Mapping the Imagined Future: The Roles of Visual Representation in the 1945 *City of Manchester Plan*

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Abstract

Visual representations have often played a crucial role in imagining future urban forms. In the aftermath of the Second World War, a noteworthy new genre of urban plan was published in Britain, most deploying seductively optimistic illustrations of ways forward not only for the reconstruction of bomb-damaged towns and cities but also for places left largely undamaged. This paper assesses the contribution of visual elements in this process with a detailed case study of the maps, statistical charts, architectural drawings and photographs enrolled into the 1945 *City of Manchester Plan*. The cultural production of these visual representations is evaluated. Our analysis interprets the form, symology and active work of different imagery in the process of reimagining Manchester, but also assesses the role of these images 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 *Plan* as a whole.

Keywords: *City of Manchester Plan*; planning; visual practices; mapping; Manchester; architectural drawings; photographs; futurity

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: 'Considering 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 different contexts of the 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,

[1] Ola Söderström, 'Paper Cities: Visual Thinking in Urban Planning', *Cultural Geographies*, 3:3 (1996), 275.

[2] See Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); James Elkins, *The Domain of Images* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

in particular, has been reinserted into scholarly investigation, with an upsurge of interest rethinking the medium,[3] a cultural democratization of everyday mapping practice[4] and increasing concern for the complex affective power of map materials.[5] Yet there is little analysis that has tested out the validity of Söderström's direct claim, or unpacked in greater detail *how* different visual materials work in urban planning documents, or in the practice of reimagining cities.

Meanwhile, there is an emerging scholarly concern for investigating what might be termed 'counterfactual geographies', alternatives that never came about.[6] Gilbert and Lambert suggest that disciplines as diverse as the history of science and technology, global historical studies, geopolitics, international relations, philosophy and historical geography are embracing counterfactual 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 counterfactual, 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, is a plan at once strongly visual yet also compellingly counterfactual.[9] Far from being a turgid, mundane planner's report to Council, it is lavishly produced, especially given the constraints of the time. This hard-bound, dust-jacketed, colour-illustrated volume, approaching 400 pages in length, was explicitly devised as an elaborate envisioning of post-war planning of the city, and it 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 unco-ordinated Victorian development with a comprehensive, rationally planned, scientifically enacted modern form. Its primary objective was 'to enable every inhabitant of this city to enjoy real health of body

[3] See *Rethinking Maps: New Frontiers in Cartographic Theory*, eds Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchin and Chris Perkins, Routledge Studies in Human Geography 28 (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2009).

[4] See Chris Perkins, 'Community Mapping', *Cartographic Journal*, 44:2 (2007), 127–37; Sarah Elwood, 'Thinking outside the Box: Engaging Critical Geographic Information Systems Theory, Practice and Politics in Human Geography', *Geography Compass*, 4:1 (2010), 45–60.

[5] See Mei-Po Kwan, 'Affecting Geospatial Technologies: Toward a Feminist Politics of Emotion', *Professional Geographer*, 59:1 (2007), 22–34.

[6] David Gilbert and David Lambert, 'Counterfactual Geographies: Worlds That Might Have Been', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36:3 (2010), 245–52.

[7] Ibid. 252.

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

[9] Rowland Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan: Prepared for the City Council* (Norwich: Printed and published for the Manchester Corporation by Jarrold & Sons, 1945).

Plate 1 'City of Manchester: Central Area' (1945 *City of Manchester Plan*, Plate 78). Presented as an oversized fold-out page, this maps out potential land use in the strategic centre of the city with a bold remaking of the urban core, fringed by a newly built ring road.

and health of mind'.[10] Overcrowded and unsanitary terraced housing is swept away and replaced with model cottages 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 radiate out to garden suburbs and new, separate industrial estates. A raft of new social, educational and cultural facilities is rendered in architectural drawings, ready for building in concrete and stone. The city centre is remade into a logical layout with proper zoning by function (**Plate 1**). Air pollution is remedied. The vast Wythenshawe housing estate is lionized as a bold civic enterprise, Manchester's very own low-density Garden City.[11] The paper landscape of the *City of Manchester Plan* imagines with a tremendously bold vision that bears little relation to what emerged during the lengthy and stuttering recovery from post-war austerity. The attempts

[10] Ibid. 1.
[11] Derick Deakin, *Wythenshawe: The Story of a Garden City* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1989).

at mass public housing turned out to be 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 gridlocked in the messy political practicalities of regulating post-war change,[12] but the *Plan* stands as a fascinating monument to counterfactual imagination, a utopian aspiration for what might have been.

The *City of Manchester Plan* has so far received scant academic attention, despite a large number of published studies of other comparable post-war plans and reconstruction reports.[13] Moreover, the role of visual materials in these kinds of documents has also been strangely absent in the scholarly analysis.[14] 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 in the *Plan* and the roles they played in its discursive counterfactual imagination of the city's future. The paper has three main goals. First, it is an argument for a critical interpretation, a 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 recognize the emancipatory potential of visual media, as well as their acknowledged capacity to persuade, exert power and in some sense provoke action. Finally, the case study of a single policy document 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.

In order 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] For a consideration of planning policy over this period see Ted Kitchen, 'The Future of Development Plans: Reflections on Manchester's Experiences 1945–1995', *Town Planning Review*, 67:3 (1996), 331–53; John J. Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester: An Architectural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Manchester City Council Planning Department, *Manchester: 50 Years of Change. Post-War Planning in Manchester* (London: HMSO, 1995).

[13] See Peter J. Larkham and Keith D. Lilley, *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow': British Reconstruction Planning, 1939–1952: An Annotated Bibliography* (Pickering: Inch's Books, 2001), in which the authors identify over 150 published pieces of research about these plans, noting how the 'great plans' of the 'great planners' (such as those by Patrick Abercrombie for London and Plymouth) have received the most attention. In this literature there are several passing references made to the *City of Manchester Plan* but, as a whole, it has surprisingly not been examined in depth.

[14] Peter J. Larkham, *The Imagery of the UK Post-War Reconstruction Plans*, Working Paper 88, School of Planning and Housing, University of Central England (London: UCE in Birmingham, School of Planning and Housing, 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 plans has been almost completely taken for granted as merely displaying data rather than making a proposition about space.

The Post-War Reconstruction Plans as a Genre

Throughout Great Britain in the period from 1941 to the early 1950s, a series of plans was 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 terms of timing, style, thematic context, goals and institutional framing, these plans represent a quite distinct genre. In the region of ninety were formally published, some being compiled by in-house teams and others with the assistance of hired planning consultants, and in total around 230 different plans were completed before the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act prescribed a much more utilitarian orthodoxy of terse, written framework statements.[15] Smaller-scale, unpublished plans are still being tracked down in local archives.[16] The fashion for their publication peaked with the end of hostilities in 1945.

These plans brought together richly imagined and thematically organized narratives for urban futures. Their form was not prescribed by legislation, and their design and content reflect local factors and the ideological norms of a small elite profession of architects, engineers and planners. Their scale varies substantially, as do 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 the ambitions of the corporations and the egos of their leading politicians. This is evident when one compares the Manchester *Plan* to the one published by the neighbouring town of Stockport, or to that produced by Sheffield City Council.[17] 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 a historic core to the town or city survived, the plans often seem to have reflected a nascent concern with preservation, as well

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[15] In *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow'* Larkham and Lilley provide a systematic listing of plans identified to date and a useful critical introduction to their genesis. See also Peter J. Larkham, 'Selling the Future City: Images in UK Post-War Reconstruction Plans', in *Man-Made Future: Planning, Education and Design in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain*, ed. Iain Boyd Whyte (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2007), 99–120.

[16] We suspect that there is an unpublished reconstruction plan from this period for the City of Salford, since its preparation by City Engineer Albert Walker is mentioned in newspaper articles of the period (see, for example, 'Replanning Salford: A Riverside Boulevard', *Manchester Guardian*, 15 April 1944, 3), but we have not yet located it in the archives.

[17] Thomas Sharp, *County Borough of Stockport: Town Centre Replanned* (Stockport: Stockport Corporation, 1950) is a rather insubstantial sixteen-page booklet. The major visuals are the work of planning consultant Sharp. *Sheffield Replanned: A Report, with Plates, Diagrams and Illustrations, Setting Out the Problems in Replanning the City and the Proposals of the Sheffield Town Planning Committee* ([Sheffield: Town Planning Committee, 1945]) is a more substantial publication and is illustrated with some colour plates, but it is the poor cousin in comparison to the *City of Manchester Plan*. See the analysis in Alan Lewis, 'Planning through Conflict: The Genesis of Sheffield's Post-War Reconstruction Plan', *Planning Perspectives*, 24:3 (2009), 381–3.

as redevelopment, and often a deep-rooted 'Garden City ethos' that pervaded much of the planning profession.[18] Elsewhere, modernist aspirations predominate, with schemes for new shopping precincts, mass social housing, ring roads and remade town centres[19] (perhaps most sensationally asserted in the *City of Manchester Plan* by the counterfactual replacement of the Victorian neo-Gothic Town Hall with a smaller utilitarian block).

In the immediate aftermath of their publication, scholarly and professional com-mentators tended to regard the plans as a response to the direct need to reconstruct the bombed cities physically, and early historiographies of post-war planning have scripted their publication as an opportunity seized by a newly emergent breed of local planners to 'improve' their areas.[20] 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. Thus it is increasingly accepted that the aftermath of war encouraged what was already a powerful discourse for change, and paved the way for a more rational and scientific planned approach to the development of British cities.[21]

Broader intellectual contexts of the plans have been theorized in many differ-ent fashions. A number of useful historical studies, for example, explore the plans as reflections of heroic and idealistic visions of 'great' planners.[22] 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.[23] 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 socialist schemes, merely one set of actors locked in a complex political

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[18] See Peter J. Larkham, 'The Place of Urban Conservation in the UK Reconstruction Plans of 1942–1952', *Planning Perspectives*, 18:3 (2003), 295–324; John Pendlebury, 'Planning the Historic City: Reconstruction Plans in the United Kingdom in the 1940s', *Town Planning Review*, 74:4 (2003), 371–93.

[19] See, for example, Andrew Higgott, 'Birmingham: Building the Modern City', in *The Modern City Revisited*, ed. Thomas Deckker (London: Spon, 2000), 150–66.

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

[21] See Larkham and Lilley, *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow'*; Michael 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.

[22] See, for example, Philip 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.

[23] Junichi Hasegawa, 'The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction in 1940s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10:2 (1999), 137–61.

mesh.[24] Many had been educated in the early decades of the twentieth century, when the pervasive Garden City mentality, with its paternalistic style of population management, still carried considerable weight in the profession. Furthermore, the actual compilation and possible enactment of reconstruction plans involved a range of actors, 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.[25] Highway engineers and city surveyors competed for resources with architects and public health officials. In the plans, artistic visions vied for space with photographs, statistics from local surveys and detailed maps compiled in drawing offices.

Noteworthy local empirical work, informed by actor-network approaches, is starting to trace the inscriptions that 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.[26] 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 in the scholarly literature relating to reconstruction planning.[27] 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 aspirant and richly varied illustrations to stroke the politicians' egos.[28] 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

[24] Nick Tiratsoo, 'The Reconstruction of Blitzed British Cities, 1945–55: Myths and Reality', *Contemporary British History*, 14:1 (2000), 27–44.

[25] Peter J. Larkham, 'The Cost of Planning for Reconstruction', *Planning History*, 27:1–2 (2005), 20–6; Peter J. Larkham, 'People, Planning and Place: The Roles of Client and Consultants in Reconstructing Post-War Bilston and Dudley', *Town Planning Review*, 77:5 (2006), 557–82. Stockport's plan, for example, was prepared by Thomas Sharp for a fee of 2,500 guineas; Charles Reilly was appointed for one year at a fee of 1,000 guineas to produce a plan for Birkenhead (Larkham and Lilley, *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow'*, 5, 23).

[26] See Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay, 'Vision, Vested Interest and Pragmatism: Who Re-Made Britain's Blitzed Cities?', *Planning Perspectives*, 22:4 (2007), 417–41; Urlan Wannop and Gordon E. Cherry, 'The Development of Regional Planning in the United Kingdom', *Planning Perspectives*, 9:1 (1994), 29–60.

[27] Numerous case studies explore empirical practice on the ground in particular places. See, for example, Patricia L. Garside, 'The Significance of Post-War London Reconstruction Plans for East End Industry', *Planning Perspectives*, 12:1 (1997), 19–36; John Pendlebury, 'Reconciling History with Modernity: 1940s Plans for Durham and Warwick', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 31:3 (2004), 331–48; Alan Lewis, 'A History of Sheffield's Central Area Planning Schemes, 1936–1952' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Sheffield, 2006).

[28] Peter J. Larkham and Keith D. Lilley, 'Plans, Planners and City Images: Place Promotion and Civic Boosterism in British Reconstruction Planning', *Urban History*, 30:2 (2003), 183–205.

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. The concrete policies that followed from the plans, however, also seem to have reflected tensions over scale, where local action embodied in a city plan was often constrained by structures and schemes scripted in regional documents[29] and in national frameworks driven from Whitehall.[30] In Manchester, for example, there were also two regional plans that were drawn up in concert with the city-level plan (see below). 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 the plans is important if one is to comprehend how and why so few of these 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,[31] and also taking into account the memories of those who experienced the redevelopment they called into being.[32] In the context of the *City of Manchester Plan*, it may well be useful to consider the linked public exhibition (see **Plate 2**, discussed below) and a Corporation-commissioned 'information' film released in 1946, *A City Speaks*, that reflects on many planning themes.[33]

The visual representations deployed in reconstruction plans are conventionally read as modernist symbols of control, with their sanitized and depopulated visions of urbanity.[34] Rob Bartram and Sarah Shobrook, for example, suggest the planning process they envisaged drew strongly on metaphors and imagery of medical science, with improvements described in terms of diagnosis, treatments and cures of an ailing urban 'body'.[35] Others develop this anatomic analogy and explore the diagramming of the modern city as reflecting cybernetic modes of control, part of an

[29] See Stephen Essex and Mark 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*, 76:3 (2005), 239–64.

[30] Peter Malpass, 'Wartime Planning for Post-War Housing in Britain: The Whitehall Debate, 1941–5', *Planning Perspectives*, 18:2 (2003), 177–96. Major national initiatives such as the Barlow Report (1940) and the Uthwatt Report (1942) also strongly influenced local practice. See Barry Cullingworth and Vincent Nadin, *Town and Country Planning in the UK*, 13th edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

[31] Keith D. Lilley, 'On Display: Planning Exhibitions as Civic Propaganda or Public Consultation?', *Planning History*, 25:3 (2003), 3–8.

[32] Phil Hubbard, Lucy Faire and Keith Lilley, 'Contesting the Modern City: Reconstruction and Everyday Life in Post-War Coventry', *Planning Perspectives*, 18:4 (2003), 377–97.

[33] *A City Speaks* (Films of Fact/Paul Rotha for Manchester City Council, 1946), black-and-white promotional film, with sound, 16mm, run time: 64 mins 16 secs. Copies are available from the North West Film Archive: see <www.nwfa.mmu.ac.uk>, accessed 23 April 2012.

[34] Peter J. Larkham, 'Remaking Cities: Images, Control, and Postwar Replanning in the United Kingdom', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 24:5 (1997), 741–59.

[35] Rob Bartram and Sarah Shobrook, 'Body Beautiful: Medical Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Urban Britain in the 1940s', *Landscape Research*, 26:2 (2001), 119–35.

MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT PLANNING EXHIBITION - 1945
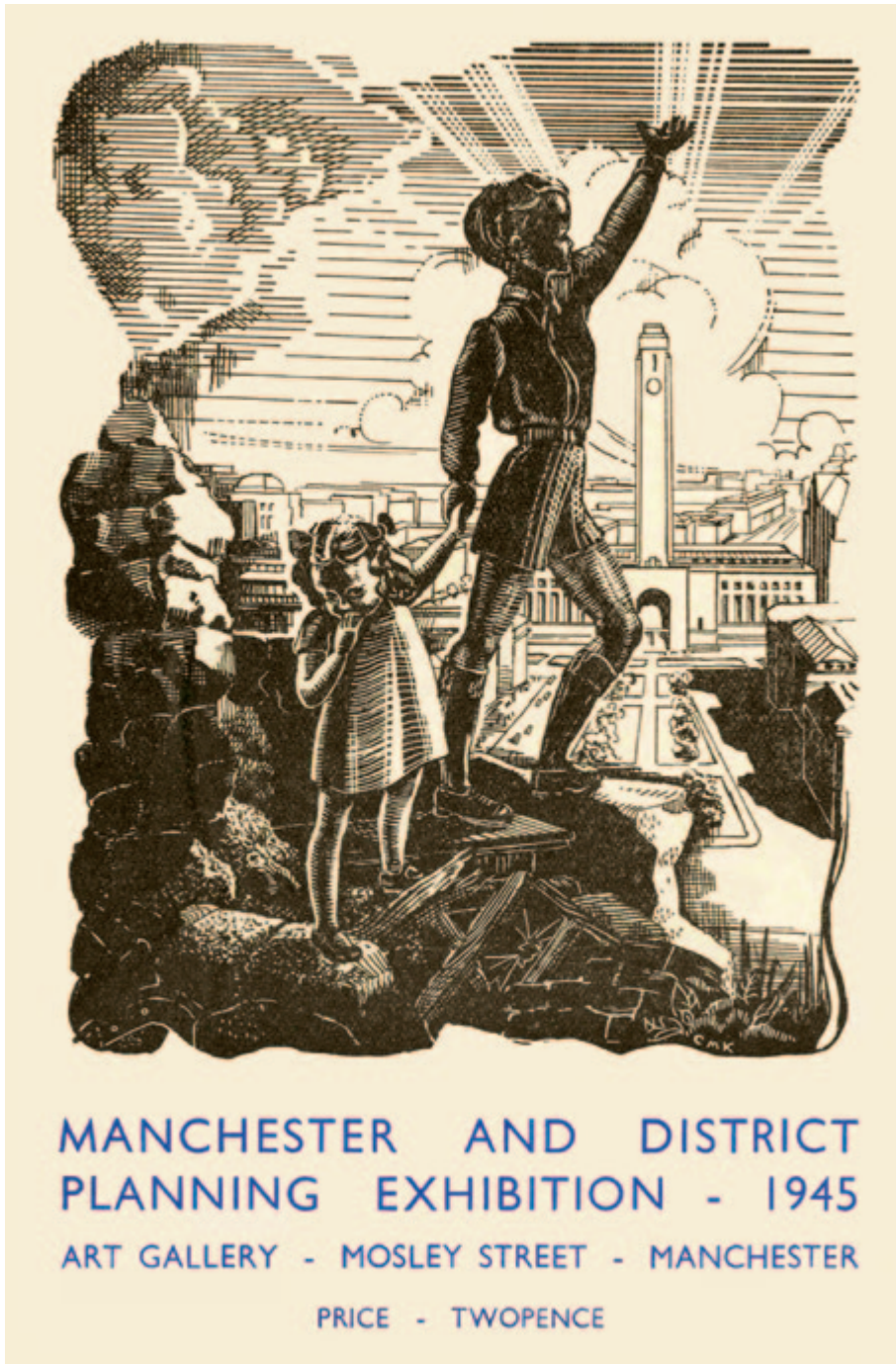**ART GALLERY - MOSLEY STREET - MANCHESTER**
PRICE - TWOPENCE

Plate 2 The front cover of the visitor brochure produced for the planning exhibition held in Manchester, linked to the release of the 1945 *Plan*. Reproduced courtesy of Richard Brook, Manchester School of Architecture.

enveloping Foucaldian system of biopolitical regulation.[36] Yet interestingly, these same cybernetic metaphors have also been reread 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.[37]

The *City of Manchester Plan*

> In this replanning we shall remember the high reputation that Manchester holds in the realms 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.[38]

Almost all published research suggests that 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 and civic context of the *City of Manchester Plan*. Its ethos clearly reflects a desire to remake the city, resonating in many ways with reformist projects of the inter-war period by local intellectuals and liberal politicians.[39] 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.[40] 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.[41]

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

[36] Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose, 'Governing Cities: Notes on the Spatialisation of Virtue', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 17:6 (1999), 737–60.

[37] Richard Hornsey, '"Everything is made of atoms": The Reprogramming of Space and Time in Post-War London', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 34:1 (2008), 94–117.

[38] Alderman Leonard B. Cox, Lord Mayor of Manchester, 'We Plan a Fairer City'. This statement was reproduced in *Our Blitz: The Daily Dispatch and Evening Chronicle Record in Story and Picture of the German Bombing Attacks on the Greater Manchester Area . . . Red Sky over Manchester* (Manchester: Kemsley Newspapers, [*c*.1944]), penultimate page.

[39] See, for example, Ernest Darwin Simon and John Inman, *The Rebuilding of Manchester* (London: Longmans, Green, 1935); Alfred P. Simon, *Manchester Made Over* (London: P.S. King & Son, 1936).

[40] Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, iii. Lord Reith was the Minister responsible for works, buildings and planning from 1940 to 1942, and he made similar public speeches in a number of cities suffering bombing, including Coventry and Plymouth. See Ian McIntyre, 'Reith, John Charles Walsham, First Baron Reith (1889–1971)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, January 2011 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31596>, accessed 23 April 2012.

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

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 wider urban planning contexts, and somewhat later, in 1947, a larger-scale regional report was prepared under the aegis of regional planning committees.[42] All three reports were conceived and published under the authorship of Rowland Nicholas,[43] share survey data and many of the same visual materials, and were largely compiled by the same technical team working from the Manchester City Surveyor and Engineer's Department, with significant assistance from the City Architect and the Housing Director's Department. Of this trilogy of plans, Gwyndaf Williams comments, 'prepared under common direction at a time of extreme difficulties, [they] remain today an impressive attempt to construct a logical and integrated basis for shaping the development framework of an entire city region, and for its structural adjustment.'[44]

The *City of Manchester Plan* was publicly launched at a major exhibition on the first floor of the Manchester City Art Gallery in the summer of 1945 (see **Plate 2** above). The Minister of Town and County Planning came up from London to open the event on 20 July, and it received significant media coverage.[45] Arranged across ten rooms, the exhibition showcased material published in the printed *City of Manchester Plan* itself, along with additional maps, models and architectural drawings not included in the published volume, together with information about the survey methods used.[46] 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.[47] Promotional material relating to the exercise was published to coincide with the launch, including a fifty-one-page

[42] Rowland Nicholas, *The Manchester and District Regional Planning Committee Report on the Tentative Regional Planning Proposals* (Norwich: Jarrold & Sons, 1945); Rowland Nicholas and Michael J. Hellier, *South Lancashire and North Cheshire Advisory Planning Committee: An Advisory Plan* (Manchester: Advisory Planning Committee, 1947). The three plans were 'nested' together and, with increasing scale, had different thematic foci. See Gwyndaf Williams, 'City Profile: Manchester', *Cities*, 13:3 (1996), 203–12. The city plan covered around 700,000 people, the regional plan about 1.3 million people, and the extended region in the advisory plan about 3.7 million people.

[43] He was a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and 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.

[44] Williams, 'City Profile: Manchester', 207.

[45] For example, several pages of the *Manchester Guardian* for that day were devoted to it, including illustrations of the exhibits: 'Manchester of the Future: Comprehensive Exhibition of the City's Redevelopment Plan', *Manchester Guardian*, 20 July 1945, 3, 6, 8.

[46] A useful description of the exhibition, including examples of designs for public buildings not published in the *Plan* itself, is provided in 'Manchester and District Plan', *Architect and Building News*, 3 August 1945, 72–8. Some of these can also be seen in the 1946 film *A City Speaks* (see n. 33 above).

[47] By early September it was reported that some 125,000 people had seen the exhibition. See the review by Justin Blanco White, 'Manchester', *Architects' Journal: Physical Planning Supplement*, 6 September 1945, 169–72.

book, described as an abridged edition of the *City of Manchester Plan*,[48] which highlighted key themes and included the most significant visualizations from its parent volume, including six colour plates.

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 redesigning and rebuilding of the city centre itself, comprehensive housing redevelopment schemes, the moving of 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: see **Plate 1** above). The time-frame 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,[49] although a more sceptical booklet was published drawing upon a distinct religious ethos.[50] A two-day conference was held at Manchester City Art Gallery from 31 August to 1 September and included delegate visits to Wythenshawe.[51] Revised proposals were presented to the Corporation's Town Planning Committee, and in 1948 these proposals were formally approved.[52]

Assessing the Visual Representations in the *City of Manchester Plan*

The *City of Manchester Plan* comprises a handsome, dust-jacketed, hardbound volume of nearly 300 quarto pages of text and over eighty 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 total include visual representations of one kind or another, comprising eighty-three plates, thirty-one diagrams and fourteen graphs, according to the table of contents. Overall, 261 separate illustrations are included, and most of the captioned items comprise several distinct illustrations. Even both endpapers are exploited to present contrasting visual representations of the city centre. **Table 1** audits the range of visual

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[48] Rowland Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, abridged edn (Norwich: Jarrold & Sons, 1945).

[49] Reviews appeared in *Architect and Building News*, 27 July 1945, 54–7; *Architects' Journal*, 6 September 1945, 169–72; *Architectural Review*, 99:594 (June 1946), lxiv; *The Builder*, 3 August 1945, 86–90, and 14 September 1945, 212; *Building*, November 1945, 289–90; *Official Architect*, December 1945, 598–607; *Town and Country Planning*, 13:52 (1945), 163–8; *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 12:2 (1946), 32–3.

[50] Ronald Edward Taylor Allen, *Christians and the City Plan* (London: Published for the Deans and Canons of Manchester by Hodder & Stoughton, 1946).

[51] 'Conference at Manchester: 31st August and 1st September, 1945', *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, 31:6 (1945), 229–30.

[52] See *The Builder*, 13 February 1948, 187–8.

Table 1 Audit of all the visual representations in the 1945 *City of Manchester Plan*.

Title of Chapter	Photographic Illustrations	Cartographic Illustrations	Architectural Drawings	Statistical Graphs	Diagrams	Count	Pages with illustrations
1. Introduction	15	2	1			18	7
2. The 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			3	24	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	11.5
15. Redevelopment	3	15	2			20	11
16. Overspill and the Satellite Town		3		1		4	3.5
17. Abolition of Smoke	5	1				6	2
18. The City Centre	10	4	5			19	11.5
19. Conclusion						0	0
Endpapers			2			2	4
Appendix C: Highways				4		4	1.5
Appendix E: Industry					3	3	0.5
Appendix H: Housing Standards					2	2	0.5
Appendix M: The City Centre					11	11	4
Total	**112**	**73**	**30**	**20**	**26**	**261**	**115**

representations deployed in this total and tabulates their distribution throughout the report.[53]

The photograph is the most frequently used visual representation. There are 112 in total, and in ten of the nineteen chapters they are the predominant visualization in numerical terms. They are all black and white, none is printed as a full page, and 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 explicitly described or analysed in the text. For example, Chapter 10, '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 spaces for mental recreation, together with 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 organizations, not individual photographers. The majority of photographic plates apparently present images at face value, yet often in a carefully selected series of representations designed to support the rhetoric and need for change (**Plate 3**). Some, 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 the introduction and the chapters on highways and public open spaces.

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 them are presented in colour. Twenty-three maps occupy a full page, and sixteen of these are coloured. In layout most of the maps are separated from the relevant text and are tipped in as plates. Four coloured maps are printed on fold-out sheets of around A3 in size, to cover surface utilization, zoning proposals, major highways, parks and parkways, and the city centre (**Plate 1** above). Almost all 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 the larger-scale images. The

[53] There is a degree of arbitrariness in our classification: some maps are more impressionistic than others; some diagrams verge into charts; aerial photographs work as if they were maps in some instances. Nevertheless, the classification process reveals some interesting variations.
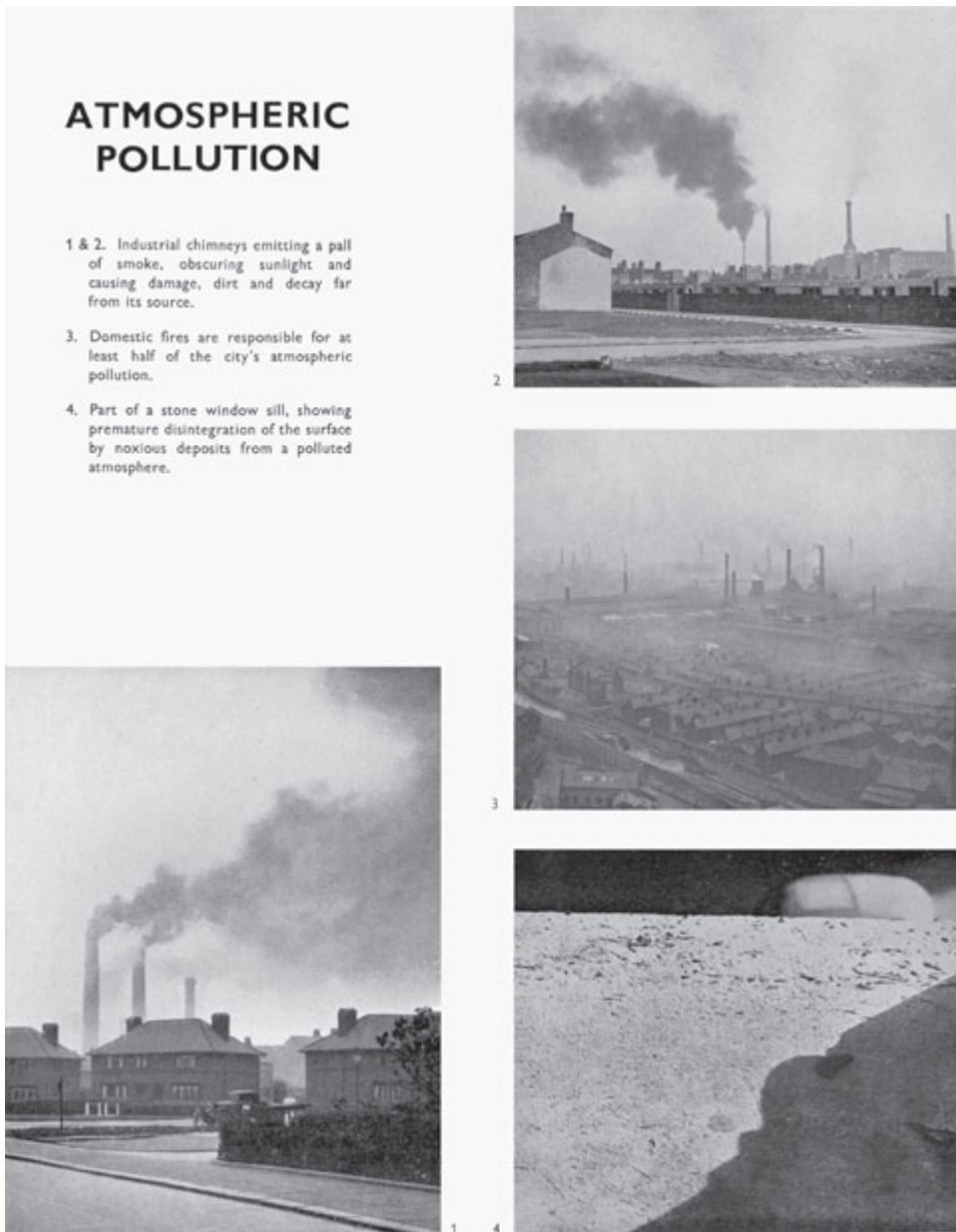
ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

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.

Plate 3   A visual narration of the problem of atmospheric pollution (1945 *City of Manchester Plan*, Plate 72).

result is a subtle but powerful visual 'silencing' of the Salford and Stretford areas from the vision of a future Manchester. Most depict either the whole area of the city, 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
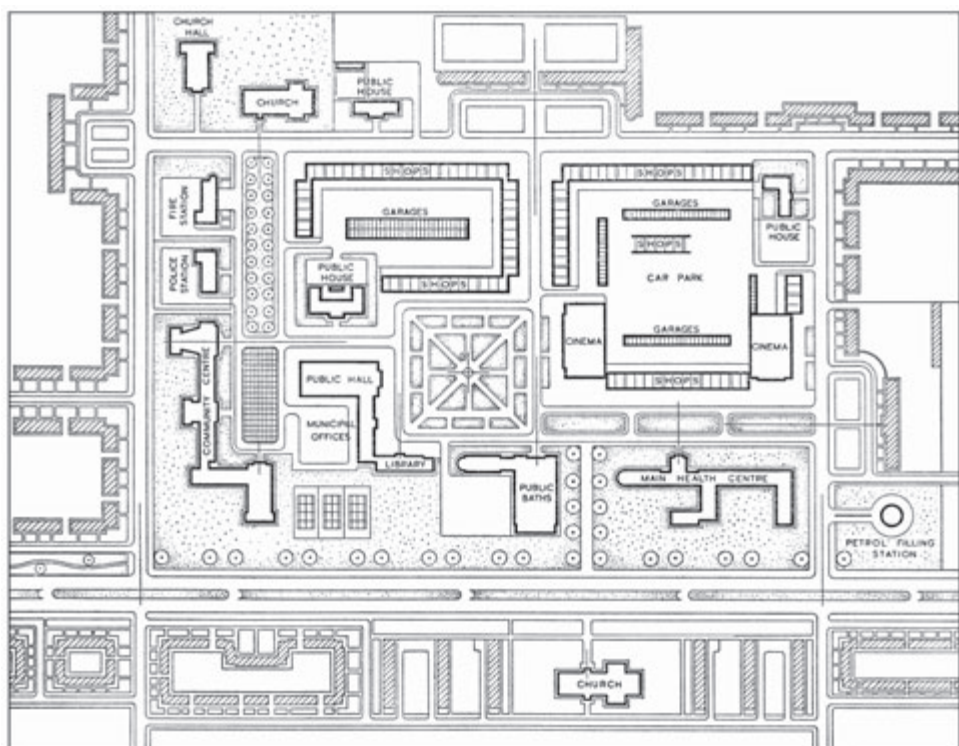
Diagram 27

G. Noel Hill, F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I.,
City Architect.

TYPICAL DISTRICT CENTRE

Plate 4 'Typical District Centre' (1945 *City of Manchester Plan*, Diagram 27).

buildings. The majority of the cartography is based on standard Ordnance Survey topographic mapping of the time, although copyright permission is not quoted. There is significant variation, however, in the use of colour, temporal range, thematic focus and cartographic design. A few black-and-white maps are integrated with the text (and classified in the *Plan*'s table of contents 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 (**Plate 4**). 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, with the notable exception of the front endpaper depicting Manchester during its Civil War siege.

There is a more uneven distribution of maps across themes in the *Plan* than is the case for the photographs. Nearly half the maps in the volume appear in the chapters focusing on highways, inner area residential 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
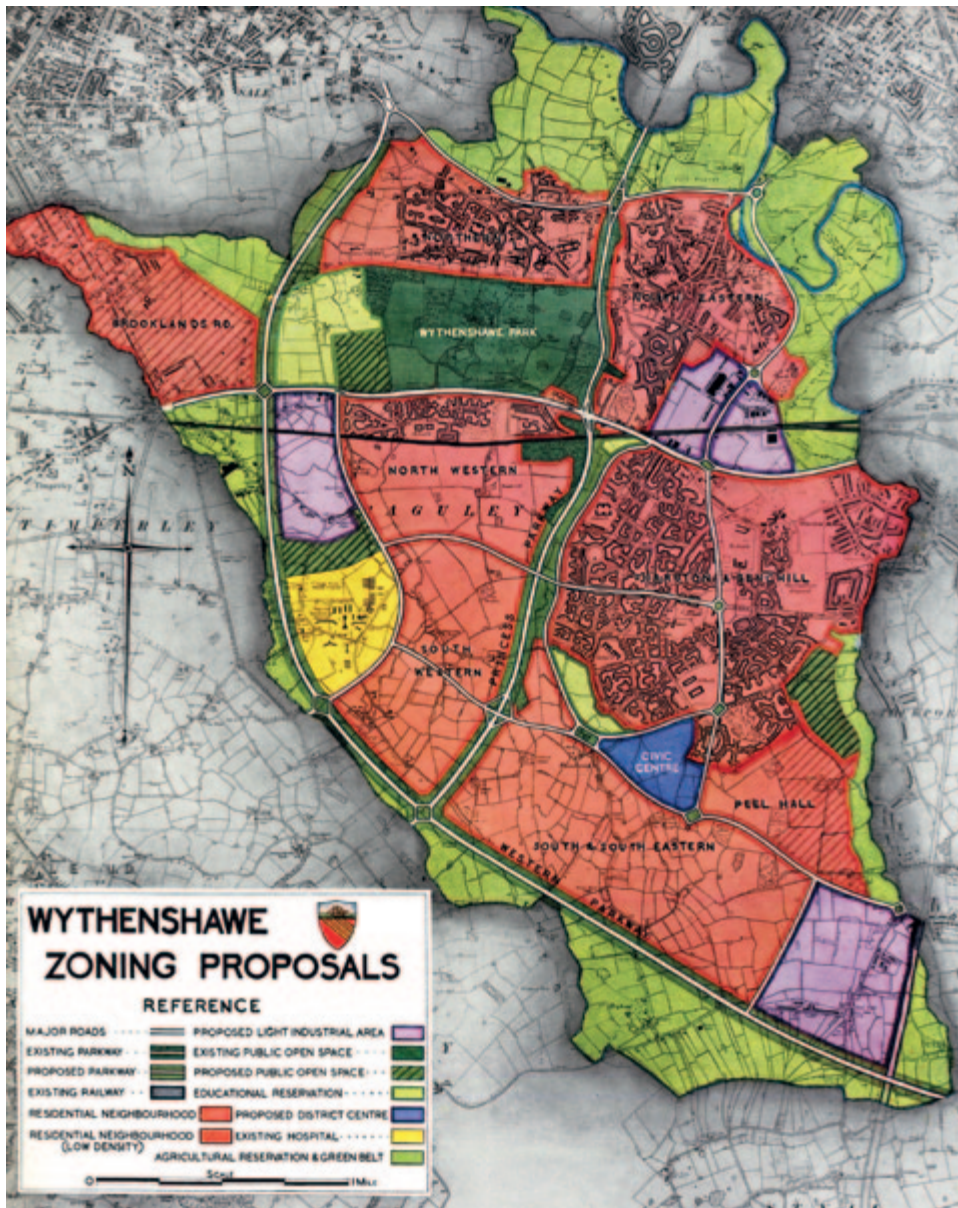
Plate 5 ' Wythenshawe Zoning Proposals' (1945 *City of Manchester Plan*, Plate 47).

proposals often carefully colour coded (**Plate 5**). A few eye-catching and unusual thematic displays stand out, such as the divided pie charts showing types of build-ing user in the central area (the *Plan*'s Plate 76, for example). Some of the most visually evocative maps, however, are those that envisage the future form of ele-ments of the built environment, notably the future of the road infrastructure, and the case-study areas, where more detail of the planned developments is shown: the

Plate 6 The Town Hall (6a above) and Law Courts (6b opposite) areas: the proposed development is narrated visually through high-quality colour architectural drawings and black-and-white aerial photographs (1945 *City of Manchester Plan*, compiled from Plates 81 and 82).

city centre, Wythenshawe, and designated redevelopment of the inner residential areas of Miles Platting, Beswick, Collyhurst and Moss Side.

None of the maps in the volume is directly attributed to the work of an individual, but the names of the draughtsmen who contributed to the overall 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, using data collected from a number of different surveys. A land survey of all undeveloped land was originally plotted at a scale of 1:2,500 on thirty-six OS topographic sheets. A civic survey modified 108 OS base maps to indicate use, age, condition and height of every building in the city. This information was then plotted onto forty-six OS maps and generalized onto a single six-inch sheet (an example is shown on the *Plan*'s 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 cartographically charted. A number of synthetic maps bring together the results of these surveys. Limited pilot social surveys were also carried out in an attempt to validate the more general mapping exercises, but these are acknowledged as partial. It is City Surveyor and Engineer Rowland Nicholas's technocratic vision for the city, not the people's.

Numerically, architectural 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 to which they relate. In a few cases these comprise reproductions of historical scenes, juxtaposed with photographs and illustrating changes in the built form. The majority of architectural drawings, however, are impressionistic and look forward in time to imagine a future that the 1945 *Plan* might bring about. The most striking of these are pastel-coloured paintings, often juxtaposed with black-and-white photographs of the same situation on the ground in the 1940s. The chapter on the city centre deploys this technique most effectively for the Cathedral, Town Hall, Law Courts and Piccadilly areas (see **Plate 6** above). This drawing of the new civic boulevard to Albert Square has been widely reproduced and clearly works as a representative icon for the time.[54] These images offer a high-level oblique view of the new urban landscape, 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

[54] For example, it is reproduced in Euan Kellie, *Rebuilding Manchester* (Derby: DB Publishing, 2010), 22–3, and appears in both *Manchester: 50 Years of Change*, 16–17, and Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester: An Architectural History*, 165. The authors also featured it in their 'Mapping Manchester' exhibition <http://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/m.dodge/mappingmanchester//e-catalogue.pdf>, accessed 23 April 2012. A version of it is also incorporated in the cover artwork for the 1945 planning exhibition brochure (see **Plate 2** above). The rendering is controversial because it captures the willingness of the planners to contemplate the destruction of Alfred Waterhouse's Town Hall, now of course fêted as a Victorian masterpiece but much less regarded by mid-twentieth-century sensibilities.

black-and-white, bird's-eye artistic renderings. Illustrations of planned new public housing are strikingly different in style to the panoramic imaginings of grand civic developments. 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 (see **Table 1**). These architectural 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.[55] Work from architectural artists of national significance was also commissioned for the *Plan*, including imagery from Cyril Farey and J.D.M. Harvey.[56] Farey's style seems much more precise than Harvey's.[57] In some cases material seems to have been reproduced from work completed elsewhere, whereas in other cases it has been compiled especially for the *City of Manchester Plan*.

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 the appendices. They are smaller than other illustrations in the *Plan* and stand out much less. There is a markedly uneven distribution of this kind of visualization. The industrial, demographic and highways chapters contain almost all these graphics.

A final category of representations comprises line drawings and plans of idealized highway layouts, housing plans and neighbourhood facilities, which provide an indicative model of an ideal form instead of an actual plan, or a more impressionistic rendering. For example, road widths and capacities are shown in complex sections through new traffic arteries (see the *Plan*'s 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 and 21, on pages 124–5). These drawings often appear under the name of the City Architect, G. Noel Hill, and are classified as diagrams in the *Plan*'s table of contents, even when they are clearly in the form of maps. Photographic images of models made by the City Architect's or City Housing Department are reproduced in the *Plan*, notably in the chapters on housing and Wythenshawe (**Plate 7**), and have the largest impact of this kind of material. To understand the different roles played by this rich variety of visual material, the following are required: an exploration of how visual representations were deployed; a 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

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

[56] Farey was 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 Larkham, *The Imagery of the UK Post-War Reconstruction Plans*, 10–12.

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

Plate 7 'Model of Wythenshawe Civic Centre' (1945 *City of Manchester Plan*, Plate 50).

vision that they facilitated. It needs to be grounded in a critical approach to visual representations.

Interpreting the Visual Imagination in the *City of Manchester Plan*

> The orderly arrangement and graphic presentation 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.[58]

In interpreting the form and meanings of the maps, drawings and photographs in the *City of Manchester Plan*, we base our reading upon ideas from visual theory.[59] Here, the focus of attention is not on descriptions of the production and denotative content, but upon a more critical examination of the connotative meanings and on how the image circulates. Gillian Rose's work focuses on the wider relations of politics and social power that a representation is enrolled within, and how it thereby comes to affect its audiences and makes the world differently.

[58] Lewis Mumford, quoted in Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, 15.
[59] Our analysis is based upon approaches described by Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*, 2nd edn (London: Sage, 2007).

It is salient, we think, that the 1945 *City of Manchester Plan* should be poised between full-colour endpapers depicting a historical past and an imagined future. The planned remaking of Manchester is conveyed through separate chapters of text, accompanied by a complex assemblage of imagery audited above. Visual representations in the *Plan* can be read as exercising paradoxical roles. On the one hand, they might be designed and employed purposefully: visual illustrations communicate specific 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 beginning of this section certainly emphasizes the connotative power of the imagery of the city: its orderly arrangement, apparently comprehensive, appropriately classified, and the graphic portrayal provide the *evidence*, and, what is more, this incontrovertible visual evidence can be seductive and draw in 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 pad out chapters so that they appear to be the result of serious deliberation, or simply because they had already been compiled and were available to use.[60] There is little evidence of how the *City of Manchester Plan* was *actually* deployed in the years after it was published, or the social work that the *Plan* achieved after its publication, particularly for audiences beyond elite professions in the Town Hall,[61] and so 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 generalizations about future possibilities. It serves not only as a technical framework for professionals but also as a persuasive outward-facing text, selling the possibilities to its more public audience, including the politicians with the power to fund its projects. This image of

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[60] Larkham, *The Imagery of the UK Post-War Reconstruction Plans*, 30, suggests that some illustrations of this genre were 'seemingly to break up blocks of text, or to fill gaps at the end of sections or chapters'.
[61] What the 1945 *Plan* achieved materially is a discussion for a separate paper. It was never enacted in a comprehensive fashion, yet it undoubtedly remained a framework of influence for more than twenty years after its publication, with its primary author, the City Surveyor and Engineer Rowland Nicholas, at the helm of planning across the city. However, through much of the late 1940s and 1950s, in a time of austerity, there was seemingly little capital available for large-scale building projects. According to Derek Senior, in the decade after 1945 'barely half a dozen new buildings went up in the city's central area' ('New Heart for Manchester', *The Guardian*, 15 June 1960, 18). Other schemes were scuppered by forces beyond the Council's control and by central government edicts. For example, the grand new Trinity Railway Station was blocked by the Ministry of Transport ('A Revised Plan for Manchester's Railway Stations', *Manchester Guardian*, 3 January 1948, 6). Key elements of housing, roads and educational precinct were realized only from the 1960s, and often in a rushed compromise to that envisioned by the 1945 *Plan*'s statement of principles. The broad zonation of the city centre (see **Plate 1** above) remains a template to this day, with maps promoting similar patterns of urban quarters for Manchester. See, for example, the main tourist map from *Visit Manchester* <http://www.visitmanchester.com>, accessed 23 April 2012.

the future is established through an evocative combination of media.[62] Here, we focus on the three most prominent visual representations: the photographic, cartographic and the hand-drawn architectural views.

1. 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 objective evidence, acting as a mirror to the world.[63] However, contemporary culture attaches diverse social meanings to photographs, which according to context are enrolled into many different tasks: evoking memories; allowing individuals to record events; calling on people to act; tantalizing and titillating; giving pleasure; and shocking and seducing.[64] 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 contexts. Photographic images also travel, representing places and people at distances in space and time, and potentially serve as a powerful unifying force and universal truth.[65] Almost all the critical literature suggests that 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.[66]

In the *City of Manchester Plan* photographic images 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. Aerial views predominate, conveying a distanced authority, but perhaps also reflecting available sources. Their stark, black-and-white austerity contrasts strongly with other coloured imagery in the *Plan*. On the one hand, the choice of black and white might reflect wartime constraints and the costs of colour printing, but the political impact reinforces a view of

[62] It has been argued that image building is an essential component of the development of new discursive and institutional framings of the city. See Michael Neuman, 'Images as Institution Builders: Metropolitan Planning in Madrid', *European Planning Studies*, 4:3 (1996), 293–312.

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

[64] For an overview of the different roles photography can play see Chris Perkins, 'Photography', in *Companion Encyclopedia of Geography: From Local to Global*, eds Ian Douglas, Richard Huggett and Chris Perkins, 2 vols, 2nd edn (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2007), ii. 587–602.

[65] *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, eds Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

[66] See *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

a rather grim, monochrome past and present when set against the vibrant, colourful planned futures on offer. Thus the selection of imagery and its anonymous presentation on the page reinforces the rhetoric of change underpinning the whole *Plan*.

2. 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 (see **Table 1**). It has frequently been argued that mapping as a medium tends to connote mimetic and immutable representations of the world.[67] Maps in this view carry out 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 externalized control into new terrain, and, used as a practical tool, are part of modernist governance.[68] As a consequence, people all too readily view what they see on a map as reality. The social selectivity of the map's (re)presentation of the space is hidden also by cartographic techniques that appear to be technical activities, with the authorship of the map becoming anonymous in order for the image to do its work. However, this immutable theorization of mapping is increasingly being challenged in recent rethinking of the medium.[69] 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 map artefact, but rather in the ways in which the mapping becomes part of a process, given different meanings according to the social network through which it circulates. Hence a contextual understanding is required, and the question in relation to the maps in the *City of Manchester Plan* concerns 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 urban space and the extent of governmental action.

There has been little research into the practices of planners and their maps to date. Stefanie Dühr suggests planners deploy mapping that is both scientific and artistic, with the larger scales offering more precise, scientific views whilst the smaller scales are more impressionistic.[70] Peter Moll's work on German regional planning suggests three very different types of cartographic product: base maps;

[67] See John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2004).

[68] For development of the notion of the map as an immutable mobile see Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

[69] See Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge, 'Rethinking Maps', *Progress in Human Geography*, 31:3 (2007), 331–44.

[70] Stefanie 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.

mapping for public participation; and maps laying down planning policies.[71] In the *City of Manchester Plan* these different roles overlap. Chapter 3, for example, highlights the 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, although some were exhibited during the *Plan*'s launch.[72] More synthetic and smaller-scale generalized maps are included, which exude a more authoritative voice by their greater abstraction. They propose, fix and, by coding space, establish an agenda. These maps are almost all about buildings and space, not people and place, and their power lies in this apparently neutral depiction of *things*.[73] The tone of every map in the volume is authoritative, people are off the map, or else classified into manageable and governable categories.[74] By focusing upon an objectified city, the built form can be changed and the inevitable disruption to everyday lives denied. Maps of model housing layouts are shown, but the voices of the people intended to live in these homes are unheard.[75] 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 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 town and country planning professionals. Land-use and zoning maps had, after all, come to embody the values of the profession during the inter-war years.[76] It is the land-use map that allows zoning to be established, which both classifies an area and 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.[77] The maps are separated from the interpretative

[71] Peter Moll, 'Funktionen der Karte im Planungsprozeß. Grundlagen-, Beteiligungs- und Festlegungskarten', in *Aufgabe und Gestaltung von Planungskarten*, ed. Peter Moll, Forschungs- und Sitzungsberichte 185 (Hannover: Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplannung, 1991), 2–15.

[72] 'Manchester of the Future: Comprehensive Exhibition of the City's Redevelopment Plan' (see n. 45 above).

[73] It has been argued that the power of the map lies in this objectification: see Denis Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (New York: Guilford Press, 2010). See also Söderström, 'Paper Cities' (n. 1 above), who explores the profession abandoning social survey and focusing instead on the built urban form.

[74] See Jeremy W. Crampton, 'GIS and Geographic Governance: Reconstructing the Choropleth Map', *Cartographica*, 39:1 (2004), 41–53.

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

[76] See Simon Rycroft and Denis Cosgrove, 'Mapping the Modern Nation: Dudley Stamp and the Land Utilisation Survey', *History Workshop Journal*, 40:1 (1995), 91–105. The land-use zonation mapping presented in the *City of Manchester Plan* reflects this trend (see **Plate 5** above).

[77] Charles Goodwin, 'Professional Vision', *American Anthropologist*, 96:3 (1994), 606–33.

Plate 8 The attractive colours of planned development (1945 *City of Manchester Plan*, Plate 61).

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, and 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 to and inspire the imagination as well as suggesting scientific realism: colours can connote and emote as well as denote. The eye is drawn to the regular patterns on the maps of the '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. The randomness of the emergent Victorian city is replanned into regularized, geometric patterns (**Plate 8**).

3. Architectural Drawings

The smaller quantity of perspective drawings enrolled in the *City of Manchester Plan* work in a rather different fashion to either the photographs or the maps (see **Table 1**). Architectural drawing has comprised three different traditions: the orthographic, the axonometric and the perspective.[78] Of the three, the perspective drawing predominates in the report.[79] 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,[80] and it has been argued that the use of perspective drawings itself significantly impacts upon architectural practice.[81] Unlike the map, however, the perspective image is clearly a view from somewhere, asserting an authored position, and also from the unashamedly different aesthetic tradition. The architectural perspective, like the map, connotes a carefully crafted precision and is a measured drawing, but the subjectivity of the viewpoint and the often stylish embellishment added to these images suggest a more artistic image. Almost all these drawings depict an 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 (see **Plate 6** above), in part because

[78] For the different roles these three distinct styles facilitate see Iain Fraser and Rod Henmi, *Envisioning Architecture: An Analysis of Drawing* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1993).

[79] In the *Plan* itself there are five orthographic drawings of ideal housing schemes, neighbourhoods and community centres, and the endpapers depicting Manchester 2045 deploy an axonometric projection. All the rest are perspective views. The exhibition seems to have included a much greater diversity of architectural drawings. See the film *A City Speaks* (n. 33 above) and 'Manchester of the Future: Comprehensive Exhibition of the City's Redevelopment Plan' (n. 45 above).

[80] See Chapter 9, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', in Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1991), 183–201, for a consideration of the power conveyed by elevated vision.

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

of the more monumental nature of its architecture and the greater cultural significance of the space. However, the City Architect's Department was more involved with the compilation of this chapter than with the rest of the *Plan*, which could also explain why its particular professional vision is prominently on display here.

Conclusions

When viewed with the hindsight of over half a century since its publication, the paper city imagined in the 1945 *City of Manchester Plan* appears counterfactual. In some senses we are already closer to the regular and scientific imagined endpaper depicting the city centre in 2045 than to the richly articulated and visualized 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's *City of Manchester Plan* clearly do offer a rationalizing view of the city, expressing 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 and rational possible urban life. Photographic images document the dramatic contrast of the colourless, often derelict, and dirty unplanned past. Architectural 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 the differences in these professional visual practices, but together they reinforce the narrative power of the whole process.

Much of the imagery in the *City of Manchester Plan*, however, is also designed to be empowering and inspirational. Whilst the 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 realized through the planning process. Impressive numbers visited the associated exhibition. The colourful mapping, released in a time of austerity, allowed readers of both the *Plan* and the cheaper abridged version to fantasize about the future, to make hope more real. Models of the proposals in the exhibition made it all seem more realizable. The utopian sentiments running through the text are emboldened by artistic rendering of the future city, which encouraged a belief in the virtues of city planning.

The illusion of precision in the mapping and the ambiguous, scientifically grounded, yet impressionistic, architectural drawings at times come together to reveal a conflicted process in the publication. This is particularly the case in the wholesale replanning of the city centre, where scientific and engineering-led specifications for the separation of blocks and for major road construction contrast markedly with impressionistic architectural proposals for specific buildings. 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 (see **Plate 1** above), marks out only significant new public buildings in the centre, such as the so-called 'People's Palace' near Piccadilly, or the new Trinity Railway Station atop the River Irwell. Elsewhere, urban blocks remain unaltered. In contrast, the artistic rendering of the future city centre on the adjacent pages of the *Plan* imagines a complete remaking of the city with clean, well-spaced, modern blocks replacing the unplanned, congested urban sprawl. Hence 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.