its agenda of the collective.

Crouch seeks to investigate this transition, which he acknowledges to have been a complex matter involving long periods of overlap and cross-fertilisation, in the setting of Liverpool, where the foundation of the Liverpool School of Architecture and Applied Art at the University in 1894 expressed broadly Ruskinian assumptions about the need to sustain a close relationship between architecture and allied arts, to teach architecture as a 'traditional handcraft, rather than just as a formal academic skill' (p. 97), and to provide craft workers with a practical training that would enable them to find personal fulfilment as individuals within a framework of collaborative endeavour. From the very beginning, however, matters were not so simple, and the first Professor, Frederick Simpson, soon demonstrated a counteracting interest in current American practices, in the Beaux Arts and what became the City Beautiful, and in new industrial building techniques. The combined School's ten-year career was riddled with conflicts and contradictions on these and other lines, although as represented here they are more implicit than explicit, and its influence was restricted by failure to link into established national networks and publications. When Applied Art was handed back to the Municipal School of Art in Mount Street in 1905, while Charles Reilly arrived as the new Professor of Architecture, the stage was set for a further retreat from the Arts and Crafts tradition, as the University moved towards a key role in the development of the new discipline of Town Planning.

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A facsimile edition of Wilhelm Miller's classic The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening (1915), a profusely illustrated book that championed the "prairie style" of landscape design. It was the first book to address the question of a truly American style of landscape design and remains one of the most significant early treatises on that topic. Christopher Vernon (University of Western Australia) provides a substantial, illuminating introduction linking the prairie landscape style to the architecture of the Progressive Era. With over 100 images, this handsome volume features projects by midwestern luminaries such as Jens Jensen, O. C. Simonds, Walter Burley Griffin, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Warren H. Manning. The book is published in association with the Library of American Landscape History and forms part of the American Institute of Landscape Architects' Centennial reprint series.
In 1912, Walter Burley Griffin's design for Australia's national capital was chosen from more than 100 international entrants. The late Paul Reid attempts to correct many popular misconceptions about Griffin and Canberra by answering some fundamental questions: Just what did Griffin propose for Canberra and why wasn't it built? Is modern Canberra better or worse than the Griffin design? The well-illustrated big format book includes some rarely seen images from the National Archives collection and presents all 12 of Marion Mahony Griffin's original competition drawings, together for the first time, with explanatory diagrams and extensive quotations from Griffin's official reports. The focus is urban design and across 14 chapters Reid analyses key plans in Canberra's development. Paul Reid was a former Chief Architect of the National Capital Development Commission and Professor of Architecture at the University of NSW. He died in 2001.


Metropolitan Governance and Spatial Planning explores the relationship between metropolitan decision-making and strategies to co-ordinate spatial policy. This relationship is examined across 19 city regions of Europe, and the similarities and differences are analysed. City regions covered: London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Stockholm, Berlin, Frankfurt, Hannover, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Prague, Vienna, Venice, Milan, Paris, Brussels, Aix/Marseille, Barcelona and Madrid.

(From back cover)


Early works on the form of medieval towns often relied on a simple dichotomy of planned and organic. Planning was characterised by orthogonal forms preferably a full gridiron. The intention of this piece is to examine critically this approach, show that its influence has been at times less than helpful and to suggest alternative ways of considering change in medieval towns. (From p.1) [Please note: further copies of this and other faculty publications can be ordered from Faculty of the Built Environment, University of the West of England, Coldharbour Lane, Frenchay, Bristol, BS16 1QY]
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