# Mapping the imagined futurity:
# The roles of visual representation in the
# 1945 *City of Manchester Plan*

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**Abstract**

Imagining futures for the city has often been a pivotal force in the physical remaking of the built fabric, and visual representations have often played a crucial role in this process. Politicians, developers, planners and architects have enrolled visual representations into their discursive constructions and have relied upon different media to present their plans, but also to persuade people to enact these imagined futures. In the aftermath of the Second World War a noteworthy new genre of urban plans were published in Britain, deploying seductively optimistic illustrations of ways forward for the reconstruction of bomb-damaged cities and towns, but also for places left largely undamaged by the war. Around ninety cities and towns published plans, either produced by in-house teams, or commissioning external planning consultants. Around 230 plans were completed before the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act prescribed a much more utilitarian orthodoxy using written statements rather than graphical envisioning.

This paper assesses the contribution of different visual elements in this process, by presenting a detailed case study of the maps, charts, perspective drawings and photographs enrolled into the *City of Manchester Plan*, produced by the Corporation just after the end of the war in October 1945. The cultural production of these visual representations is examined and evaluated. The analysis deploys an approach grounded in science and technology studies and takes a critical view of

representational practices, exploring how different visualizations worked and continue to be deployed as active agents in the process of re-imagining Manchester, but also as markers of a particular moment in the cultural economy of the city. This analysis is carried out in relation to the ethos of the *City of Manchester Plan* as a whole, and to reconstitute some of the significant cultural and political contexts in which the report was released. It also attends to the range of the visual media deployed, to the kinds of places they portrayed and to other actors involved in the process of imagining the improved future of the city.

## 1. Introduction

Ola Söderström asserts that urban planners' visual practices subtly and yet deeply pervade the nature of the discipline, as well as influencing everyday activities of the profession and constituting many of its discourses: "[c]onsidering urban planning as a form of visual thinking in action seems to me to make it possible to understand, in new ways, the specificity of the discipline, its permanent features, and certain of its current limitations."[1] Stereotypically the planner sits at the drawing board laying down sweeping lines of change across the mapped city and in his analysis Söderström provides useful evidence from many different contexts of ways in which the visual has constructed planning. In the years since Söderström's work a significant amount of empirical research has explored the practical enrolment of visual artefacts in widely different social contexts[2]. Cartographic representation, in particular, has been re-inserted into scholarly investigation, with an upsurge in interest rethinking the medium[3], a cultural democratisation of everyday mapping

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[1] O. Söderström, 'Paper cities: visual thinking in urban planning', *Cultural Geographies*, 3 (1996), 275

[2] See M. Sturken and L. Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[3] See M. Dodge, R. Kitchin and C. Perkins (Eds.), *Rethinking Maps: New Frontiers of Cartographic Theory,* (London: Routledge, 2009).

practice[4], and increasing concern for the complex affective power of map materials[5]. However in the fourteen years since Söderström's paper relatively little analysis has tested out the validity of his direct claim, or unpacked in greater detail *how* different visual materials work in urban planning documents, or in the practice of re-imagining cities.

Meanwhile there is an emerging scholarly concern for investigating what might be termed 'contrafactual geographies', alternatives that never came about[6]. Gilbert and Lambert suggest disciplines as diverse as the history of science and technology, global historical studies, geopolitics, international relations, philosophy and historical geography are embracing contrafactual writing which they argue can be "about the pleasures and enchantments of imagining how things might have been, or might be different. It is about open thinking, that can work positively through the notion of possibility, and it is also a form that has tremendous potential for connection and engagement with wider popular imaginations."[7] Moreover, we would argue that by considering the contrafactual, what Doreen Massey terms the 'chance of space' becomes more possible: juxtapositions in the same place of different, potentially conflicting, narratives can reveal new ways forward[8].

The *City of Manchester Plan* prepared for the corporation under the stewardship of City Surveyor and Engineer Rowland Nicholas,[9] is a report at once strongly visual, yet also compellingly contrafactual. Far from being a turgid, mundane planner's report to Council, it is lavishly produced, especially given the constraints of the time. This hardbound, dust-jacketed, colour-illustrated volume, approaching 400

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[4] See C. Perkins, 'Community Mapping', *The Cartographic Journal*, 44(2) (2007), 127-37; S. Elwood, 'Thinking outside the box: engaging critical geographic information systems theory, practice and politics in human geography', *Geography Compass*, 4 (2009), 45-60.

[5] See M-P. Kwan, 'Affecting geospatial technologies: towards a feminist politics of emotion', *The Professional Geographer*, 59(1) (2007), 22-34.

[6] D. Gilbert and D. Lambert, 'Counterfactual geographies: worlds that might have been', *Journal of Historical Geography* (In press, doi:10.1016/j.jhg.2009.12.002).

[7] Gilbert and Lambert, 'Counterfactual geographies'.

[8] D.B. Massey, *For Space*, (London: Sage, 2005).

[9] R. Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan,* (Norwich: Jarrold and Son, 1945).

pages in length was explicitly devised as an elaborate envisioning of post-war planning of the City, and presents a seductive vision for the future of Manchester, a discourse that depends to a great degree upon active enrolling of visual media into a sustained narrative. It imagines a city radically remade from the chaos of war, replacing piecemeal and uncoordinated Victorian development with a comprehensive, rationally planned, scientifically enacted modern form. The primary objective of the plan was "to enable every inhabitant of the city to enjoy real health of body and health of mind"[10]. Overcrowded and unsanitary terraced housing is swept away and replaced with model designs for flats meeting objectively determined space requirements; new urban highway infrastructure relieves congestion and frees the flow of traffic through and around the city, with all-encompassing ring-roads, and parkways radiating out to suburbs and new industrial estates. A raft of new social, educational and cultural facilities are rendered in drawings ready for building in concrete and stone. The city centre is remade into a logical layout with proper zoning by function. Air pollution is remedied. The vast Wythenshawe housing estate is lionised as bold civic enterprise. The paper landscape of the *City of Manchester Plan* imagines with a tremendously bold vision that bares little relation to what emerged during the lengthy and stuttering recovery from post-war austerity. The attempts at mass public housing turned out as no improvement on the terraces for many residents, and the free flowing modernist city imagined in the *City of Manchester Plan* remained out of reach, resolutely grid-locked in the messy political practicalities of regulating post-war change[11], but the document stands as a fascinating monument to contrafactual imagination, a utopian aspiration for what might have been.

The *City of Manchester Plan* has so far has received scant academic attention, despite a large number of published studies of other comparable post-war plans and

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[10] Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, page 1.

[11] For a consideration of planning policy over this period see T. Kitchen, 'The future of development plans: reflections on Manchester's experiences 1945-1995,' *Town Planning Review*, 67(3) (1996), 331-53; J. J. Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester: An Architectural History*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); HMSO, *Manchester: 50 Years of Change*, (London, HMSO, 1995).

reconstruction reports[12]. Moreover, the role of visual materials in these kinds of documents has also been strangely absent in the scholarly analysis[13]. Yet one of the most overt and significant aspects of the *City of Manchester Plan*, is the number, range and quality of visual elements enrolled between its covers.

Our analysis aims to fill the research gap by bringing the *City of Manchester Plan* into sharp focus and examining in detail the range of visual representations included in the report and the roles they played in its discursive imagination of the city's future. The paper has three main goals: first, it is an argument for a critical, situated and cultural reading of visual media, and for a relational approach to the politics of imagining future urban form. Secondly, it argues that any theoretical approach to representations of the city must recognise the emancipatory potential of visual media, as well as their acknowledged capacity to persuade, exert power, and in some sense provoke action. And finally the case study of a single policy report reveals the potential significance of in-depth local considerations of day-to-day professional visual practices and the kinds of politics they call into being.

To understand the narrative power of the *City of Manchester Plan* we need to know something of the historical context in which it was conceived, written, published and promulgated.

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[12] P. J. Larkham and K. D. Lilley, *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow': British Reconstruction Planning, 1939-1952 An Annotated Bibliography*, (Pickering: Peter Inch, 2001) identifies over 150 published pieces of research about these plans. They demonstrate how the 'great reconstruction plans of the great planners' (such as Patrick Abercrombie's London and Plymouth) have received most attention. In this literature there are several passing reference made to the *City of Manchester Plan*, but the report as a whole has surprisingly not been examined in depth.

[13] P. J. Larkham, *The Imagery of the UK Post-War Reconstruction Plans,* (Working Paper 88, School of Planning and Housing, University of Central England, 2004) provides a detailed evaluation of architectural drawings presented in a sample of post-war reconstruction plans, with a particular focus on their artists, but a systematic comparative study of the different visual elements found across the plans has never been researched and the cartographic representation in these reports has been almost completely taken for granted as merely displaying data.

## 2. The post-war reconstruction plans as a genre

Throughout Great Britain in the period from 1941 through to the early 1950s a series of reports were drawn up by public bodies that imagined a new urban future, offering a powerful technocratic and optimistic set of policy objectives and specific schemes for the reconstruction of British cities and towns. In the region of ninety plans were formally published, some being compiled by in-house teams and others with hired planning consultants, and in total around 230 different plans were completed, before the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act proscribed a much more utilitarian orthodoxy of terse written framework statements[14]. Smaller scale, unpublished plans are still being tracked down in local archives. The fashion for their publication peaked with the end of hostilities in 1945, including the *City of Manchester Plan*.

These planning reports brought together richly imagined and thematically organised narratives for urban futures. Their form was not prescribed by legislation and their design and content reflects local factors and the ideological norms a small elite profession of architects, engineers, and planners. Their scale varies substantially, as does the quality of analysis and the gravitas of their presentational style. Typically larger more affluent planning authorities were able to devote more resources to the process, and in so doing made more elaborate plans of the areas under their jurisdiction, which reflect ambitions of corporations and egos of their leading politicians. Plans addressed core issues under the public control of local government such as housing and transport, but emphasis varied considerably. Where there was less bomb damage and an historic core to the town or city survived, the plans seem to have often reflected a nascent concern with preservation, as well as redevelopment[15]. Elsewhere modernist aspirations predominate with schemes for new precincts, mass social housing, ring-roads and remade town centres.

[14] Larkham and Lilley, *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow'* (2001) provides a systematic listing of plans identified to date with a useful critical introduction to their genesis. See also P. J. Larkham 'Selling the future city: images in UK post-war reconstruction plans', in I. B. Whyte (ed.) *Man-Made Future: Planning, Education and Design in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 99-120.

[15] See P. J. Larkham, 'The place of urban conservation in the UK reconstruction plans of 1942-1952', *Planning Perspectives,* 18 (2003), 295-324.

In the immediate aftermath of their publication, scholarly and professional commentators tended to regard the plans as a response to the direct need to physically reconstruct bombed cities, and early historiographies of post-war planning have scripted their publication as an opportunity seized by newly emergent breed of local planners to 'improve' their areas[16]. The plans were certainly formulated from a context of widespread bomb damage, but they also envisioned futures for places left largely undamaged by the war. So it is increasingly accepted that the aftermath of war encouraged what was already a powerful discourse for change, and for a more rational and scientific planned approach to the development of British cities[17].

Broader intellectual contexts of the plans have been theorised in many different fashions. A number of useful historical studies, for example, explore the plans as reflections of heroic and idealistic visions of 'great' planners[18]. Other complex explanations for the upsurge of 'paper cities', and subsequent lack of action in their real equivalents, have emerged in the last twenty years. Junichi Hasegawa's work focuses upon the radical and utopian nature of the reconstruction plans, highlighting their possibilities for engendering greater social equity in what was a highly class-riven society and the broader political and economic contexts that facilitated their compilation[19]. On the other hand Nick Tiratsoo suggests that most planners involved in the reconstruction plans of this period were at best mild reformers, with tightly constricted powers to enact radical modernist designs or

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[16] See for example, W. Ashworth, *The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning: A Study in Economic and Social History of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954).

[17] See Larkham and Lilley, *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow'* (2001); M. Hebbert, 'The daring experiment: social scientists and land-use planning in 1940s Britain', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 10(1) (1983), 3-17.

[18] See for example P.N. Jones, '"A fairer and nobler city": Lutyens and Abercrombie's plan for the city of Hull 1945', *Planning Perspectives*, 13(3) (1998), 301-16.

[19] J. Hasegawa, 'The rise and fall of radical reconstruction in 1940s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10(2) (1999), 137-61.

socialist schemes, merely one set of actors locked in a complex political mesh[20]. Furthermore, a range of actors were involved in the actual compilation and possible enactment of reconstruction plans, reflecting national and local interests as well as contested demands from very different political positions and from competing expert constituencies. Commercial consultants vied for lucrative commissions from cities[21]. Highway engineers and city surveyors competed for resources with architects and public health officials. In the reports artistic visions vied for space with photographs and with maps compiled in local drawing offices. Noteworthy local empirical work, informed by actor-network approaches, is starting to trace the inscriptions these participants have left behind, and to follow their actions in seeking to build newly emerging urban assemblages, where pragmatic and messy compromises seem to determine emerging political outcomes[22]. It is hardly surprising that the intellectual agenda of the plans reflects local political contexts and tensions, and that this theme is the most frequently researched emphasis in the literature relating to reconstruction planning[23]. The plans often played significant roles for the towns and cities that compiled them, and Peter Larkham and Keith Lilley suggest that they offered a subversive vehicle for civic boosterism, promoting local prestige, by commissioning expensive consultants, and preparing lengthy, carefully argued texts, full of suitably

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[20] N. Tiratsoo, 'The reconstruction of blitzed British cities, 1945-55: myths and reality', *Contemporary British History*, 14(1) (2000), 27-44.

[21] P.J. Larkham, 'People, planning and place: the roles of client and consultants in reconstrucing post-war Bilston and Dudley', *Town Planning Review,* 77(5) (2006), 557-82.

[22] S. Essex and M. Brayshay, 'Vision, vested interest and pragmatism: who re-made Britain's blitzed cities?', *Planning Perspectives*, 22(4) (2007), 417-41.

[23] Numerous case studies explore empirical practice on the ground in particular places, see for example P. L. Garside, 'The significance of post-war London reconstruction plans for East End industry', *Planning Perspectives*, 12 (1997) 19-36; and J. Pendlebury, 'Reconciling history with modernity: 1940s plans for Durham and Warwick', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 31 (2004), 331-48.

aspirant and richly varied illustrations to stroke politicians egos [24]. They also reflect the growing influence and aspirations of a number of maturing urban professions, communicating elite, technocratic expertise to a wider and largely acquiescent public. Trained and professionally accredited architects, town planners, highway engineers and sanitary officers brought their different skills together, and the political will of civil authorities allowed their visions to be disseminated like never before, or indeed since. However, the concrete policies that followed from the plans seem to have also reflected tensions over scale, where local action embodied in a city plan was often constrained by structures and schemes scripted in regional documents[25] and national frameworks driven from Whitehall[26]. The successful emergence of new ideas of urban governance instilled in the reconstruction plans depended upon enrolling wide coalitions of interest, and a focus on the reception of plans is important if one is to comprehend how and why so few of their paper schemes were made real. A consideration of the everyday geographies of those subject to the plans is also emerging, with research exploring the exhibition of plans as propaganda or public consultation[27], and also considering the memories of those who experienced the redevelopment they called into being[28].

The visual representations deployed in reconstruction plans are conventionally read as modernist symbols of control, with their sanitized and depopulated visions of

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[24] P. J. Larkham and K. D. Lilley, 'Plans, planners and city images: place promotion and civic boosterism in British reconstruction planning', *Urban History*, 30(2) (2003), 183-205.

[25] See S. Essex and M. Brayshay, 'Town versus country in the 1940s: planning the contested space of a city region in the aftermath of the Second World War', *Town Planning Review*, 76 (2005), 239-63.

[26] P. Malpass, 'Wartime planning for post-war housing in Britain: the Whitehall debate, 1941-5', *Planning Perspectives,* 18 (2003), 177-96.

[27] K.D. Lilley, 'On display: planning exhibitions as civic propaganda or public consultation?', *Planning History,* 25(3) (2003), 3-8.

[28] P. Hubbard, L. Faire and K. Lilley, 'Contesting the modern city: reconstruction and everyday lives in post-war Coventry', *Planning Perspectives,* 18 (2003), 377-97.

urbanity[29]. Rob Bartram and Sarah Shobrook, for example, suggest the planning process they envisage drew strongly on metaphors and imagery of medical science, with improvements described in terms of diagnosis, treatments and cures of an ailing urban 'body'[30]. Others develop this anatomic analogy and explore the diagramming of the modern city as reflecting cybernetic modes of control, part of an enveloping Foucauldian system of bio-political regulation[31]. Yet, interestingly these same cybernetic metaphors have also been re-read as actually inscribing novel spatio-temporal imaginaries of travel and temporalities, where reconstruction plans participate in the making of new mobilities that continue to inform contemporary urban flows in many British cities[32].

## 3. The City of Manchester Plan

"In this replanning we shall remember the high reputation that Manchester holds in the realm of freedom, art and culture. There is, however, much in our records which is unworthy of the city and its people. We see the mistakes and we know that the coming of victory and peace will open a new chapter in world history, when we can start the task of rectifying past errors." 'We Plan A Fairer City', by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Alderman Leonard B. Cox[33].

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[29] P. J. Larkham, 'Remaking cities: image, control, and postwar planning in the United Kingdom', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design,* 24 (1997), 741-59.

[30] R. Bartram and S. Shobrook, 'Body beautiful: medical aesthetics and the reconstruction of urban Britain in the 1940s', *Landscape Research*, 26(2) (2001), 119-35.

[31] T. Osborne and N. Rose, 'Governing cities: notes on the spatialization of virtue', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 17 (1999), 737-60.

[32] R. Hornsey, '"Everything is made of atoms": the reprogramming of space and time in post-war London', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 34 (2008), 94-117.

[33] Statement reproduced in Daily Dispatch and Evening Chronicle, *Our Blitz: Red Sky over Manchester*. (Manchester: Kemsley Newspapers (Facsimile edition by Aurora Publishing, Bolton, (1945) [ca. 2000]).

Almost all of this literature suggests we need to be attentive to local contextual factors and focus on the politics of particular plans. Before examining its visual representation we need to consider the intellectual agenda of the *City of Manchester Plan*. The ethos of the plan clearly reflects a desire to remake the city, resonating in many ways in reformist projects of the interwar period[34]. In his preface to the *City of Manchester Plan*, the Chairman of the Town Planning and Buildings Committee, Councillor Ottiwell Lodge, suggests that its form owes much to an address by Lord Reith in August 1941 to the Manchester and District Regional Planning Committee, when the then Minister urged bold and comprehensive planning for a reconstructed city[35]. It also reflects a desire to repair the damage of the war, even though Manchester had suffered less from bomb damage than other industrial cities in the UK, such as Liverpool and Sheffield[36].

Initially the idea was to produce a series of reports accompanied by plans, but this rapidly changed to a single integrated document, once the interrelated nature of the challenges came to be appreciated. Direct work compiling the plan seems to have taken two years and started in 1943. It proceeded along with the compilation of a shorter and significantly less lavish companion volume, focusing on regional planning contexts and prepared under the aegis of the Manchester and District Regional Planning Committee[37]. The two reports are both conceived and published under the

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[34] See for example, E. D. Simon and J. Inman, *The Rebuilding of Manchester*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1935).

[35] Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, page iii. Lord Reith was the Minister responsible for works, buildings and planning from 1940 to 1942 (see I. McIntyre, 'John Charles Walsham Reith, 1889-1971', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

[36] Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, page 1. The psychological impact of the 'Christmas Blitz' bombing in December 1940 was, however, significant, with 684 people killed in the city (see P.J.C. Smith, *Luftwaffe over Manchester: The Blitz Years 1940-1944,* (Manchester: Neil Richardson, 2003).

[37] R. Nicholas, *The Manchester and District Regional Planning Committee Report on Tentative Regional Planning Proposals,* (Norwich: Jarrold and Sons, 1945).

authorship of Rowland Nicholas[38], share many of the same visual materials, and were compiled by the same team working from Manchester City Surveyor and Engineer's Department, with significant assistance from the City Architect and the Housing Director's Department.

The *City of Manchester Plan* was publicly launched at a major exhibition on the first floor of the City Art Gallery in the summer of 1945. The Minister of Town and County Planning came up from London to open the event on July 20th and received significant media coverage [39]. Arranged across ten rooms, the exhibition showcased material published in the printed *City of Manchester Plan* itself, along with additional maps, models and architects drawings not included in the published volume, as well as information about the survey methods used in the compilation of the plan[40]. The exhibition ran for several months and was the largest event yet mounted to promote reconstruction planning, with visitors guided around its displays by Planning officers[41]. Promotional material relating to the exercise was published to coincide with the launch, including a fifty-one page brochure, described as an abridged edition of the *City of Manchester Plan*[42], which highlighted key themes and deployed the most significant visualizations from its parent volume, including six colour plates.

[38] He was a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and of the Town Planning Institute, and was Manchester's City Surveyor and Engineer for twenty-three years from 1940 to 1963 having previously held the same post in Sheffield.

[39] For example, several pages of the Manchester Guardian for that day were devoted to it, including illustrations of exhibits: 'Manchester of the future: comprehensive exhibition of the city's re-development plan', *The Manchester Guardian,* Friday 20th July 1945, pages 3, 6 and 8.

[40] A useful description of the exhibition including examples of public building designs not published in the plan itself is provided in: 'Manchester and District Plan', *The Architect and Building News,* 3 (August 1945), 72-78.

[41] By early September reported that some 125,000 people had seen the exhibition; J. B. White, 'Manchester: physical planning supplement', *The Architects' Journal*, September 6th 1945, 169-72.

[42] R. Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan: Abridged Edition,* (Norwich: Jarrold and Sons, 1945).

The complete *City of Manchester Plan*, its promotional exhibition and affordable abridged version all focus on a relatively narrowly articulated envisioning of the future of Manchester. The key tropes underpinning the work are the development of new neighbourhoods, a considerable redesign and rebuilding of the city centre itself, comprehensive housing redevelopment schemes, moving people out of crowded areas with poor housing, and a substantial investment in new transport infrastructure that might facilitate movement around the city (including a major new railway station between Salford and Manchester above the River Irwell). The timeframe of the plan looked forward fifty years. It mostly articulated broad visions, not specific policies to be enacted on the ground.

The plan received extensive and almost entirely positive reviews from the professional press[43]. A conference about the plan was held at the City Art Gallery on 31st August and 1st September, including delegate visits to Wythenshawe[44]. Revised proposals were presented to the Corporation's Town Planning Committee, and in 1948 were formally approved[45].

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[43] Reviews appeared in *Architect and Building News*, (27th July 1945), 54-57; *Architects' Journal*, (6th September 1945), 169-172; *Architectural Review* 99, (June 1946), lxiv; *The Builder,* CLXIX (5348), (3rd August 1945), 86-90; and CLXIX(5354), (14th September 1945), 212*; Building* (November 1945), 289-290; *Official Architect,* (December 1945), 598-607; *Town & Country Planning* XIII(52), (1945), 163-68; and *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 12(2) (Spring 1946), 32-33.

[44] 'Conference at Manchester', *Journal of the Town Planning Association,* September-October 1945*,* 229-30.

[45] See *The Builder* CLXXIV(5478), 13th February 1948, page 188.

Table 1: Audit of all visual representations in the *City of Manchester Plan*.

| Chapter | Photographic illustrations | Cartographic illustrations | Perspective drawings | Statistical graphs | Diagrams | Count | Pages with illustrations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Introduction | 15 | 2 | 1 | | | *18* | 6 |
| 2. Historical Background | 8 | 2 | 7 | | | *17* | 4.75 |
| 3. Basic Surveys | | 6 | | | | *6* | 1.5 |
| 4. Population and Family Structure | | | | 8 | | *8* | 2.75 |
| 5. Zoning of Land Use | 2 | 4 | | | | *6* | 6 |
| 6. Highways | 10 | 11 | | | 1 | *22* | 9.5 |
| 7. Transport and Municipal Services | 5 | 4 | 2 | | | *11* | 3 |
| 8. Industry | 7 | 5 | | 6 | | *18* | 8.5 |
| 9. Learning Medicine and the Arts | 4 | 1 | 4 | | | *9* | 4 |
| 10. Public Open space | 14 | 3 | | | | *17* | 6 |
| 11. Schools | 2 | 2 | | | | *4* | 1 |
| 12. Housing Standards | 9 | | 4 | | 4 | *17* | 6.5 |
| 13. Neighbourhood and District | 9 | 1 | | 1 | 2 | *13* | 4.5 |
| 14. Wythenshawe | 9 | 9 | 3 | | 1 | *22* | 12 |
| 15. Redevelopment | 3 | 15 | 2 | | | *20* | 10 |
| 16. Overspill and the Satellite Town | | 3 | | 1 | | *4* | 4.5 |
| 17. Abolition of Smoke | 5 | 1 | | | | *6* | 2 |
| 18. The City Centre | 7 | 4 | 5 | | | *16* | 11.5 |
| 19. Conclusion | | | | | | - | - |
| Endpapers | | | 2 | | | *2* | 4 |
| | | | | | | | |
| Appendix C Highways | | | | 4 | | *4* | 1.5 |
| Appendix D Transport | | | | | 3 | *3* | 0.5 |
| Appendix H Housing standards | | | | | 2 | *2* | 0.5 |
| Appendix M The City Centre | | | | | 11 | *11* | 4 |
| **Total** | **109** | **73** | **30** | **20** | **24** | *256* | **114.5** |

**4. Auditing the visual representations in the *City of Manchester Plan***

The *City of Manchester Plan* comprises a handsome dust-jacketed blue cloth-bound volume of nearly 300 quarto pages of text, and 80 separately paginated plates. Material is presented in twelve preliminary pages, an introduction, seventeen thematic chapters, a conclusion, and thirteen technical appendices. Some 115 pages out of this 380 page total include visual representations of one kind or another: comprising 83 plates, 31 diagrams and 14 graphs according to the report's table of content. Overall 256 separate illustrations are included: most of the captioned items comprise several distinct illustrations. Table 1 audits the range of visual representations deployed in this total and tabulates their distribution throughout the report[46].

The photograph is the most frequently used visual representation. There are 109 in total and in ten of the nineteen chapters are the predominate visualisation in numerical terms. They are all black and white, none is printed as a full page, most are quarter page or smaller. All are tipped in as plates, separated from the main textual narrative and with up to six separate photographs per plate. They are typically enrolled to exemplify the theme of the chapter with which they are associated and are usually not described or analysed in the text. For example chapter 10 on Public Open Space includes three plates of photographs: one with three photographs of major parks, a double page plate about the open space system, including photographs to illustrate general principles, neighbourhood open spaces, spaces for physical recreation and for mental recreation and a plate with five images of rivers juxtaposing photographs of urban dereliction with supposedly naturalistic rural scenes. Each plate is labelled and captions interpret the photographs for the reader. Acknowledgement for the sources of the photographs is given at the start of the volume and is to organisations, not individual photographers. The majority of photographic plates simply present images at face-value, yet often in a carefully selected series of representations designed to support the rhetoric and need for change (Figure 1). Some,

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[46] Note, there is a degree of arbitrariness in our classification: some maps are more impressionistic than others; some diagrams verge into charts; some maps incorporate statistical diagrams; aerial photographs may work as if they were maps. Nevertheless the classification process reveals some interesting variations in visualising practices.

however, juxtapose a photograph to a representation in another medium. These are most striking when the photograph recording the present or past is set against an artist's impression, or map of the imagined future improvement. Other clever compositions include plates where a contemporary map is set against photographs, and where photographs are set against indicative imagery of a typical planned feature, to reveal how much better the city might become if the Plan were to be enacted. Certain chapters are much more strongly supported by photographs than others, notably in the introductory, highways and open spaces sections.
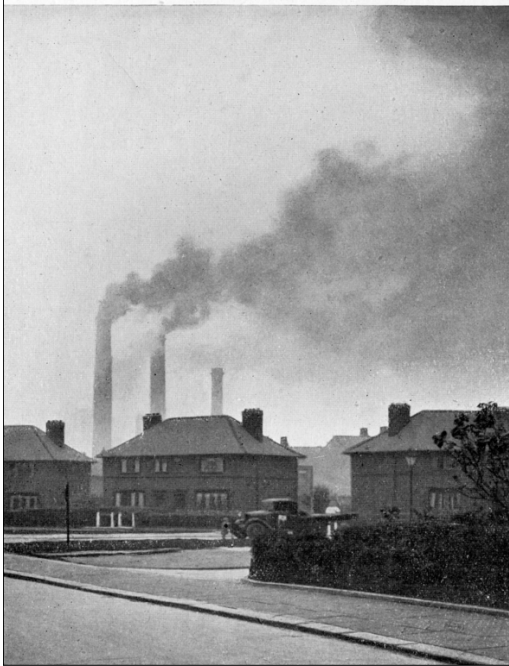
## ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

1 & 2. Industrial chimneys emitting a pall of smoke, obscuring sunlight and causing damage, dirt and decay far from its source.

3. Domestic fires are responsible for at least half of the city's atmospheric pollution.

4. Part of a stone window sill, showing premature disintegration of the surface by noxious deposits from a polluted atmosphere.
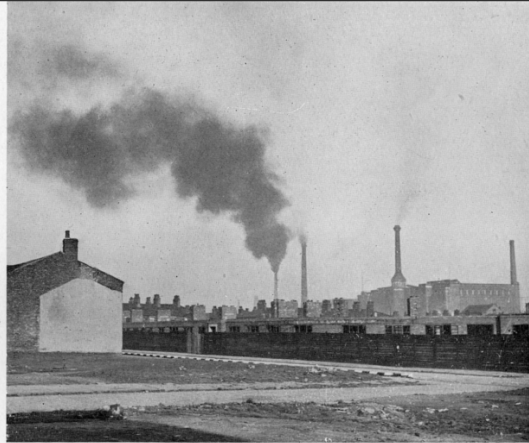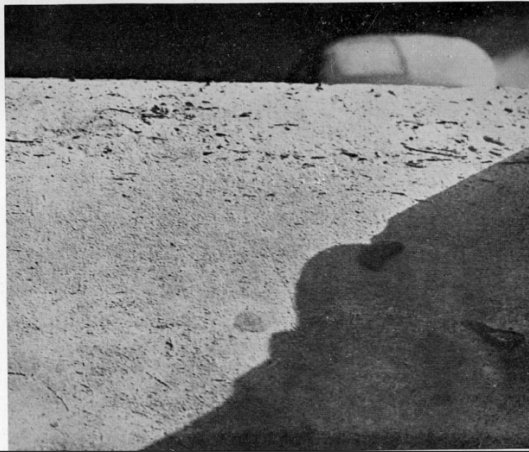
Figure 1: Visual narration of the problem of atmospheric pollution (Plate 72, *City of Manchester Plan*).

There are fewer maps in the *City of Manchester Plan* than photographs, but in representational terms they are much more significant, in part because they occupy much more page space, but also because most of they are printed in colour. In layout most of the maps are separated from the relevant text and are tipped in as plates. Twenty-three maps occupy a full page, and sixteen of these are coloured. Three coloured maps are printed on foldout sheets of around A3 in size, to cover zoning proposals, major highways parks and parkways and the City Centre. A striking coloured redrawing of the well-known Palmer map of the city dating from 1650 appears on the frontispiece. Almost all of the cartographic representations keep strictly to the administrative area of the city of Manchester, greying out anything outside the city borders, or beyond the community focus of larger scale images. Most either depict the whole of the area of the city, and with a full page map printed at a scale of around 1:63,360, or focus in more detail on a case study area, where they are sufficiently detailed to identify individual buildings. The majority of the cartography is based on standard Ordnance Survey topographic mapping of the time, though copyright permission is not quoted. There is significant variation however in use of colour, temporal range, thematic focus and cartographic technique. A few black and white maps are integrated with the text (and classified in the plan as diagrams). These depict administrative boundaries, or variations in traffic flow at road junctions, or indicative layouts of potential new features in the built environment (Figure 2). Most maps depict either current variation of the theme being discussed in the associated chapter, or consider the future implications of proposals. Very few provide historical context. There is a more uneven distribution of maps across themes in the plan than for photographs. Nearly half the maps in the volume appear in chapters focusing on highways, redevelopment and Wythenshawe, and six of the nineteen chapters include one or no maps. Most of the maps focus upon land use mapping of the city, and classify different land uses according to a colour coding. Planning jurisdiction is also mapped out, with possible zoning proposals often carefully colour coded (Figure 3 below). A few eye-catching and unusual thematic displays stand out, notably the divided pie charts showing types of building user in the central area (Plate 76). Some of the most visually evocative maps in the report, however, are those that envisage the future form of elements of the built environment, notably the future of the road infrastructure and of the case study areas where more detail of planned developments

are shown: the City Centre, Wythenshawe, and designated redevelopment areas of Miles Platting, Beswick, Collyhurst and Moss Side (Figure 4 below).
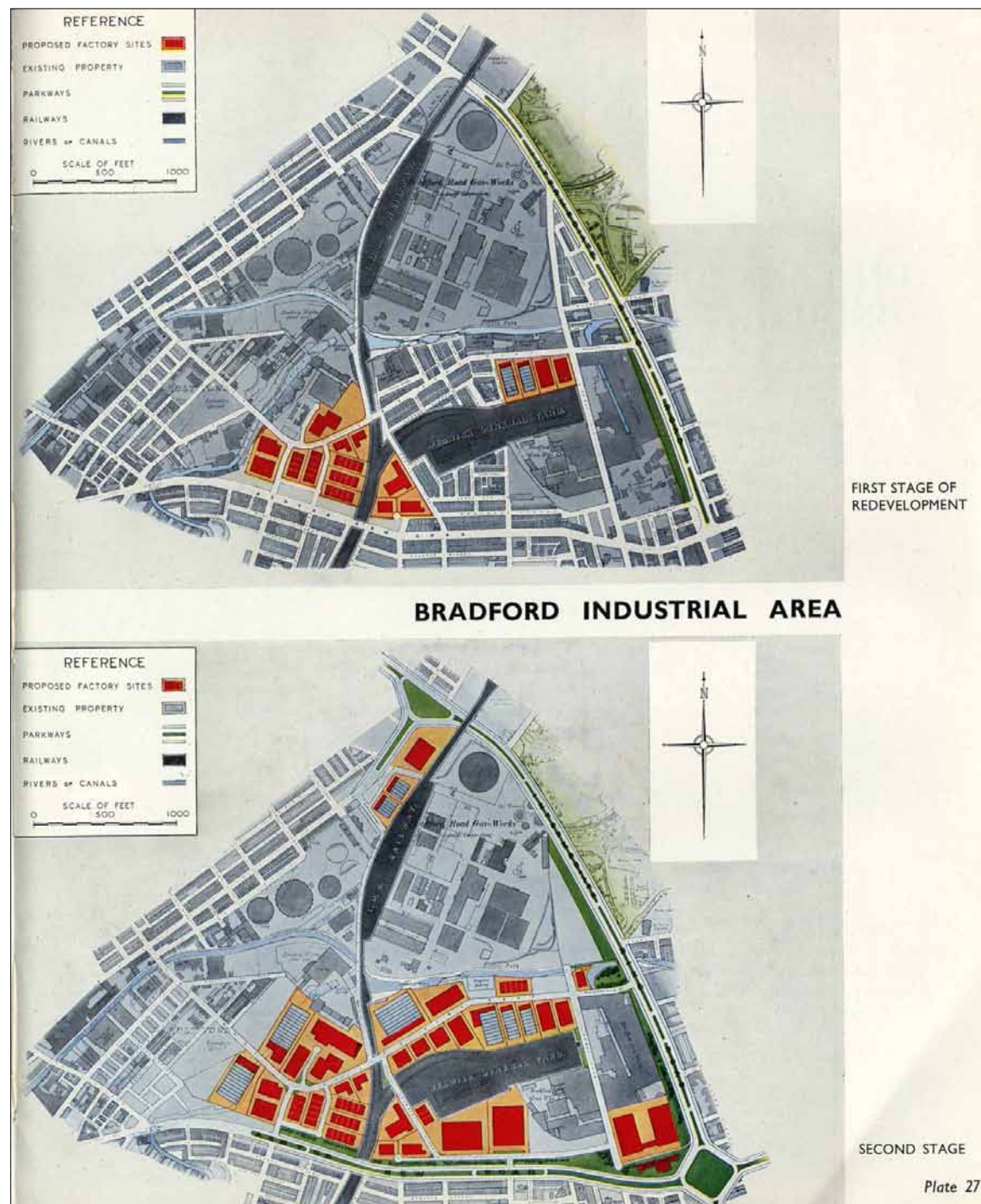


Figure 2: Typical district centre (Diagram 27, *City of Manchester Plan*).
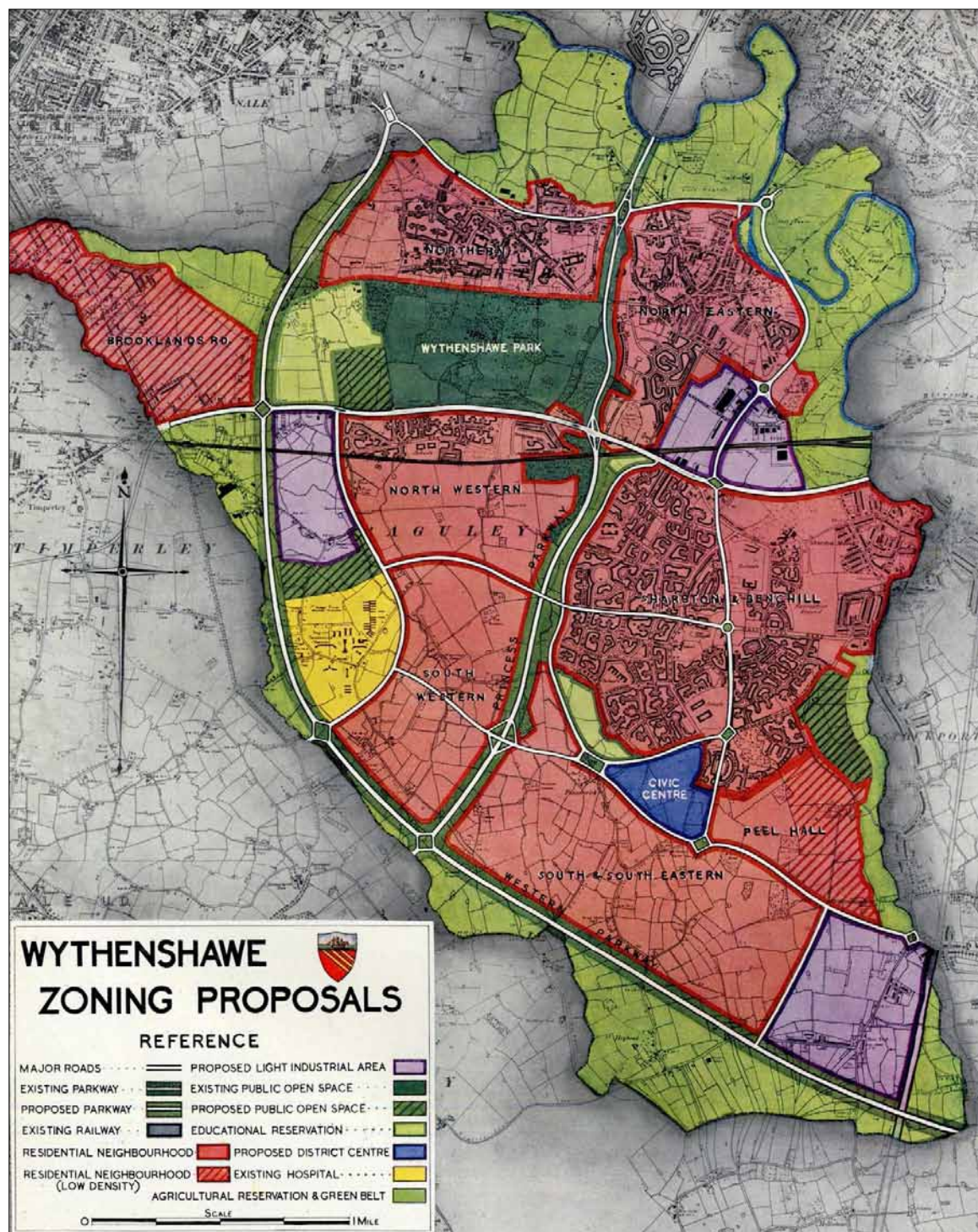
19

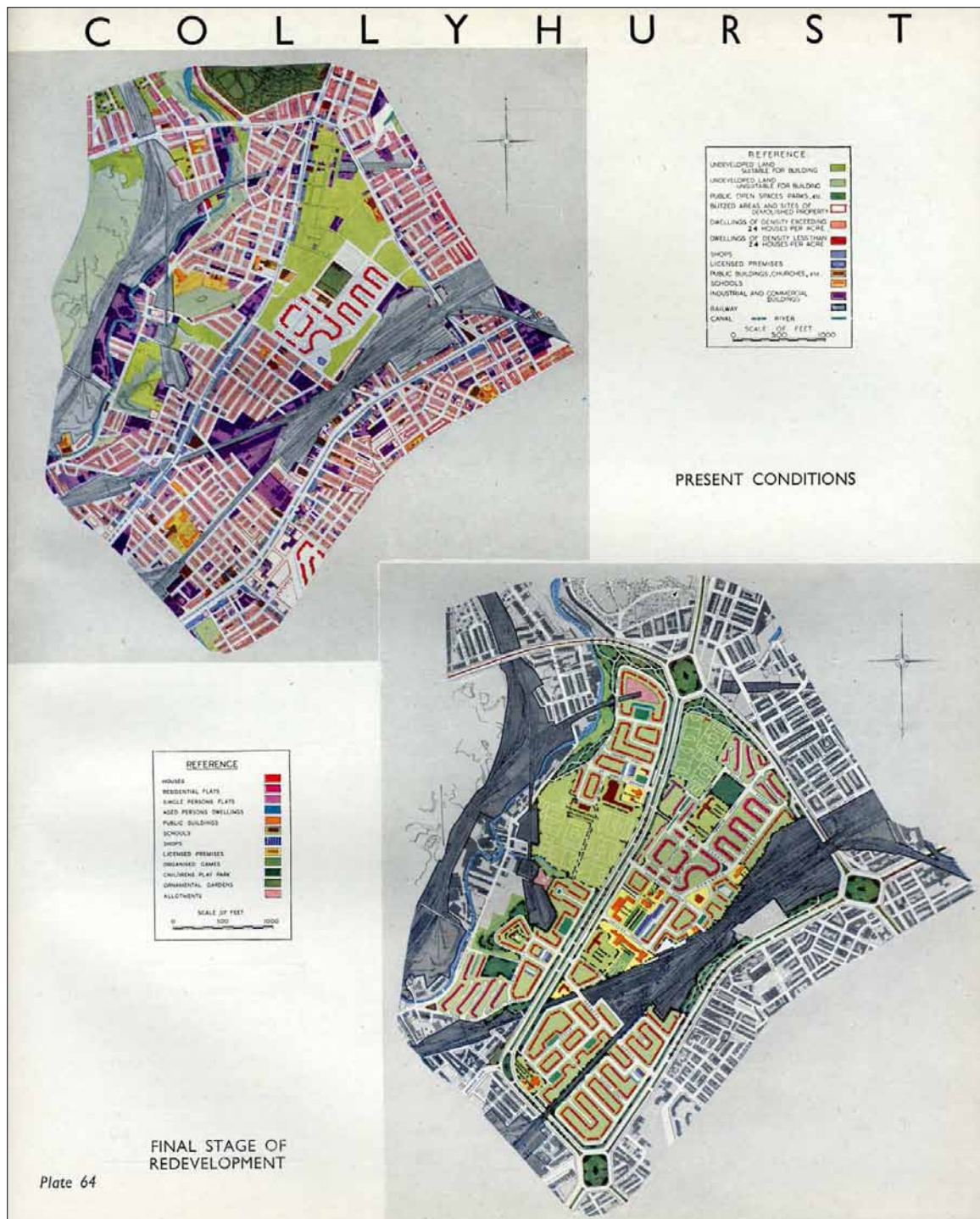Figure 3: Wythenshawe: zoning proposals (Plate 47, *City of Manchester Plan*).

Figure 4: Collyhurst: present conditions and final stage of development (Plate 64, *City of Manchester Plan*).

None of the maps in the volume is directly attributed to the work of an individual, but the names of draughtsmen who contributed to the preparation of the plan appear in the acknowledgements at the start of the volume. Some of the procedures involved in the surveys and compilation of mapping are, however, described in Chapter 3. All the maps in this volume were compiled in house, from data collected in a number of different surveys. A land survey of all undeveloped land was originally plotted at 1:2,500 scale on thirty-six OS topographic sheets. A civic survey revised 108 OS base maps to indicate use, age, condition and height of every building in the city. Data were then plotted onto 46 OS maps and generalised onto a single six-inch sheet (Plate 12). Eleven OS base maps also recorded the state of industrial buildings, a shopping survey was carried out, and warehouses and commercial premises were also cartographically charted. A number of synthetic maps bring together the results of these surveys. Limited pilot social surveys were also carried out to attempt to validate the more general mapping exercises, but these are acknowledged as partial. It is Nicholas's technocratic vision for the city, not the peoples.

Numerically artistic perspective drawings comprise the third most significant type of visual material in the plan. Most are half-page images, with only a few published as full pages. All appear on plates, captioned and separate from the main textual sections that they relate to. In a few cases these comprise reproductions of historical scenes, juxtaposed to photographs and illustrating changes in the built form. However, the majority of artistic impressions look forward in time and imagine a future that the plan might bring about. The most striking of these are pastel-toned coloured paintings often juxtaposed to black and white photographs of the same situation on the ground in 1945. The chapter on the City Centre deploys this technique most effectively for the Cathedral, Town Hall, Law Courts and Piccadilly areas (Figure 5 below). This drawing of the new civic boulevard to Albert Square has been widely reproduced and clearly works as representative icon for the time[47]. These

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[47] For example, it is reproduced in HMSO, *Manchester: 50 Years of Change*, page 17 and in Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester: An Architectural History*, page 165. The authors also featured it in their Mapping Manchester exhibition (www.mappingmanchester.org/e-catalogue.pdf).

images offer a high-level oblique view of the new urban landscape, strongly impressionistic in tone: buildings fade into obscurity in the distance. Elsewhere the brief cultural and social chapter envisages potential provision of services in higher education, the arts, and medical facilities by deploying black and white birds-eye artistic renderings. The extensive development of Ringway Airport at the edge of the city, and potential housing and neighbourhood centres are also illustrated using this material.

Illustrations of housing are strikingly different in style to the panoramic imaginings. The eye level falls and typical street scenes are represented in drawings compiled in house by the Housing Department. Eleven of the nineteen chapters do not deploy any examples of this kind of image. These drawings and paintings are the only visual material in the Plan where authorship is acknowledged on the plate itself. In some cases they came from staff working for the City Architect's Department[48]. Work from architectural artists of national significance was also commissioned for the plan, including perspectives from Cyril Farey and J.D.M. Harvey[49]. Farey's style seems much more precise than Harvey's[50]. In some cases material seems to have been reproduced from work completed elsewhere, in other cases it has been compiled especially for the *City of Manchester Plan*[51].

Graphical materials in the form of line charts, bar charts and other statistical diagrams are interspersed with the text in several of the chapters and in appendices. They are smaller than other illustrations in the Plan and stand out much less. There is a strikingly uneven distribution of this kind of visualization. Industrial, demographic and highway chapters comprise almost all of these graphics.

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[48] See for example the introductory plate '*Panorama: The City Today'* drawn by A. Sherwood Edwards (Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, Plate 1).

[49] Farey one of the most renowned architectural illustrators of the period, and exhibited frequently at the Royal Academy, as did Harvey, who produced up to 100 illustrations a year (see P. J. Larkham, *Imagery of UK Postwar Reconstruction Plans*, 10-12.)

[50] Contrast for example Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, Plate 56 South Eastern Neighbourhood (Farey), with Plate 62 Mile Platting Neighbourhood (Harvey).

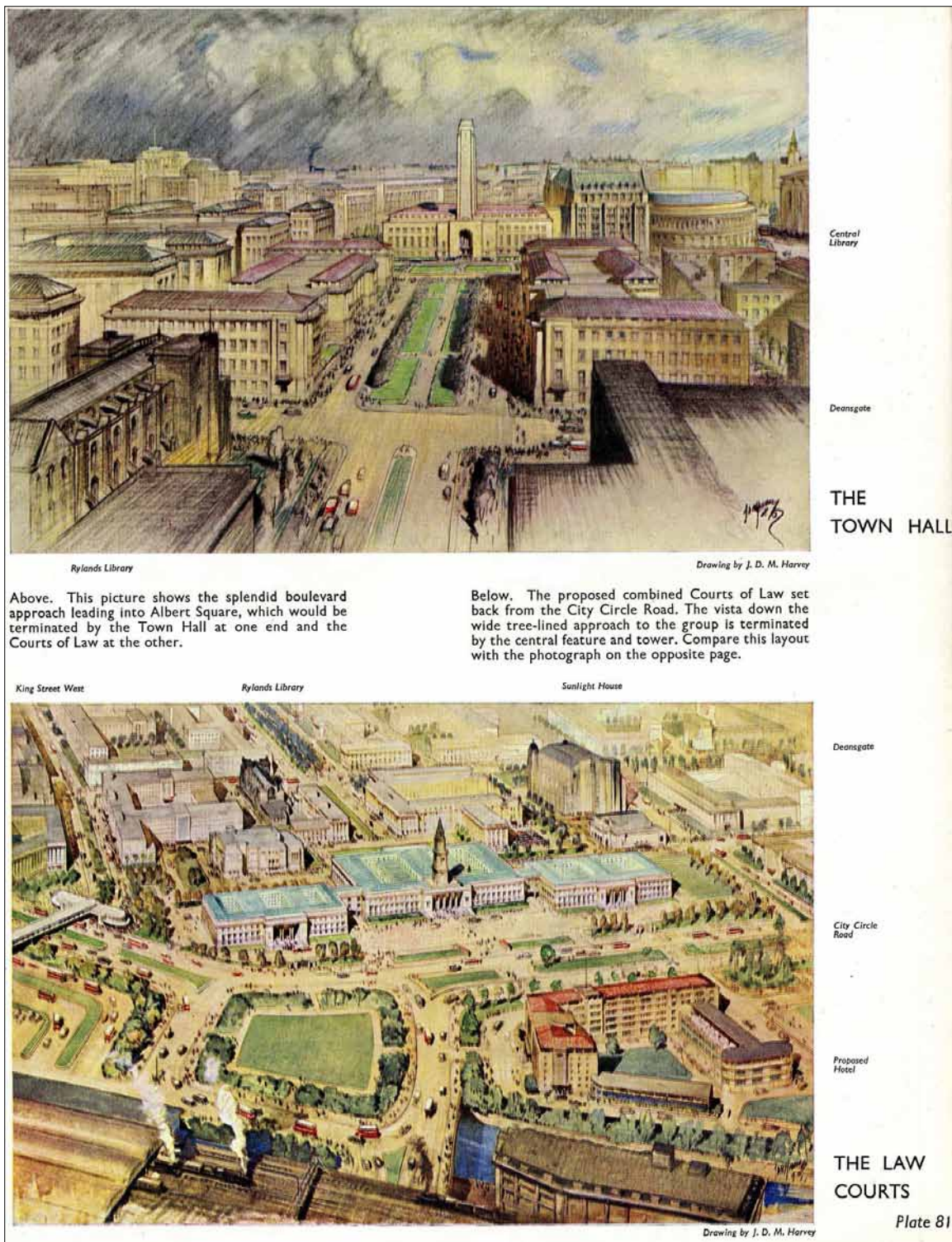[51] See P. J. Larkham, *Imagery of UK Postwar Reconstruction Plans*.

Figure 5: The Law Courts Area: proposed development and aerial photograph (Plates 81 and 82, *City of Manchester Plan*).

The following labels appear around the photographs:

**Upper photograph (THE TOWN HALL AREA):**
Piccadilly — Midland Bank — Ship Canal House — Cross Street — THE TOWN HALL AREA — Portland Street — Queen Street — Peter Street

Above. The present civic group and surrounding property. The majority of the buildings are commercial blocks, characterised by heavy over-crowding of sites. Of the three "open spaces" visible, only Piccadilly gardens can be said to provide any real amenities.

Below. An aerial photograph of the city immediately to the north of the site of the projected Courts of Law. The denseness of the development and intermixture of land-use can be clearly seen. This area suffered heavily in the blitz; between the railway and the river it is almost entirely cleared of buildings.

**Lower photograph (THE LAW COURTS AREA):**
Victoria Station — Cathedral — Site of Trinity Station — Deansgate — Albert Bridge — THE LAW COURTS AREA — Plate 82 — River Irwell
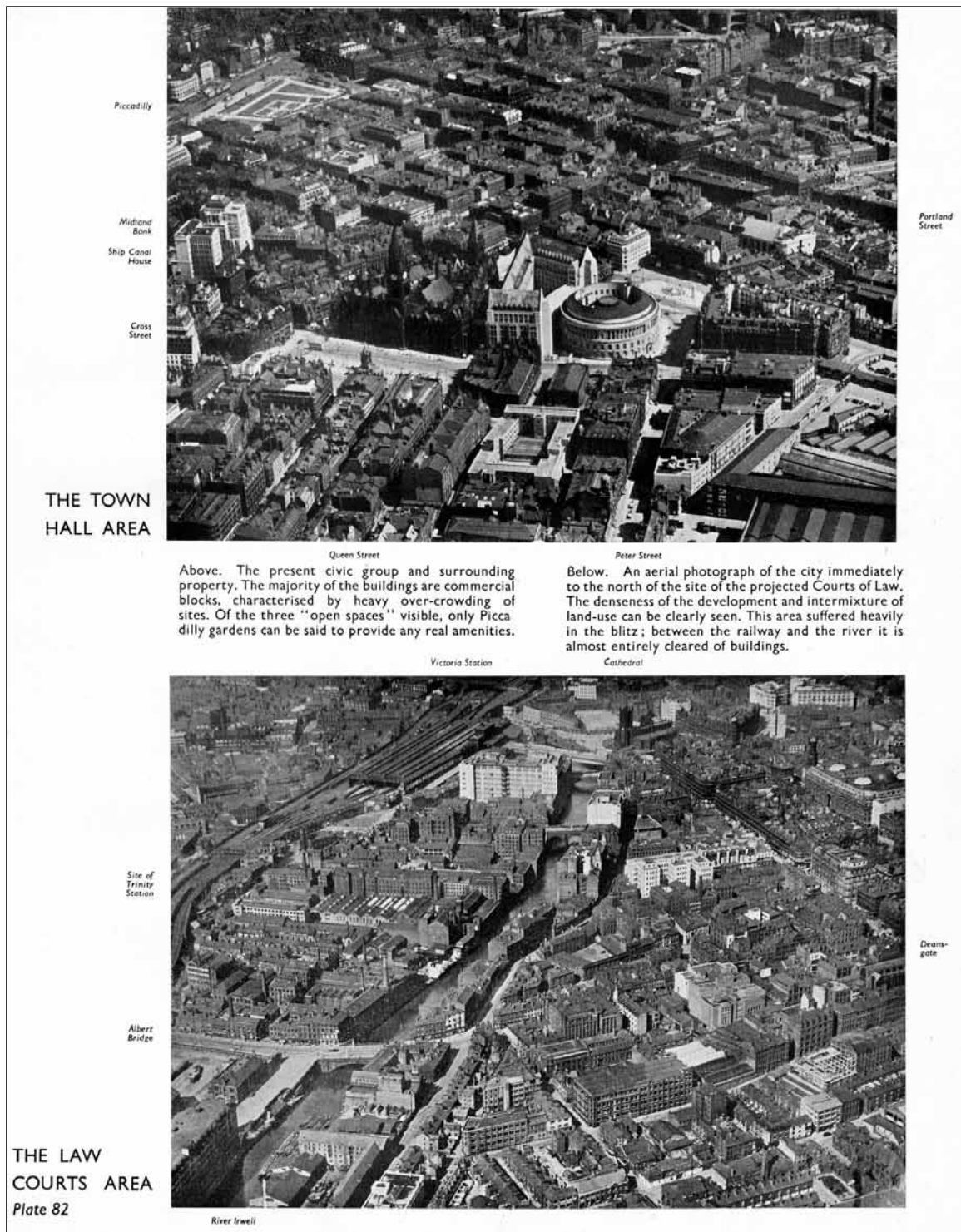
Figure 5: The Law Courts Area: proposed development and aerial photograph (Plates 81 and 82, *City of Manchester Plan*).

A final category of representations comprises line drawings and plans of idealised highway layouts, housing plans and neighbourhood facilities, which provide an indicative model of an ideal form, instead of an actual plan, or an artistic rendering. Road widths and capacities are shown in striking sections through new traffic arteries (Plate 20). Line drawings are also interspersed with the text and often create a striking impact, notably the full-page diagrams of house types (diagrams 20-21 on pages 124-5). These drawings often appear under the name of the City Architect G. Noel Hill, and even when they are clearly in the form of maps, are classified as diagrams in the Plan contents. Images of models made by the City Architect's or City Housing Department are reproduced in the plan, notably in chapters on housing, and Wythenshawe and have the largest impact of this kind of material (Figure 6).

To understand the different roles played by this rich variety of visual material requires: exploring how visual representations were deployed; an historical appreciation of the context in which they were published; a focus on their power in the *City of Manchester Plan*; a consideration of the relationship of the report to the planning process; and an awareness of the professional vision that they facilitated. It needs to be grounded in a critical approach to visual representations.
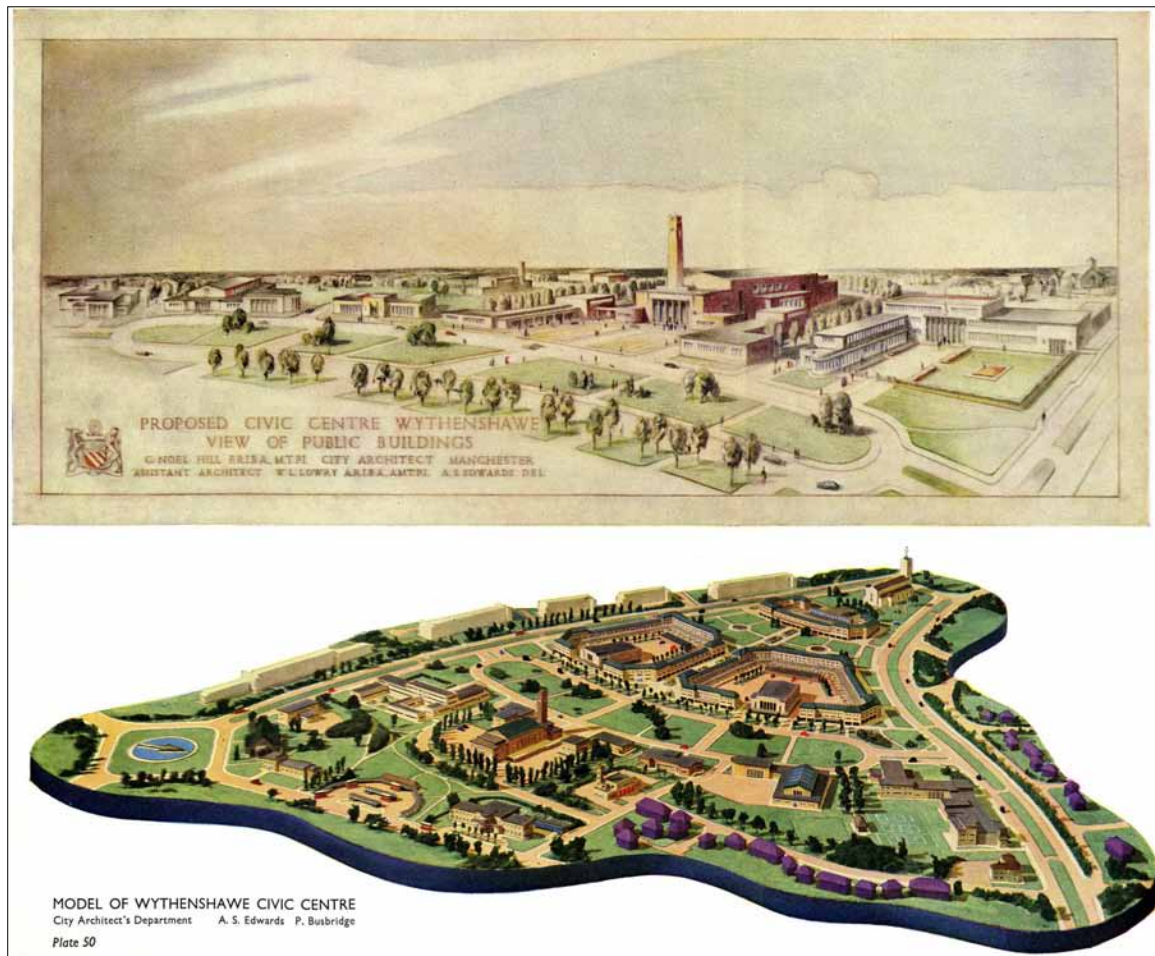
Figure 6: Model of Wythenshawe Civic Centre (Plate 50, *City of Manchester Plan*).

## 5. Interpreting the visual imagination in the *City of Manchester Plan*

"The orderly arrangement and graphic portrayal of these data through maps, statistical charts and photographs are important aids in clearing the mind of confusion, partial observation and misleading generalisation formed on the basis of insufficient evidence." Lewis Mumford[52].

It is salient, we think, that the *City of Manchester Plan* should be poised between full colour endpapers depicting an historical past and an imagined future. The redrawing of Manchester in between these endpapers is conveyed through separated chapters of text, accompanied by complex assemblage of imagery audited above. Visual representations in the document can be read as exercising paradoxical roles. On the one hand they might be designed and employed for a specific purpose: visual illustrations communicates information about the vision, but at the same time these images reinforce and reify the policy detail that will bring about the transformation. The quote from Mumford at the head of this session certainly emphasises the connotative power of imagery of the city: its orderly arrangement, apparently comprehensive, appropriately classified and graphic portrayal provide the *evidence* and, what is more, this incontrovertible visual evidence can be seductive and interpolate readers. On the other hand it could be argued that some of the illustrations were included for more prosaic reasons - to make the text of the plan more palatable, or to make the work long enough to appear to be result of serious deliberation, or simply because they had already been compiled and were available to use[53]. There is little evidence for how the City of Manchester Plan was *actually* deployed in the years since it was published, or record of the practices that called this particular combination into being, or indeed of the social work the plan achieved after publication, particularly for audiences beyond elite professions in the Town Hall. So

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[52] Quoted in Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, page 15.

[53] Larkham, *Imagery of UK Postwar Reconstruction Plans*, suggests some illustrations in this genre plans were "seemingly to break up blocks of text, or to fill gaps at the end of sections or chapters", page 30.

interpretation depends upon a careful textual and contextual analysis of some of the materials themselves.

The *City of Manchester Plan* strives to convey a sense of scientific precision, but it is also laden with impressionistic and artistic generalization about future possibilities. It serves as a technical framework for professionals, but also as a persuasive outwards-facing text, selling the possibilities to its more public audience, including politicians with power to fund its projects. This image of the future is established through an evocative combination of media[54]. Here we focus on the three most prominent visual representations: the photographic, cartographic and the hand-drawn perspective drawings.

### *Photography*

Photographic representations in the *City of Manchester Plan* contribute significantly to this image of the city. Photography inherently fixes and freezes the mobile world, naturalizing culture and reifying a single viewpoint, in an apparently mechanical and mass-produced process. The technology of the camera purports to capture reality, to serve as evidence, acting as a mirror to the world[55]. However, contemporary culture attaches diverse social meanings to photographs, which according to context are enrolled into many different tasks: evoking memories, allowing us to record events, calling on us to act, tantalizing us, giving us pleasure, shocking us, persuading us and attracting our attention[56]. People respond differently to photographs depending on subject matter, composition, format and genre, but also according to audience and context: a single photograph can mean different things to different people, serve many different purposes, and will be seen in very different

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[54] It has been argued that image building is an essential component to the development of new discursive and institutional framings of the city (see M. Neumann, 'Images as institution builders: metropolitan planning in Madrid', *European Planning Studies,* 4 (1996), 293–312).

[55] See T. Wheeler, *Phototruth or Photofiction?: Ethics and Media Imagery in the Digital Age*, (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002).

[56] For an overview of the different roles photography can play see C. Perkins, 'Photography.' In I. Douglas, R. J. Huggett and C. Perkins (eds.) *Companion Encyclopaedia to Geography,* (London: Routledge, 2007), 589-605.

contexts. Photographic image travel, representing places and people and potentially serve as a powerful unifying and evidential force[57]. Almost all of the critical literature suggests scholars need to attend carefully to the roles photographs play in visual culture, by focusing on more than just a photographic product, and considering process and practice[58].

In the *City of Manchester Plan* photographic image are markedly homogeneous. Their composition, time-frame and subjects are consistent throughout the report. They represent examples of the built fabric of the city, carefully classified, organized and captioned to support the rhetoric of the words in an adjacent chapter. People are almost always absent from these views. Their stark black and white austerity contrasts strongly with other coloured imagery in the *City of Manchester Plan*. On the one hand the choice of black and white might reflect war time constraints and costs of colour printing, but the political impact reinforces a view of a rather grim, monochrome past and present, when set against the vibrant colourful planned futures on offer here. So the selection of imagery and its anonymous presentation on the page reinforces the rhetoric of change underpinning the whole report.

*Cartographic representations*

Cartographic representations comprise visually the most significant element in the *City of Manchester Plan*, as they do in urban planning discourse more generally. It has frequently been argued that mapping as a medium tends to connote mimetic, and immutable representations of the world[59]. Maps in this view do their social work in part by masking the interests that bring them into being, and present the world as scientific statements of fact, carrying fixed messages of externalised control into new

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[57] J. M. Schwartz and J. R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996).

[58] See L. Wells (ed.), *Photography: A Critical Introduction,* (London: Routledge, 2000).

[59] See J. Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-coded World*, (London: Routledge, 2004).

terrain, and used a practical tool, part of modernist governance[60]. People as a consequence all too readily believe what they see a map. The social selectivity of the map's (re)presentation of the space is hidden also by cartographic techniques that appear to be technical activities, the authorship the map becomes anonymous, in order for the image to do its work. However, this immutable theorisation of mapping is increasingly being challenged in recent rethinking of the medium[61]. Instead of focusing on the map as an object, with certain fixed ontic quantities, it has been argued that mapping might be more productively seen as a process, in which technical knowledge in the form of a map is called into being to achieve a social task and ontology is always uncertain. Immutable meaning in this view does not reside in the objects, but rather in the ways the objects become part of a process given different meanings according to the social network through which it circulates. So a contextual understanding is required, and the question in relation to the maps in *City of Manchester Plan* is how cartographic images contribute to the discourses embodied in planning practices, to the wider role of mapping in Britain in 1945, and to evolving notions of the urban space and the extent of governmental action.

To date there has been little research into the practices of planners and their maps. Stefanie Dühr suggests planners deploy mapping that is both scientific and artistic, with the larger scales offering more precise scientific views, whist smaller scales are more impressionistic[62]. Peter Moll's work on German regional planning suggests three very different types of cartographic product: base maps, mapping for public participation and maps laying down planning policies[63]. In the *City of Manchester Plan* these different roles overlap; chapter 3, for example, highlights the

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[60] For development of the notion of the map as an immutable mobile see B. Latour, *Science in Action*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

[61] See R. Kitchin and M. Dodge, 'Rethinking maps', *Progress in Human Geography,* 33(3) (2007), 1-14.

[62] S. Dühr, 'The form, style, and use of cartographic visualisations in European spatial planning: examples from England and Germany', *Environment and Planning A,* 36(11) (2004), 1961-89.

[63] P. Moll, 'Funktionen der Karte', in Akademie für Raumforschung und LandesPlannung (Ed.) *Aufgabe und Gestaltung von Planungskarten. Forschungs- und Sitzungsberichte* 185, (Hanover: ARL, 1991), 2-15.

use of different map scales in the collection of land use information (see pages 15-21). The base maps underpinning the smaller scale and synthetic images are, however, not themselves presented in the volume, though some were exhibited during the plan's launch[64]. More synthetic and smaller scale generalized maps are included, which exude a more authoritative voice. They propose, fix, and by coding space establish an agenda. These maps are almost all about objects or processes, not people and their power lies in this apparently neutral depiction of *things*[65]. The tone of every map in the volume is authoritative, people are off the map, or else classified into manageable and governable categories[66]. By focusing upon an objectified city, the built form can be changed and the inevitable disruption to everyday lives denied. Plans of model houses are shown[67], but the voices of people living in these houses are unheard. Roads permitting movement around the city are imagined, but people in cars, or walking along the pavement do not appear on the maps. Planning maps of the city become statements of fact, instead of authored, positioned opinions about potential futures, produced by a governing civic class. This objectified and un-emotive technical knowledge is articulated to facilitate Lewis Mumford's desire for avoiding partial observation and misunderstanding. Instead the maps purport to be complete and precise. They articulate a vision grounded in the specialist expert practices of the emerging cadre of trained of town and country planning professionals. Land use and zoning maps after all had come to embody the values of the profession during the interwar years[68]. It is the land use map that allows zoning to be established, which

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[64] See 'Manchester of the future: comprehensive exhibition of the city's re-development plan', *The Manchester Guardian* (Friday 20th July 1945), pages 3, 6 and 8.

[65] It has been argued that the power of the map lies in this objectification (see D. Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps,* (Guilford Press, New York, 2010) and O. Söderström, 'Paper cities: visual thinking in urban planning' who explores the profession abandoning social survey, and focusing instead on the built urban form.

[66] See J. Crampton, 'Cartographic rationality and the politics of geosurveillance and security', *Cartography and Geographic Information Science*, 30(2) (2003), 135-48.

[67] Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, Diagrams 20 and 21.

[68] See S. Rycroft and D. Cosgrove**, '**Mapping the modern nation: Dudley Stamp and the Land Utilisation Survey', *History Workshop Journal*, 40 (1995), 91-105.

classifies an area, and which calls the future into being. It gives planners their power over objects. They are a powerful part of the City Surveyor and Engineer's assertion of professional gaze, supporting the rhetoric of his plan, appropriately precise, but also suitably open-ended and under-specified so that a *guide* is given for possible futures, not a planned certainty[69]. The maps are separated from the interpretive and text, which frequently offers a notion, not a certainty. Nevertheless, it can sometimes be hard to tell whether the maps depict what was on the ground in 1945, or what was envisaged as a possible future. So the representational precision implied is illusory. Also at times the imaginative potential lurking in this authority cannot help leaking out. Pastel coloured and abstract maps attract the eye. They appeal and inspire the imagination, as well as suggesting scientific realism. Colours connote and emote as well as denoting. The eye is drawn to the regular patterns on the maps of 'final stages of development' of the different redevelopments, attracted by the green background: so much more appealing than the busy mass of pink *unplanned* development on the ground in the present condition maps (Figure 7).

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[69] C. Goodwin, 'Professional vision', *American Anthropologist,* 96(3) (1994), 606-33.

Figure 7: The attractive colours of planned development (Plate 59, *City of Manchester Plan*).

*Perspective drawings*

The smaller quantity of perspective drawings enrolled in the *City of Manchester Plan* work in a rather different fashion to either photographs or maps. Architectural drawing has comprised three different traditions: the orthographic, the axonometric and the perspective[70], but of the three only the perspective is deployed in the report[71]. The visual difference of these drawings, as against other materials in the work, stems from their position of the reader's viewpoint. Like maps, the authority of the representation is enhanced by the elevated view of the city[72], and it has been argued that the use of perspective drawings itself significantly impacts upon architectural practice[73]. However, unlike the map the perspective image is clearly a view from somewhere, asserting an authored positioned, and also from the unashamedly different aesthetic tradition. These are clearly artistic images, and as such without any necessary connotations of being truthful or precise. Almost all of these drawings depict a imagined future. Their sketch-like character, in some senses, avoids the inconvenience of a precise designation. The technique is deployed on a selective basis in the *City of Manchester Plan*. The city centre receives particular attention, in part because of the more monumental nature of its architecture and the greater cultural significance of the space. However, Manchester Corporation's Architects Department were more involved with the compilation of this chapter than

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[70] See I. Fraser and R. Henmi, *Envisioning Architecture: An Analysis of Drawing.* (Chichester: Wiley, 1993), for the different roles these three distinct styles facilitate.

[71] The exhibition seems to have included a much greater diversity of architectural drawings.

[72] See D. Haraway, 'Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective.' In D. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, (New York: Routledge, 1991), 183–201, for a consideration of the power conveyed by elevated vision.

[73] A. Pérez-Gómez and L. Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000) makes a similar argument for architectural drawings, to the one used by Söderström in relation to urban planners.

with the rest of the plan, which could also explain why their particular professional vision is prominently on display here[74].

## 5. Conclusions

The paper city imagined in the 1945 *City of Manchester Plan* appears strangely contrafactual when viewed with hindsight of over half a century after its publication. In some senses we are already closer to the bland imagined endpaper depicting the city centre in 2045, than to the richly articulated and visualised complexity of the 1945 urban dreams that are visualized throughout its pages. The tensions between different visual representations deployed in the report clearly contribute to the planning process. Our conclusions suggest, however, that we need to be careful in simply asserting they envisage a modernist and technocratic view of the future.

On one level the visions articulated in Nicholas' *City of Manchester Plan* clearly do offer a rationalising view of the city, articulating a very specific planned dream of the future and showing in a practical fashion how it might be brought about. Maps appear to fix and facilitate the possible futures, offering potent evidence of a vibrant, rational, possible urban life. Photographic images document the dramatic contrast of the colourless, often derelict and dirty unplanned past. Artistic perspectives encourage a belief in their imagined possibilities. Each reflects the power of local civic vision and the status of specialist practitioners. Their juxtaposition in the plan highlights differences in these professional visual practices, but together they reinforce the narrative power of the whole process.

However the imagery in the plan is also empowering and inspirational. Whilst residents of Manchester themselves had no real voice in the plan the whole of its rhetoric is directed towards them and the possibilities for better lives that might be realised through the planning process. Impressive numbers visited the exhibition. The colourful mapping released in a time of austerity allowed readers of the *City of Manchester Plan* to fantasize about the future, to make hope more real. Models of the proposals in the exhibition make it all seem more realisable. The utopian sentiments

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[74] A.P. Lewis, *A History of Sheffield's Central Area Planning Schemes, 1936-1952*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, School of Architecture, University of Sheffield, 2006).

running through the text are emboldened by artistic rendering of the future city, which encouraged a belief in the virtues of city planning[75].

The illusion of precision in the mapping, and of ambiguous dream-like perspective drawings at times come together to reveal a conflicted process in the publication. This is particularly the case in the wholesale re-planning of the city centre, where scientific and engineering-led specifications for separation of buildings, and for road construction, contrast markedly with impressionistic architectural proposals for specific buildings[76]. Professional architectural visions here conflict with engineering-led tabulated data, technical graphs drawings and cartographic rationality. The coloured fold out map of the city centre, in many ways the most muscular visual image in the whole volume (Figure 8) only marks out significant new public buildings in the centre, such as the so called People's Palace near Piccadilly, or the new Trinity Station and transport interchange. Elsewhere urban blocks remain unaltered. In contrast the artistic rendering of the future city centre on adjacent pages of the plan imagines a complete remaking of the city with clean, well-spaced, modern blocks replacing the unplanned, congested urban sprawl.

So instead of a simple modernist dream we have a complex multi-authored assemblage, a pragmatic compromise, deploying different visual imaginations to map out possible planned futures.

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[75] P. J. Larkham *Imagery of Postwar Reconstruction Plans*, page 30, reports that "two academics have stated to me that the single most significant factor in their entering the professions of planning and architecture…was the impression made by the colour images of new redesigned town centres in these plans".

[76] A.P. Lewis, *Ibid.*

Figure 8: City of Manchester Central Area (Plate 78, *City of Manchester Plan*).

**Acknowledgements**