Developing the Airport and Dreams of a Heliport

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Start with 2 questions
Significance of aviation in post-war period

- Availability and affordability is one of key change in these three decades
- Growth in passenger numbers
- Concrete developments
- Routine travel for many, planes are unremarkable sight in the sky
- But not all that was predicted in 1950s came to be realised by the 1970s and some developments have retreated
The Siting of Aerodromes around the City of Manchester, 1918-1938

Uncertain Positioning >> Infrastructural Permanence
PROGRAWMME
OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MANCHESTER (RINGWAY) AIRPORT

His Majesty's Secretary of State for Air
(The Right Honourable Sir Kingsley Wood, P.C., M.P.)
and Inspection of
AIR DISPLAY
BY THE ROYAL AIR FORCE AND OTHERS

Saturday, 25th June, 1938
“Of all the prophecies which the planner is called upon to make none is more hazardous than to predict the future of air transport. ... whatever the future holds we can regard the possession of one major airport as essential to the prosperity of Manchester. We must also be ready for a development of rotor aircraft, a type particularly suited to our congested island conditions. These may be landed and serviced on large buildings or on small plane parks in the city centre.”

After intensive military use during the war, Ringway resumes scheduled civilian air services in June 1946.
MCC battles with Ministry for continuing municipal control

‘Make-do mentality’
The Development
Mid 1950s plans for a proper international airport
Ground broken on new terminal in October 1957
Phase 1: May 1959 - April 1961, £439,500
Manchester has provided this new transatlantic international airport to serve the communities of the Midlands and Northern Counties with the most up-to-date airport facilities in Europe
Quality of interior noted: “Prestige, too let alone any argument about beauty being its own justification, is important. It is necessary to our image abroad that the manner in which visitors to 'Britain's other Capital' are received should do credit to their hosts.”
1970s accretions, imminent arrival of wide body jets
‘A construction site with airport attached’

March 1974: The official opening of £8.3m additions, aimed to double passenger handling capacity
Capacity versus Demand

Annual passenger traffic
1982: 5,156,000
1969: 1,628,000
1965: 1,427,000
1961: 946,000
1958: 512,000
1951: 163,000
1947: 34,000

Does new infrastructure drive growth?
The Dream
1950s helicopters, hope.. hype...

The Modern Way

Fig. 7. Hypothetical network of internal and short stage European routes as operated by a 160-m.p.h. B.E.A. helicopter with 48 seats. Figures represent journey time for each route in hours and/or minutes.
Planning for the helicopter

- Novel and uncertain, but belief in many that helicopter was going to be major transport mode
- Parliamentary debates, reports, policies set
- Underlying logic: centrality of landing
- Pragmatics of the heliport: where to put it; what form would it take
- Planning challenges but plenty of scope. Bomb sites into 1950s and by mid decade councils had capacity for redevelopment of their city centres
- How to insert wholly new mode of mass transport into existing city fabric....? Comparison to c19th railway ‘invasion’ of urban core
Logic of the rooftop landing!

- Commonsensical at first glance. Get above congestion on streets below
- In our folk memory we imagined helicopters had routinely landed atop many high buildings
- Some antecedence of (wild) speculations from the 1930s for city centre airports
J.J. Spyra scheme, 1951
PROPOSED HELICOPTER ROTORSTATION

SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

NORTHWEST ELEVATION

EXISTING SITE LEVEL
PROPOSED SITE LEVEL

THIRD FLOOR
SECOND FLOOR
FIRST FLOOR
SECOND FLOOR
FIRST FLOOR
SECOND FLOOR

BASEMENT
BASEMENT
BASEMENT

SCALE ONE INCH TO EIGHT FEET

LEONARD C. DONETTY
CITY ARCHITECT
MANCHESTER
CITY OF MANCHESTER

HELIPORT
Scheduled helicopter services fade in the face of four issues

- Noise
- Planning Blight
- Safety
- Economics
What they had *hoped* for ....
And what really happened with helicopter passenger services
1939: 4,000 passengers
(Civilian flights stopped in Sept. 39)

2011: 18.8 passengers
(3rd busiest in Britain, just ahead of Stansted)
Plans that were realised, other possibilities remain
Sources

Slide 1:
• Right hand Sikorsky advert. Image available at http://c590298.r98.cf2.rackcdn.com/TM1_708.JPG

Slide 2:
• Left hand image. Science et Vie, Avril 1946 magazine cover image.
  www.flickr.com/photos/jean-paul-margnac/7044833271/
• Right hand image, adapted from one in Manchester Airport: Master Plan to 2030, p. 30.
  www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/1665/manchester_airport_master_plan_to_2030

Slide 4:
• Left hand map created by Graham Bowden, Cartography Unit, University of Manchester
• Right hand map author scan from McDonald S, 1988 First and Foremost: In Celebration of Fifty Years of Manchester Airport, Second Edition (Manchester Airport PLC), p. 12

Slide 5:
• Photograph of the 1938 Ringway terminal, control tower and hanger. Manchester Local Image Collection, http://images.manchester.gov.uk, ref. m62642
• Image of the opening Programme from Pagan555, www.flickr.com/photos/pagan555/6411233773/
Slide 6:
- Quotation taken from Nicholas R, 1945, *City of Manchester Plan 1945* (Manchester Corporation), p. 74

Slide 7:
- Photograph of passenger hall. Author scan from Scholefield R A, McDonald S D, 1978, *First and Foremost: 50 Years of Manchester’s Civic Airports* (Manchester International Airport Authority), no pagination

Slide 8:
- Photograph of “Model of New Terminal Building”, 1957. Courtesy of Manchester Airport Archive, ref. TB29

Slide 9:
- Unrealised layout plan for new airport, June 1956. “Revised scheme with independent control tower”. Courtesy of Manchester Airport Archive, ref. P3673

Slide 10:
- Aerial view from 1959 of the progress on construction of the new terminal directly behind the 1938 building, which was subsequently demolished. Author scan from McDonald S, 1988, *First and Foremost: In Celebration of Fifty Years of Manchester Airport, Second Edition* (Manchester Airport PLC), p. 68
Slide 11:
- Elevation of the control tower, April 1959. Plan “Control tower and domestic flights wing. South elevation”. Courtesy of Manchester Airport Archive, ref. P12533
- Photograph of new control tower building from unfinished international pier. Courtesy of Manchester Airport Archive, ref. TB77

Slide 12:
- Main image of Costain advert. Author scan from MCC, 1963?, *Manchester Airport: A Fully Illustrated Handbook and Souvenir of an International Airport* (Manchester City Council Airport Committee), inside front cover
- Quotation from “Manchester Airport”, *The Guardian*, 22 October, 1962, p. 9
- Top left image, courtesy of Manchester Airport Archive, ref. TB77
- Bottom left image, author scan from McDonald S, 1988, *First and Foremost: In Celebration of Fifty Years of Manchester Airport, Second Edition* (Manchester Airport PLC), p. 77

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Slide 14:
- The 1962 terminal space allocation plan. “Manchester Airport New Terminal Building, first floor plan”, undated. Courtesy of Manchester Airport Archive, plan ref. 12641
- Top right image, author scan of 1960s era postcard of chandeliers in the main concourse
- Bottom right image, photograph of the information desk, October 1965. Courtesy of Manchester Airport Archive, ref. TB212
- Quotation from MCC, 1963?, *Manchester Airport: A Fully Illustrated Handbook and Souvenir of an International Airport* (Manchester City Council Airport Committee), p. 54
Slide 15:

Slide 16:
• Image left, aerial view of the enlarged 1974 terminal complex, including the new international pier C for wide body jets. Manchester Local Image Collection, http://images.manchester.gov.uk, ref. m75757
• Image top right, new multi-storey car park, 1974. Manchester Local Image Collection, http://images.manchester.gov.uk, ref. m62524
• Image bottom right, new office block to rear of 1962 control tower, 1972. Manchester Local Image Collection, http://images.manchester.gov.uk, ref. m62699

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Slide 19:
• “The Modern Way” image courtesy of Richard Brook taken from a brochure held The National Archives, ref. HLG51/111
• Route map taken from “The commercial future of helicopters”, Flight Magazine, 14 November 1952, p.623
Slide 21:
• Left hand image taken from “King’s Cross Airport Scheme”, The Builder, 25 December 1931, p. 1046

Slide 22:
• Author scan from untitled article, Manchester Guardian, 1 November 1951, p. 8

Slide 23:
• Image courtesy of Manchester City Archives and GMCRO. Source: City Surveyor and Engineers plan archive, ref. 3260/-/13

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• Image courtesy of Manchester City Archives, ref. GB127.M723/82

Slide 27:
• Image courtesy of Manchester City Archives, ref. GB127.M723/81
Slide 28:
• Top image taken from “The commercial future of helicopters”, *Flight Magazine*, 14 November 1952, p. 622
• Right hand image “Hypothetical helicopter landing ground” taken from Hough H T, 1955, “The design of helicopter operating sites for passenger services”, *The Surveyor and Municipal and County Engineer*, 24 December, p. 1251
• Left hand image author scan of the cover of *Noise: Final Report*, 1963

Slide 29:
• Left hand map taken from “The commercial future of helicopters”, *Flight Magazine*, 14 November 1952, p. 623
• Right hand map taken from “British Airways Helicopters - 30 Years Old”, *Flight International Magazine*, 13 August 1977, p. 494

Slide 30:
• Top left map author scan from Scholefield R A, McDonald S D, 1978, *First and Foremost: 50 Years of Manchester's Civic Airports* (Manchester International Airport Authority), no pagination
• Bottom right map, author screen capture from www.manchesterairport.co.uk/manweb.nsf/Content/Destinations
Slide 31:
- Top left image taken from Manchester Airport: Master Plan to 2030, p. 52. www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/1665/manchester_airport_master_plan_to_2030
- Top right image courtesy of Greater Manchester Police, www.flickr.com/photos/gmpolice1/4525717955/
- Bottom right image courtesy of North West Air Ambulance, www.flickr.com/photos/northwestairambulance/3980747688/

Slide 32:
- Image of University Place, Oxford Road, Manchester, http://man-estates-fs5.ds.man.ac.uk/PSU/Building_Data/064AA/Photography/External/Main/01.JPG