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It is with great sadness that we have to pay tribute to John Ashurst, a respected member of our Editorial Advisory Board, who died in May. We include a two-part obituary contributed by his colleagues and friends, in acknowledgment of his substantial contribution to the conservation community.

Editorial

Journals such as this one can trace their roots back to the coming together of a small group of ‘natural philosophers’, including Christopher Wren and Robert Boyle, in 1660. Established as a ‘... Colledge for the Promoting of Physico-Mathematicall Experimentall Learning ...’, the organization received the patronage of Charles II in the following year, and became known as the Royal Society. Among its leaders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were (in addition to Wren and Boyle) Robert Hooke, Samuel Pepys, Isaac Newton and Hans Sloane.

These were the technology gurus of their day, and it is hardly an exaggeration to suggest that the Royal Society created the core principles of modern science, including careful and critical observation of phenomena, and a concern for the replicability of experiments. Most of all, the Society sponsored meetings at which its learned members could present the findings of their research, and discuss the merits of the broader ideas that grew from this multi-disciplinary research. In 1665, the first issue of *Philosophical Transactions* was published; today it is the world’s oldest scientific journal in continuous publication. Widely read, even in its earlier years, the Society’s journal established the concept of ‘distance learning’ long before electronic media gave us web-based seminars and video conferencing.

In this issue of our modest journal, we continue to offer both technical and theoretical studies that stir debate. Keith Garner, in the opening paper, documents the recent struggle to preserve the Battersea Power Station, focusing on its most iconic (and most problematic) features: the monumental chimneys. Built in several campaigns starting in 1929, the power station is among the most visible components of London’s industrial heritage. When operations shut down 25 years ago, day-to-day maintenance ceased. As with many great cathedrals, Battersea’s dilemma is a combination of the uncertainties of engineering studies with the more fundamental question of how future generations will be able to carry out periodic inspections and repairs on those four towering spires.

Elizabeth Hirst, Alison Aynsworth and Karen Morrissey present an amazing tale of the restoration of a mid-eighteenth-century chapel by James Paine at Cusworth Hall, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire. Like a

good mystery, this paper starts simply, with a programme of historic paint analysis. But archival research undertaken by the client soon directed the investigation toward the hunt for missing figural paintings, and the reconstruction of a complex decorative scheme that also included replication of a pigmented plaster floor, mechanical stabilization of the plaster ceiling, and the conservation of a gilded altar table.

Both Battersea and Cusworth are listed buildings. In their contribution, Gina Crevello and Paul Noyce discuss one aspect of the conservation of a Grade I listed building that isn't a building at all: it is the *Cutty Sark*, among the most famous historic ships in the world. Built in 1869, this remarkable clipper ship has been dry docked in Greenwich for more than half a century. These authors present the research and field testing of a technique to remove chlorides from the iron frame of the great ship. This is sophisticated work by a team of corrosion scientists, and in summarizing it these authors manage to teach us a little electrochemistry.

Chris Topp's article looks at ironwork from the opposite extreme, that is, from the viewpoint of the craftsman. He makes a very personal plea for the development of standards for the training of blacksmiths in traditional techniques. His goal is to incorporate these artisans into the larger framework of heritage conservation in the UK. Doing this successfully would simultaneously preserve craft skills that are quickly disappearing, and historic buildings that display ornamental ironwork of extraordinary beauty.

While Topp's paper emphasizes the talents of the individual, Dennis Rodwell considers the value of architecture on a grand scale, as he documents the ups and downs of the city of Liverpool. Once an economically powerful transatlantic port, the city began its decline in the 1970s, as more and more of its great buildings were mothballed or abandoned. But Rodwell's story has (as many of us know) a happy ending. Today's Liverpool, with over 2,500 listed buildings, boasts a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is Europe's Capital of Culture for 2008. Rodwell's paper provides us with all of the administrative and political details of this city's rough pathway to success.

Once again, our journal has shown its forte, in articulating just what architectural conservation is all about. It is the melding together of streams of knowledge, from management to building sciences to history and craftsmanship. We all learn much from our teachers and mentors, and from the mistakes that we have made as young practitioners, but those moments pass much too quickly. Journals, along with monographs and textbooks, are a way of preserving the expertise of our diverse disciplines. The five papers in this issue combine conservation theory with common sense, and esoteric technical knowledge with practical experience.

Norman R. Weiss

Urban Regeneration and the Management of Change

Liverpool and the Historic Urban Landscape

Dennis Rodwell

Abstract

In the decades following the Second World War the once proud transatlantic port and trading city of Liverpool witnessed serious, progressive decline. The city featured prominently in buildings at risk registers, and areas of traditional terraced housing remain programmed for destruction under the government's controversial Housing Market Renewal Initiative (better known as 'Pathfinder'). In recent years Liverpool has seen a remarkable change of fortune. Key monuments have been restored, and multi-million pound projects of inner-city redevelopment are either on site or in the pipeline, including one for the site of the 'fourth grace'. Six linked, tightly defined areas in the historic centre and docklands were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004; Liverpool celebrated its 800th anniversary in 2007 and is European Capital of Culture 2008.

This paper sets out the historical background, recent initiatives and ongoing conservation challenges that confront the historic central and waterfront areas as well as the wider city of Liverpool. It relates threats posed by tall buildings and 'iconic' modern architecture to the concept of 'historic urban landscape', a UNESCO World Heritage Centre initiative aimed at the protection of urban identity and the management of change at the scale of historic cities.

Liverpool

Early times

First mentioned in historical records around the year 1192, Liverpool was founded as a borough by King John under Royal Charter in 1207 and

served initially as a harbour for communication between England, Ireland and the northern coastline of Wales.¹

By the mid-sixteenth century the population of the township was still only around 500. A century later, in the decades following the English Civil War, the early thirteenth-century castle was totally dismantled and its foundations erased. Apart from traces of the medieval street pattern, nothing in today's city centre survives above ground from before the eighteenth century.

Rise and fall of a great port city

Liverpool's development as one of the great port cities of the world began in the mid-seventeenth century, tentatively at first, with the progressive arrival of cargoes of tobacco and sugar from the colonies in America and the West Indies and the reciprocal export of manufactured wares from the nascent industries of the Midlands and the North.

Throughout the eighteenth century Liverpool prospered as a major port of exchange in the slave trade between West Africa and the Americas and, increasingly throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries, as Britain and northern Europe's foremost transatlantic port for the import of produce and raw materials, export of manufactured goods and the migration of people to the New World (Figure 1).

Liverpool extends north-south for a length of 19 kilometres along the east bank of the mouth of the River Mersey; the city plan is roughly semicircular in shape.² The waterfront forms the straight edge, the Pier Head lies at its centre, and the riverbank behind rises gently to a ridge along which the fortuitously named Hope Street links the landmark Anglican and Metropolitan (Roman Catholic) cathedrals.³

In population terms Liverpool peaked in 1931 when the census counted 855,688 inhabitants. By 1961 this figure had fallen to 745,750; by 1971 to 610,113; and by 2001 to 439,473. The estimated figure for 2006 was 436,000, since when a marginal increase has been reported.

Liverpool is far from being alone among major United Kingdom cities to have lost a significant proportion of their urban populations, especially since the Second World War. What distinguishes Liverpool are the extent to which the city relied almost solely on shipping, maritime trade and associated commerce and industries, and its geographical location at a landward terminus that leads only to the sea. These limitations inspired the city's rise to fortune in the eighteenth century just as they triggered its decline in the twentieth.

Although the wider urban area counts a population today of around 817,000, the city of Liverpool's decline since the 1930s can be accounted for by a combination of general factors – population movement in



Figure 1 View northwards across Canning Dock towards Mann Island and the Pier Head. The riverbank at Liverpool has a tidal range of 10 metres. As such, the construction of wet docks was the key to its viability as a port. Liverpool pioneered the development of commercial wet docks: the first, Old Dock, was in operation by 1715. By the end of the nineteenth century the waterfront counted 120 hectares of wet docks, an enormous range of bonded warehouses, and 10 kilometres of fortress-like enclosing walls – all built on reclaimed land. These served a commercial district of banks, exchanges, mercantile offices and insurance companies that were unrivalled outside London for the virtuosity and technological innovation of their buildings. The trio of early twentieth-century buildings at the Pier Head form one of the most recognizable waterfront ensembles in the world (see also Figures 13 and 14).

England from the north to the south and from inner cities to suburbs – and the specific: the dismantling of Britain’s transatlantic trading routes in favour of east coast ports serving Europe; and the changeover in international shipping practices from manually intensive dockside to predominantly automated containerization employing far larger ships with a deeper draught. Merseyside continues to be a major player in international

shipping. Seaforth Dock, opened in 1972 as a purpose-built container port, makes a major contribution to the regional economy. It lies north of the city boundary, however, and its relationship to the historic port city is largely circumstantial.

The heritage challenge

The heritage challenge that has increasingly faced Liverpool since the Second World War opens with the key question of functionality. In brief, what is the long-term destiny for a city whose infrastructure and historic environment no longer perform the set of functions for which they were conceived and which was built to house and serve a population twice its present size?

The historic docks within the city, inadaptable to modern requirements, passed out of commercial use from the 1970s onwards. Today, apart from cruise liners, passenger and leisure craft, none of the landing stages is operational. Nor are any of the great warehouses in use for the purposes for which they were designed and several are disused (Figure 2).

Empty and abandoned sites, commercial and civic buildings, religious buildings of all faiths and denominations, shops and public houses, abound across the city (Figure 3). Liverpool still bears scars from the wartime blitz



Figure 2 The fourteen-storey tobacco warehouse in Stanley Dock was reputed at the time of its construction to be the largest brick building in the world (1897–1901; Anthony George Lyster, dock engineer). The Stanley Dock complex dates from 1848 and is currently disused.



Figure 3 The disused Everton Library, St Domingo Road (opened 1896; Thomas Shelmerdine, architect). Liverpool boasts an enormous wealth and variety of historic buildings dating from the mid-eighteenth century onwards – especially from the Victorian period.

of May 1941. Planning blight resulting from lack of vision and despair, or overambition and misdirected urban planning and road schemes, combined by the 1990s to provide a heritage challenge without parallel elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

The political ostracization of the city in the 1980s, associated as it was with Militant Tendency, an extremist organization on the fringes of the Labour Party, compounded the heritage challenge further. The urban grain fared badly: among several tangible legacies are suburban-like corporation housing developments atypically located adjacent to the commercial city centre. Historic buildings were seriously undervalued: the magnificent Neo-Classical St George's Hall, for example – recently the subject of a £22 million restoration programme⁴ – was mothballed, and there was even talk of its demolition.

It is tempting to compare the heritage challenge facing Liverpool in the 1990s with that facing cities of equivalent size and significance across Central and Eastern Europe in the immediate post-communist period: capital cities on major rivers, such as Budapest and Prague; and great port cities such as St Petersburg. But Liverpool was in a far worse position. The former Eastern bloc cities were still fully functioning; their buildings may have been ill-maintained but they were not abandoned and without apparent prospect of re-use.⁵ The urban grain of those cities had survived intact, unlike in Liverpool where the urban landscape had lost much of its historical cohesion and remains pockmarked with dereliction (Figures 4 and 5).



Figure 4 The restored southern length.



Figure 5 The derelict and partly missing northern length.

Shaw Street is a long terrace of late Georgian houses that typifies the fragmentation in Liverpool's historic environment. After decades of dereliction most of the houses towards the south have now been restored, reconstructed behind their façades, or rebuilt using salvaged materials. To the north, one long section is entirely missing and the houses either side remain derelict.

The heritage challenge facing the city may be summarized as:

- redefining an overarching and identifiable sense of purpose and place while at the same time protecting the city's historic urban landscape
- re-establishing coherence in the city's urban grain across the diversity of its inner quarters and outer neighbourhoods
- integrating the recognized heritage components – including the World Heritage Site – into planning policies that treat them as parts of a whole rather than disconnected fragments
- avoiding an excessive focus on the city centre while engaging with the cross-section of the city's diverse communities and recognizing their appreciation of the broader historic environment
- devising and implementing policies that avoid conflict between regeneration objectives and the historic environment, including the location, scale and design of new buildings; also, policies that safeguard long-established neighbourhoods

Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site

In 1999, Liverpool's waterfront and commercial centre featured in the United Kingdom's *Tentative List*⁶ of possible candidates for future nomination to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as part of a carefully devised response to the gaps in the World Heritage List that had been identified in the post-1994 global strategy,⁷ including those in the categories of industrial archaeology and cultural landscapes.⁸

In World Heritage terms the theme that defined Liverpool was simple: 'the supreme example of a commercial port developed at the time of Britain's greatest global influence' from the eighteenth through to the early twentieth centuries.⁹ This was underscored by reference to the seminal position that Liverpool held in the development of dock and warehouse design and construction, and the surviving urban landscape that bore witness to the city's historical role and significance (Figure 6).

'Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City' was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004 under the UNESCO criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv).¹⁰ The World Heritage Site extends over 136 hectares; the buffer zone – the purpose of which is to protect the setting of the site – covers 750 hectares. The site comprises six distinct components that are either contiguous or linked on plan:

- waterfront north: the Stanley Dock conservation area, including the dock and warehouse complex



Figure 6 Albert Dock (1843–47; Jesse Hartley, dock engineer, with advice from Philip Hardwick, architect; see also Figure 12) is described in Sharples as ‘one of the great monuments of C19 engineering; its sublime grandeur unquestionably the architectural climax of the Liverpool docks’.¹¹ The first enclosed, non-combustible dock warehouse system in the world, built using cast iron, brick and stone, today it houses the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Tate Liverpool, the Beatles Story, and a multitude of other uses. The restoration and conversion of Albert Dock, commenced in 1983, pioneered heritage-led regeneration in Liverpool at an inauspicious time in the city’s political history. It remains the city’s showpiece regeneration project and most popular visitor attraction.

- waterfront centre: the Pier Head complex,¹² adjacent landing stage and piazza
- waterfront south: the Albert and Wapping warehouses and their surrounding complex of docks together with Mann Island and the site of Old Dock
- inland centre: the predominantly Victorian commercial district including the principal civic buildings
- inland east: the cultural quarter focused on St George’s Hall, the Walker Art Gallery and William Brown Library together with Lime Street railway station
- inland south-east: the Duke Street area, part of the largely Georgian mercantile quarter which has become known as Rope Walks

The World Heritage Site includes fifteen surviving pre-1850 docks and nine monumental dockside warehouses. Perhaps surprisingly, it only incorporates part of Rope Walks and does not include any part of the Canning area of Georgian terraced housing to its east.

Liverpool resurgent

A world city

It comes as no surprise to relate that many people expressed incredulity that Liverpool could ever feature as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here was a city that had become notorious in the 1960s and 70s for industrial disputes; in the 1980s for street riots and political extremism; and by the 1990s for above-average levels of unemployment, social problems and crime.

The articulation of Liverpool as a world city – once again, and at the dawn of the new millennium – has, however, had a catalytic effect on a raft of regeneration initiatives.

In broad cultural terms there has been widespread promotion of the diversity of the city's traditions and associations, including: its standing in literature, comedy, the performing and visual arts; its role at the forefront of the popular music scene in the 1960s; the sporting prowess of its rival football clubs, Everton and Liverpool; and a collection of historic public house interiors that is unrivalled outside London.¹³ There has also been atonement for the city's role in the slave trade through the International Slavery Museum, opened in 2007 to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trade. Additionally, Liverpool claims the oldest Chinese community in Europe and has long-established East African and Jewish communities.

The rich cultural diversity of the city, both in tangible and intangible heritage terms, underscored the slogan for Liverpool's successful bid to become European Capital of Culture 2008: 'The World in One City'.

The resurgence of pride in the spectrum of Liverpool's cultural resources, from the elitist to the popular, has embraced the built heritage and interacted with disparate interests – sometimes complementary, sometimes discordant. 'World Heritage City' and 'European Capital of Culture' are potent brand names that attract powerful financial interests that are not always sympathetic to the historic environment.

They also beg the question of what kind of world city Liverpool is to become, given that it has ceased to be a maritime mercantile one. Managing change within Liverpool's distinctive urban landscape has become a major challenge.

Heritage-led regeneration

For a decade or more the exemplary mid-1980s conservation and conversion of Albert Dock was like a beacon in the desert.

In the second half of the 1990s, following the granting of Objective 1 status under European Union regional funding policy, the economy of the

city began to recover and investment accelerated. This renaissance in the city's fortunes has been accompanied by an unparalleled array of heritage-led initiatives and partnerships between the public and private sectors. These have engaged equally with central government and community groups, development agencies and heritage bodies, transport and business interests, academia and the media.

No city in Britain has ever benefited from such a concentration of regeneration initiatives; nor from the range of creatively interlinked funding packages that have enabled so much to happen within such a short span of time.

The year that saw Liverpool placed on the *Tentative List*, 1999, was also the year that Liverpool Vision – the first of the new breed of urban regeneration companies – was established; it became operational the following year. One of its flagship city-centre projects has been the £1 billion Paradise Square development – also known as Liverpool One – by Grosvenor: vaunted as the largest new shopping complex in Europe, it includes 131,000 square metres of retail floorspace and its completion is programmed to coincide with European Capital of Culture 2008.

'Stop the Rot'

Also in 2000 the local newspaper, the *Liverpool Echo*, launched its 'Stop the Rot' campaign to rescue and conserve the city's rich architectural heritage (Figure 7). A survey of Liverpool's listed building stock by English Heritage in 1991 had identified over 350 buildings at risk (14% of the total stock), of which 100 were categorized as at extreme risk. The *Liverpool Echo* campaign was triggered by the collapse of a landmark building in the city centre.

Historic Environment of Liverpool Project

The ground-breaking Historic Environment of Liverpool Project (HELP) was launched by Liverpool City Council and English Heritage in 2002, in partnership with the North West Development Agency, Liverpool Vision, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, and the Liverpool Culture Company. Its activities have included detailed studies of the city's built heritage and archaeology, the design and implementation of a buildings at risk strategy, and a range of educational and community projects, exhibitions and publications.¹⁴

The city of Liverpool counts within its boundaries four scheduled ancient monuments, ten registered parks, 35 conservation areas and over 2,500 listed buildings. The development of the nomination bid to UNESCO in 2002–03 was, however, from the outset, a central component



Figure 7 St Andrew's Scottish Presbyterian Church, Rodney Street (1823–24; Greek Revival façade by John Foster, Jr, architect), has stood a forlorn burnt-out shell since 1983. Typical in recent years of other cases of ruinous historic buildings in the city which have featured in the 'Stop the Rot' campaign, Liverpool City Council (in a funding partnership with the North West Development Agency) has adopted an interventionist approach to secure its future through urgent works and compulsory purchase.

of HELP; much of its focus – including on buildings at risk – remains on the World Heritage Site, not on the wider city. This represents a failure to embrace the breadth of the heritage challenge of the city as a whole.

Rope Walks

Rope Walks is the name given to the inland eighteenth-century mercantile quarter that was served by Old Dock, sited on an inlet of the River Mersey and now covered over. It was a mixed-use area of merchant's houses and warehouses, the warehouses being small and vertical in scale compared to the massive waterfront storehouses of the nineteenth century.

Rope Walks was the most dilapidated and abandoned quarter of the city centre and has been the subject of intensive regeneration under a succession of funding packages targeted on buildings and the public realm. Progressively, many of the original warehouses have been transformed to modern uses, both commercial and residential. A major challenge has been presented by the number of empty sites, many of them scars remaining from the Second World War (Figure 8).



Figure 8 Duke Street. The conservation philosophy behind the regeneration of Rope Walks has been minimum intervention coupled with contemporary intervention. This has given rise to challenging issues of design, scale and relationships. The design solution for this street corner, which comprises a surviving building in poor condition and an infill site, is for a new steel and glass building to which the retained street façade will adhere like a postage stamp from history. The word 'contemporary' does of course have a double meaning: occurring at the present time; and conforming to modern ideas in style or fashion.

Urban Splash

Urban Splash, established in Liverpool in 1993, is credited with kick-starting the creative re-use of historic buildings in the city, initially in the city centre, then city-wide. Urban Splash has since become one of the major players in the regeneration of industrial complexes and urban communities across the north of England (Figures 9 and 10).

Housing Market Renewal Initiative

The Housing Market Renewal Initiative – better known as Pathfinder – was launched early in 2003 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (since 2006, the Department for Communities and Local Government) as a key component of a programme of action for delivering sustainable communities.¹⁵ It was directed at addressing perceived oversupply and undervalue in the housing market in urban areas across the West Midlands and north of England that had suffered serious socio-economic decline following the closure of traditional industries such as coal-mining, ship-building, textiles and other manufacturing. The basis for the initiative was a report by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham, a report that matched and was supported by construction industry interests.

Pathfinder identified nine subregional areas from Birmingham in the south to Tyneside in the north comprising a total of 77 regeneration neighbourhoods. One of the nine areas encompassed parts of East Lancashire, including Nelson; another, Merseyside, affected neighbourhoods in the Wirral, Sefton and inner Liverpool.¹⁶



Figure 9 The neo-Gothic former Collegiate Institution, Shaw Street (1840–43; Harvey Lonsdale Elmes, architect – architect also of the Neo-Classical St George’s Hall) was gutted by fire in 1994. Urban Splash restored the street elevations, converted the shell into apartments, rebuilt the rear elevation, and created a walled garden within the roofless former lecture theatre (remodelled 2001; Shed KM architects).



Figure 10 Urban Splash converted the former Bryant and May match factory in the Garston district of the city (built 1919–21) to business uses, incorporating new circulation towers into the rear, courtyard elevation (remodelled 2002; Shed KM architects). Urban Splash have also acquired the Art Deco former Littlewoods building on Edge Lane for a mixed-use development.

The initiative represented a government investment of £1.2 billion over the period 2003–08, primarily focused at recovering values in the housing property market by programmes of mass demolition – initially estimated to involve the loss of up to 400,000 pre-1919 terraced houses – new building and refurbishment.

From the outset Pathfinder attracted criticism from residents, the heritage lobby – including English Heritage, SAVE Britain’s Heritage and the Victorian Society – politicians and the media. The timing of the initiative was ill-judged in relation to the sustained nationwide price escalation in the private housing market from around 2000 onwards, and ignored the reported overall shortage across the region of housing to accommodate the increasing number of households.

Likened to a revival of 1950s and 1960s programmes of slum clearance, Pathfinder failed to take heed of the established social, material and heritage values of buildings and neighbourhoods that offer the sense of place, belonging and cohesion that are the *sine qua non* of sustainable communities. Indeed, by reducing the supply and artificially driving up prices, Pathfinder has inevitably resulted in the measurable loss of affordable housing, thus marginalizing still further those households and communities in greatest need of support. Values in an inflated, credit-funded private marketplace represent a crude guide for policies aimed at regenerating the housing stock and reviving sustainable communities, especially in socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

Place-making based on historic character analysis did not inform the Pathfinder concept. Neither did community engagement or retraining opportunities in refurbishment skills involving self-help groups, co-operatives or new business start-ups. Pathfinder was a good, old-fashioned, top-down, politically-driven programme based on quantities and speed: of housing stock to be ‘renewed’, of capital funding to be ‘invested’, and of tightly defined delivery dates and spending targets.

Inevitably, many of the neighbourhoods most affected by the nine individual pathfinders were historic places allied to the industries that underscored Britain’s heyday as a world manufacturing and trading power from the late eighteenth through to the early twentieth centuries – including those in Liverpool.

From the premise that Liverpool’s population halved between 1931 and 2006 it might be assumed that there is a considerable surfeit of housing in the city. Wartime bombing, clearances in the 1950s and 60s, and the demolition in recent years of inferior modern estates located away from the city centre have dented this perception. Additionally, Liverpool has a 60,000-strong student population across its three universities,¹⁷ and space standards in housing have dramatically increased since the 1930s, as have the proportionate of households.

Liverpool retains a large number of pre-1919 terraced houses, variously estimated as comprising almost 50% of the overall housing stock and totalling around 70,000 in number. The Merseyside pathfinder initially earmarked 20,000 of these for demolition, thereby blighting the affected neighbourhoods. This pathfinder was given the brand name of 'New Heartlands'; locals renamed it 'New Heartbreak' and 'New Wastelands'.

Liverpool's status and wealth as a trading rather than a manufacturing city is reflected in the quality of the everyday houses: mostly between two and four storeys in height complete with entrance halls, generous bay windows, small front gardens together with rear gardens or yards. They offer desirable, well-located residences that are typical of inner-city housing types that command premium prices in cities up and down the country (Figure 11). Those that are too large for single families are well-suited to extended families; subdivision offers a range of options for students and smaller households.

Community resistance has so far reduced to 5,000 the number of houses to be demolished; the remainder are being upgraded. Many of those still programmed for demolition are on the Edge Lane road transport corridor – part of the city's traffic planning to improve this 'gateway' into the city centre: the focus of European Capital of Culture and its follow-up; the location of the World Heritage Site; and the scene of massive private investment in new commercial developments such as Liverpool One. This



Figure 11 Skerries Road is located in part of the Stanley Park and Anfield clearance area; it is one of several streets to have been reprieved. Houses that could be bought for less than £5,000 in 2002 were selling for over £130,000 in 2007. At the very least this suggests that the Merseyside pathfinder was mistimed.

again represents a failure to embrace the heritage challenge holistically, to address loss of coherence in the urban grain, and to engage positively with the diversity of the city's communities and their broad appreciation of the historic environment.

Historic urban landscape and the management of change

UNESCO World Heritage Committee 2004 and 2006

Lively discussion took place at the 2004 meeting of the World Heritage Committee before it was decided to add Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City to the World Heritage List. Concern was expressed at the potential impact of the spectrum of development and design-led pressures within the site, and specifically at the images it was shown of the so-called 'fourth grace', the glittering cloud-like structure designed by architect Will Alsop for the new Museum of Liverpool on part of Mann Island immediately to the south of Pier Head.¹⁸ That project was abandoned shortly afterwards.

The meeting of the same committee two years later recalled the earlier decision and reported 'great concern' at the dominant nature of the substitute project that was then being considered and requested 'the State Party to invite a joint ... monitoring mission to consider the impact of these proposals on the World Heritage property'.¹⁹ It also urged 'the State Party to put in place strategic plans for future development that set out clear strategies for the overall townscape and for the skyline and river front'.

The preparation of a nomination to the World Heritage Committee requires the applicant to justify the criteria of 'outstanding universal value' from a historical and comparative perspective, to meet benchmarks of authenticity and integrity in a site's current state of conservation, and to demonstrate that the site has adequate protection and management mechanisms in place to ensure that the conditions of authenticity and integrity that existed at the time of inscription will be maintained or enhanced in the future.²⁰

The nomination document and management plan that were submitted for the 2004 meeting of the World Heritage Committee championed inscription on the premise that the surviving urban landscape testified to the historical role of Liverpool as a great port city and defined its 'tangible authenticity' (Figure 12).²¹ The trio of buildings at the Pier Head is described as the focal point: 'They form a dramatic manifestation of Liverpool's historical significance ... [whose] vast scale ... allows them to dominate the waterfront when approaching by ship.'

The decision text of the 2006 meeting of the World Heritage Committee reflected recognition that adequate management mechanisms were not in place at the time of inscription, a situation that the city council has sought, retrospectively, to address.



Figure 12 The Albert Dock complex of warehouses typifies the urban landscape of the Merseyside waterfront at the time of Liverpool's pre-eminence as a port city. With the exception of the buildings at the Pier Head, the waterfront was characterized by long, low, brick-built dockside warehouses. The rising ground behind allowed the skyline to add to this landscape – here featuring the Anglican cathedral.

Policy initiatives in Liverpool

The United Kingdom planning system is considered by many – rightly or wrongly – to be one of the best in the world, with its plethora of policy guidance and development plans allied to checks and balances through the democratic process. The legislation that relates to the historic environment is, however, focused on its fragmented parts: scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and conservation areas. There are currently no special provisions for World Heritage Sites – except as a ‘key material consideration’ – in the planning process.²² Given the overtly arbitrary nature of the World Heritage List, with its emphasis on a global strategy that precludes the addition of such world-renowned monuments as St Paul's Cathedral and cities such as Cambridge, Oxford and York, there is a substantive argument that protection of our historic environment should be addressed first and foremost according to the standards expected under mature, national criteria – standards which in this author's view should be at least as high as those anticipated for selected sites under international conventions.

Under the heritage policy review for England, 2000 onwards, the fragmented parts have been given the collective term of ‘heritage assets’, and the 2007 Heritage White Paper confirms proposals to consolidate these parts into a single register and to co-ordinate administrative and consent procedures.²³ The system does not have – nor does the White Paper propose that it should have – any policies, guidance or legislation that address historic cities holistically. Given that this policy review is vaunted as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reassess and consolidate heritage protection policy, its projected outcome tinkers with the

bureaucracy of established designations without adding value to them. Not only did the review fail to co-ordinate with the Urban Task Force, it did not consider mechanisms that would address historic cities as coherent entities.²⁴ In France, for example, and since the enactment of the 1930 Sites Law, the designation of urban sites has protected the historic landscape of entire cities – such as Paris, Chartres and Lyons. Is it too late to remedy such a serious omission in the United Kingdom?

In the absence of overarching designations, mechanisms in the United Kingdom are at best cumbersome; at worst, ambiguous and ineffective. The report that was drafted by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for the 2004 meeting of the World Heritage Committee reported that Liverpool was in the process of preparing a tall buildings policy.²⁵ The city council drafted an initial tall buildings assessment in 2004, and this has guided policy since; an urban design and policy analysis was finalized in 2006.²⁶

The underlying tone of this guidance is permissive. It speaks of ‘positively managing the development of new tall buildings in Liverpool’ and of their being ‘of a sufficient height to deem them of citywide significance’, especially in areas of high intensity of commercial use as well as former industrial areas. The waterfront north of Pier Head, which is in the World Heritage Site buffer zone but not predominantly part of it or within a conservation area, is identified on plan as suitable for new tall buildings. Lime Street station, a transport node, is identified as suitable for a cluster of them. Since World Heritage inscription in 2004 there have been numerous proposals that coincide with this guidance: some built; others approved (Figures 13 and 14). There is no shortage of building land across the city; the need for tall buildings has, however, not been challenged, nor have locations for them away from the historic core been promoted.

The city’s guidance focuses on protecting views of famous landmarks from specific viewpoints – ‘viewing corridors’ – rather than overall panoramas that defend context and setting; it adopts a methodology that – like the protective system – is fragmentary. Such guidance is well-suited to supporting dramatic change in the historic urban landscape, as is national guidance published in 2007 which recommends ‘that local authorities should now identify appropriate locations for tall buildings in their development plan documents’.²⁷

Historic urban landscape

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre recognizes that established concepts and management tools for historic cities, based as they are on international conservation charters and recommendations that date back several decades, do not attach sufficient importance to today’s parallel agendas



Figure 13 Panorama of the waterfront from the seaward north-west (August 2007).



Figure 14 Panorama of the waterfront from the south-west (August 2007). The great tobacco warehouse at Stanley Dock features at the far left; Pier Head right.

The Liverpool waterfront immediately to the north of Pier Head. None of the taller modern buildings in these photographs features in the documentation that was submitted for the 2004 meeting of the World Heritage Committee. These buildings display a motley array of heights, materials and colours with no self-evident relationship to the city's defining historic urban landscape.

of intangible cultural heritage and sustainability. Nor are they adequate to meet major current challenges such as high-rise buildings within or adjacent to historic cities, iconic modern architecture, or – as has been experienced over the past decade in Liverpool – the dynamics of rapid socio-economic change.

Faced with threats posed by a number of high-profile projects in cities such as Vienna, Cologne, Esfahan, St Petersburg and the City of London, the World Heritage Centre is driving a global initiative aimed at elaborating a new standard-setting instrument for the safeguarding of 'historic urban landscapes'. The term is intended to embrace cityscape, natural elements, urban morphology, functionality, authenticity and integrity, *genius loci*, and all the associated intangible values. The intention is to submit a formal recommendation on the subject to the UNESCO General Conference in

2009.²⁸ This should establish an international benchmark against which the management of change at the scale of historic cities may be gauged.

Joint monitoring mission and follow-up

The joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre and International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) monitoring mission, which was anticipated at the 2006 meeting of the World Heritage Committee, took place in the autumn of that year. It was set against the background of the global initiative on historic urban landscapes; in effect, Liverpool has become a case study.²⁹

The mission assessed the overall state of conservation of the six components of the World Heritage Site, their authenticity and integrity, and recognized past and present actions to restore and rehabilitate historic buildings, to re-establish the site's coherence through the infill of vacant lots and redesign in the public realm and through the redevelopment of sites that were poorly planned and rebuilt in the decades immediately following the Second World War.

Concerning the Mann Island project, the mission was satisfied with the much reduced height of replacement architect Kim Neilsen's project for the Museum of Liverpool which is currently on site. The report noted, however, that the project's massive scale, fiercely angled planes and asymmetry deviate from the historic character of the area, and advised that the design brief should have described the site's characteristics, specifically the verticality and rhythm of the existing landmark buildings. The report emphasized that where recent international documents such as the 2005 *Vienna Memorandum*³⁰ call for interventions to be contemporary, they also call for harmonious integration, not iconic modernity.

The mission report commended sectional guidance that is already in place in the city,³¹ and confirmed the follow-up commitment of the city council to produce a World Heritage Site supplementary planning document with the aim of introducing stricter planning controls over the site, based on a thorough analysis and articulation of its townscape characteristics, building density, urban pattern and sense of place.

At the time of writing, this supplementary planning document has been commissioned but not finalized. Meantime, the city council has been more rigorous in its decision-making processes concerning the detail of individual design projects and their impact on visual integrity of the site, and a number of putative and formally submitted planning applications have been beneficially modified as a result.

The dilemma: trading city or waterfront city?

Liverpool has been in a continuous process of change and renewal for 800 years, exaggerated by the cycle of 200 years of boom as a trading port followed by post-Second World War bust. In its heyday it was a pioneering city on the world stage, and this was recognized by its inscription on the World Heritage List in 2004. Functionally, however, it is no longer a maritime mercantile city.

The conservationist's methodology of characterization portrays how people have exploited, changed and adapted to their physical environment over time. The dynamics of the historical layering of Liverpool are such that the oldest building in city centre is less than 300 years old (the former Blue Coat School, now Bluecoat Chambers; 1716–18).

Defining the *genius loci* or spirit of place of Liverpool and articulating its physical manifestations at any given historical period – for example during the First World War at the time of the completion of the landmark trio of buildings at Pier Head – is a relatively simple exercise. Defining that sense of place today, let alone predicting its future identity, would be difficult enough in itself without the added international obligation to protect and conserve its 'outstanding universal value'.

One answer is for the former trading port to become a waterfront city. A parody of one of Liverpool's twin cities, Shanghai, is already taking shape north of Pier Head. Another solution is for Liverpool to seek to become a clone of Manchester, with its growing festoon of city-centre towers, more populous catchment area, and strongly competing 'retail experience'. But does either of these constitute a world city of the twenty-first century, let alone one that respects its unique history and is sustainable?

Conclusion

The management of change at the scale of historic cities with a view to the protection and enhancement of core environmental, social, economic and cultural values is a highly complex field. Liverpool has lost the international trading role that defined the city for almost 300 years and has yet to consolidate a distinctive alternative. In the process, while much good conservation work has taken place, much serious damage has arisen – particularly at the waterfront.

The vision statement in the World Heritage Site management plan states that it will manage the site 'as an exemplary demonstration of sustainable development and heritage-led regeneration'.³² There is a strong sense in which this vision should be applied to the city as a whole.

The current wave of investment into the built heritage, broad cultural offer, employment and commerce is focused on the city centre, with only a

limited spectrum of initiatives directed towards the historic environment and communities beyond. Past loss of coherence in the urban grain is not being addressed; indeed, Pathfinder continues to threaten inner-city neighbourhoods that fall in its wake. ‘Stop the Rot’ has helped save a number of buildings at risk, but the challenges presented by tall buildings and contemporary design in architecture remain.

The fragmentary nature of United Kingdom protection policy, of the ‘viewing corridors’ methodology behind the supportive approach to tall buildings policy, and indeed of the six components of Liverpool’s World Heritage Site, does not offer clear answers, even for the city centre and waterfront – let alone for the wider city.

Liverpool’s historic urban landscape managed to absorb and survive several decades of neglect and mismanagement, albeit in a depleted state. Can it survive the United Kingdom model of heritage-led regeneration? Should we continue with a heritage policy review that tinkers with the bureaucracy of established designations, or take up the full challenge of a once-in-a-generation opportunity and establish effective instruments for the management of change at the scale of historic cities?

Biography

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Dennis Rodwell is based in south-east Scotland. He works internationally as a consultant architect-planner, focusing on the promotion and achievement of best practice in the management of historic cities and the conservation of historic buildings. In recent years he has undertaken a number of missions on behalf of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Division of Cultural Heritage, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the World Bank and the British Council. Previously in practice in Edinburgh as a conservation architect, he has also served as conservation officer and urban designer to the city of Derby, England, and promoted the rescue and re-use of a number of historic buildings at risk. The illustrations in this paper are the copyright of the author.

Notes

- 1 The history, urban planning and architecture of the city of Liverpool are well set out in: Sharples, J., *Liverpool*, Pevsner Architectural Guides, Yale University Press, New Haven and London (2004); and Liverpool City Council, *Nomination of Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City for Inscription on the World Heritage List*, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool (2003).
- 2 Liverpool was granted city status in 1880; it covers an area of 112 sq km and is governed by Liverpool City Council.
- 3 Hope Street was named in the late eighteenth century after William Hope, a Liverpool merchant. The Anglican cathedral, designed in Gothic style by Sir Giles

- Gilbert Scott, was built 1904–78. The Metropolitan cathedral boasts two distinct phases as well as architects: the crypt, in monumental Classical style, by Sir Edwin Lutyens, built 1933–40; and the superstructure, nicknamed locally ‘Paddy’s wigwam’, by Sir Frederick Gibberd, built 1962–67.
- 4 Chambers, R., ‘St George’s Hall, Liverpool: A Review of Recent Work’, *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, Vol. 13, No. 1, March 2007, pp. 37–56.
 - 5 Rodwell, D., ‘Approaches to Urban Conservation in Central and Eastern Europe’, *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, Vol. 9, No. 2, July 2003, pp. 22–40.
 - 6 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *World Heritage Sites: The Tentative List of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, DCMS, London (1999).
 - 7 The World Heritage Committee’s *Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible World Heritage List* is set out at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy> (accessed 6 May 2008).
 - 8 ‘Cultural landscapes’ are defined as cultural properties that represent the ‘combined works of nature and of man’ at paragraph 47 of: UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, UNESCO, Paris (latest revision, January 2008). Further information may be found at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/> (accessed 6 May 2008).
 - 9 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *op. cit.* (1999).
 - 10 The relevant criteria of inscription are as follows: (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design; (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; and (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.
 - 11 Sharples, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
 - 12 The Pier Head trio of buildings comprises, north to south: Royal Liver Building (1908–11; Walter Aubrey Thomas, architect); former Cunard Building (1914–16; Willink & Thicknesse, architects, with Arthur J Davis); former offices of Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (now Port of Liverpool Building) (1903–07; Briggs & Wolstenholme, architects, with Hobbs & Thornely).
 - 13 CAMRA Liverpool and Districts, *Liverpool Historic Pub Guide*, CAMRA Liverpool and Districts, Liverpool (2006).
 - 14 HELP publishes a periodic newsletter: issue 1 appeared in October 2003; available from English Heritage North West Region and Liverpool City Council. Books include: Giles, C. and Hawkins, B., *Storehouses of Empire: Liverpool’s Historic Warehouses*, English Heritage, London (2004).
 - 15 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), *Sustainable Communities: Building for the future*, ODPM, London (2003).
 - 16 References include: Owen-John, H., ‘Pathfinders and the historic environment’, *Context*, Institute of Historic Building Conservation, November 2003; Wilkinson, A., *Pathfinder*, SAVE Britain’s Heritage, London (2006); Muthesius, S., ‘The Victorian Terrace: An endangered species again?’, *The Victorian*, The Victorian Society, London, March 2006; and Morgan, A., ‘Pathway to destruction?’, *The Victorian*, The Victorian Society, London, March 2006.
 - 17 University of Liverpool; Liverpool John Moores University; Liverpool Hope University.

- 18 Decision 28 COM 14B.49 at: UNESCO, *Decisions adopted at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, 2004)*, UNESCO, Paris (2004), <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/132> (accessed 6 May 2008).
- 19 Decision 30 COM 7B.93 at: UNESCO, *Decisions adopted at the 30th session of the World Heritage Committee (Vilnius, 2006)*, UNESCO, Paris (2006), <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1180> (accessed 6 May 2008).
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- 22 Department of the Environment and Department of National Heritage, *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment*, PPG 15, HMSO, London (1994).
- 23 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century*, DCMS, London (2007).
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- 25 ICOMOS, 'Advisory body evaluation: nomination of Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City', ICOMOS, Paris (March 2004), http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/1150.pdf (accessed 6 May 2008).
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- 27 Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and English Heritage, *Guidance on Tall Buildings*, CABE and English Heritage (July 2007).
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- 29 Van Oers, R. and Bonnette, M., 'Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City: Mission Report'. UNESCO, Paris (2006), <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1252> (accessed 22 January 2008); Decision 31 COM 7B.121 at: UNESCO, *Decisions adopted at the 31st session of the World Heritage Committee (Christchurch, 2007)*, UNESCO, Paris (2007).
- 30 UNESCO, *Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape*, UNESCO, Paris (2005), <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-48-3.doc> (accessed 6 May 2008).
- 31 Liverpool City Council, *Urban Design Guide*, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool (2003); Liverpool City Council, *Rope Walks Supplementary Planning Document*, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool (2005).
- 32 Liverpool City Council, *Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City: Management Plan*, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool (2003).