Industrial Heritage Sites in Transformation

Clash of Discourses

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Heritage and Development—Bridging the Gap?

Dennis Rodwell

In June 2004, at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Suzhou, China, the Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The nomination of Liverpool the previous year was integral to a concerted governmental and nongovernmental strategy to place cultural heritage at the forefront of reviving the city's fortunes for the 21st century (Rodwell, 2008). Liverpool's waterfront and commercial center had been featured in the United Kingdom's 1999 Tentative List of potential candidates for future nomination to UNESCO as part of a carefully devised response to gaps that had been identified in the World Heritage List, including in the categories of industrial archeology and cultural landscapes (DCMS, 1999). The Tentative List itemized 25 sites, of which nine focused on the nation's pivotal role in world industrialization and seven reflected Britain's singular impact as an imperial and trading power and through culture.

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 18th through to the early 20th century (Liverpool City Council, 2003a; 2003b). 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—symbolized by the Pier Head group of buildings that form one of the most recognizable waterfront ensembles in the world. In June 2012, the 36th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, placed Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger. This first step could lead to the site being removed from the World Heritage List at a future session of the Committee, as with the precedent of Dresden Elbe Valley: inscribed in 2004, placed on the "in danger" list in 2006, and delisted in 2009. The June 2012 decision followed Liverpool City Council's granting of outline planning consent for a major new development (known as Liverpool Waters) within and contiguous to the World Heritage Site; and the conclusion reached by the joint UNESCO–ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission in November 2011 that the proposed development would irreversibly damage the outstanding universal value of the UNESCO

site (UNESCO, 2011a). The previous UNESCO–ICOMOS mission in October 2006 had concluded that developments already completed since World Heritage inscription in 2004, together with others agreed at the planning stage, would not have an adverse effect on the site's outstanding universal value (UNESCO, 2006). In the debate that preceded the in-danger listing in 2012, the mayor of Liverpool described the UNESCO status as a "plaque on the wall" (as cited in Bartlett, 2012), one that was dispensable if it interfered with economic development objectives for the city. The mayor is also on the board of directors of Liverpool Vision, an economic development company within the city. This debate has polarized heritage and development objectives for the city, undermining more than a decade of efforts to harness them to common purpose. This paper addresses three questions:

- Does this signal an intractable conflict between the two objectives, or a specific failure in this instance?
- Where are the interests of heritage protection and contemporary architecture positioned in this dialogue, and has UNESCO illuminated or confused this discourse?
- How can the gap be bridged?

This paper explores these questions against the complex background of historical and present-day events and influences.

3.1 LIVERPOOL: THE RISE AND FALL OF A GREAT PORT CITY

3.1.1 Liverpool Ascendant

Liverpool's development as one of the great port cities of the world began in the second half of the 17th century, with the import of cargoes of tobacco and sugar from the colonies in America and the West Indies, and the reciprocal export of manufactured wares from industries in the Midlands and North of England (Sharples, 2004). Through the 18th century, Liverpool developed as a major port of exchange in the slave trade between West Africa and the Americas. This trade was abolished in 1807. Throughout the 19th and into the 20th centuries, Liverpool prospered as Britain and Northern Europe's foremost trans-Atlantic port for the import of produce and raw materials, export of manufactured goods, and the migration of people to the New World. In its heyday, Liverpool deferred only to London as the second city of the empire.

3.1.2 Liverpool Descendant

The critical distinguishing characteristic of Liverpool is its geographical location at a landward terminus that leads only to the sea, coupled with the city's reliance, during its period of ascendancy, almost entirely on shipping,

maritime trade, and associated banking, commerce, and industries. These limitations inspired the city's rise to fortune in the 18th century just as they determined its decline in the 20th. Liverpool's descent from one of the world's great commercial seaport cities was hastened by the depression that succeeded the First World War, aggravated by severe aerial bombardment in the early 1940s, and completed by the post-Second World War change in international shipping practices from manually intensive dockside to predominantly automated containerization employing far larger ships with a deeper draught. By the 1970s, Liverpool had ceased to be a maritime mercantile city, with parallel impacts on dependent commerce and manufacturing, and severe knock-on effects for the socioeconomic life of the city's communities. In population terms, Liverpool peaked in 1931 when the census counted 846,101 inhabitants.[1] By 1961, this had fallen to 683,133 and by 2001 to 439,476—a low point of slightly more than half the 1931 figure. Official projections presently forecast stabilization of the population at around 460,000 by 2021 (Liverpool City Council, 2014). Liverpool's decline in the 20th century was so dramatic and catastrophic that by the 1980s it came to be regarded as an intractable problem by the British government (Stamp, 2007). At the time, certain London-based politicians advocated that Liverpool should be abandoned to "managed decline" (BBC News, 2011; Vanstiphout, 2012).

By the 1990s, the aggregation of citywide disuse and decay, untreated wartime bomb damage, and planning blight resulting from overambitious and misguided post-war redevelopment proposals had combined to produce a legacy of serious scars and lack of coherence in the urban geography of the city. Furthermore, it presented a heritage challenge without parallel elsewhere in the United Kingdom. A condition survey of listed buildings in the city conducted by English Heritage in 1991 identified more than 351 at risk (out of a total of 2,651) and 100 at extreme risk, both significantly above the national average (English Heritage, 2002).

3.1.3 Dilemma for the 21st Century

The aim to recover a global identity for this former second city of the empire is at the heart of the debate that has led to Liverpool's inscription on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger. This objective has followed parallel partnerships and paths for economic development and cultural promotion. Initially, it was thought that these could operate in harmony, but the ambition to recover the status of "world city" in economic terms—starting from a seriously negative position—has come to dominate the political agenda and underscored the primordial potential for conflict. The situation has called for extreme care on the part of all concerned, especially the national and international heritage organizations. See Table 3.1.

At the same time, and of crucial importance to assessing how the gap between heritage and development objectives for Liverpool can be bridged,

Table 3.1 Liverpool's Search for a New Global Identity in the 21st Century: Seeds of the Conflict between City of Culture and Economic Development © Dennis Rodwell

Date	Event
1994	Merseyside granted Objective 1 status under European Union regional funding policy.
1999	Britain's first Urban Regeneration Company, Liverpool Vision, established: focused on economic development. Liverpool twinned with Shanghai; historically China's foremost mercantile trading port whose historic urban landscape echoed Liverpool's (Denison & Yu Ren, 2006). Liverpool placed on the United Kingdom's Tentative List to UNESCO.
2002	Historic Environment of Liverpool Project (HELP) launched by English Heritage and partners.
2004	Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.
2005	UNESCO *Vienna Memorandum.*
2006	First UNESCO-ICOMOS monitoring mission to Liverpool World Heritage Site.
2007	Celebration of the city's 800th anniversary, designated Year of Heritage (Belchem, 2006). Completion of the £22 million restoration of St George's Hall.
2008	European Capital of Culture, under the theme of The World in One City, celebrating Liverpool's collective culture, from the fine arts to popular entertainment, and three centuries of religious and ethnic diversity. Opening of first phase of Liverpool One, vaunted as the largest retail-led city center regeneration project in Europe (Early, 2006).
2011	Opening of the first phase of the Museum of Liverpool on the Pier Head. UNESCO *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape.* Second UNESCO-ICOMOS monitoring mission to Liverpool World Heritage Site.
2012	March: Liverpool City Council grants outline planning consent to Liverpool Waters. June: Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City placed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger. October: Liverpool Waters outline planning consent forwarded by Liverpool City Council to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.
2013	March: Secretary of State endorses the City Council's decision to grant consent to Liverpool Waters.

it is important to keep in view that we live in an age of both expanding and shrinking world cities, varying by such factors as geography and stage of socio-economic development (Pallagst et al., 2009). An alternative approach for Liverpool—one that acknowledges that the population has leveled out, and that consolidation of the city's cultural, human, and material assets would provide the best platform for a sustainable future for the citywide population—forms no part of the current political agenda in the city (Couch & Cocks, 2011).

3.2 HERITAGE-LED REGENERATION IN LIVERPOOL

3.2.1 Launch of a Renaissance

In the summer of 1981, in the wake of street riots in the Toxteth district that were symptomatic of the underlying socioeconomic problems in the city (riots recurred in Toxteth during 2011), Secretary of State for the Environment Michael Heseltine launched a raft of central-government-sponsored regeneration initiatives in the city and its surroundings (Heseltine, 2000). Of these, the Merseyside Development Corporation served as the catalyst for the city's pioneering project of heritage-led regeneration, the monumental Albert Dock. Commenced in 1983, formally opened in 1988, and finally completed in 2003, it remains the city's showpiece restoration and conversion project as well as its most popular multi-use visitor attraction. 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 was accompanied by an unparalleled array of heritage-led initiatives and partnerships between the public and private sectors. These 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, or from the range of creatively interlinked funding packages that enabled so much to happen within such a short span of time.

3.2.2 Heritage and Culture Initiatives

Historic Environment of Liverpool Project

In 2002, the groundbreaking Historic Environment of Liverpool Project (HELP) was launched by English Heritage in partnership with Liverpool City Council, the North West Development Agency, National Museums Liverpool, Liverpool Vision, and the Liverpool Culture Company. Its activities included detailed studies of the city's built heritage and archeology, the design and implementation of a buildings-at-risk strategy, and a range of educational and community projects, exhibitions, and publications (Stonard, 2003).

Rope Walks

Rope Walks, the largely Georgian (a period that covers 1714–1830) mercantile quarter of merchants' houses and warehouses that predates the complex of wet docks and warehouses that line the east bank of the river Mersey, was the most dilapidated and abandoned quarter of the city (Liverpool City Council, 2005). The subject of a decade-long £40 million regeneration program targeted on buildings as well as public space, the area became one of the most vibrant commercial and residential areas of the city center.

St. George's Hall

One of the major individual success stories of the 2000s was the £22 million restoration of St. George's Hall, a neo-Grecian masterpiece described as "one of the finest in the world" (Sharples, 2004), which had been considered for demolition in the 1980s. The comprehensive restoration program was completed in time for the city's 800th anniversary celebrations in 2007 (Jackson, 2007).

European Capital of Culture

The rich cultural diversity of the city, from the elitist to the populist, underscored the slogan for Liverpool's successful bid to become European Capital of Culture 2008: "The World in One City". This focused international attention and national celebration on Liverpool's exceptional cultural 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; and the sporting prowess of its rival football clubs, Everton and Liverpool. Additionally, Liverpool claims the oldest Chinese community in Europe and has long-established East African and Jewish communities.

3.3 LIVERPOOL MARITIME MERCANTILE CITY WORLD HERITAGE SITE, 2004

The development of the nomination to UNESCO in 2002–2003, to which the HELP contributed substantively, formed a core part of the re-articulation of Liverpool as a world city for the 21st century. Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004 under UNESCO criteria (ii), (iii), and (iv).[2] The 136-hectare World Heritage Site comprises six disparate components that are either contiguous or linked on plan by lengths of fortress-like walls that formerly enclosed the docks. The site and its 750-hectare buffer zone were delineated two- rather than three-dimensionally on plan—as UNESCO guidance anticipated—thereby sowing elemental seeds for conflict between heritage and development interests.[3]

The state party's 2003 nomination document and management plan championed the inscription of Liverpool on the premise that the surviving urban landscape (which the documents also refer to as "outstanding") testified to the historical role of Liverpool as a great port city and defined its "tangible authenticity". 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" (Liverpool City Council, 2003a, 2003b). The pre-inscription 2004 ICOMOS advisory report described the nominated site as "a complete and integral urban landscape that provides coherent evidence of Liverpool's historic character and bears testament to

its exceptional historical significance" (ICOMOS, 2004). The ICOMOS report also noted that the city council was in the process of preparing a tall buildings policy, and whereas it expressed satisfaction that the buffer zone had been drawn sufficiently wide to protect the nominated area, it highlighted the need to monitor the processes of change to the site and its surroundings vigilantly, especially changes in use and new constructions. The report omitted, however, to make any mention of "urban landscape" in its draft wording for the statement of outstanding universal value; critically, this was not corrected by UNESCO at the time of inscription. Given that the statement of outstanding universal value is the benchmark that conditions subsequent monitoring of a World Heritage Site, this was a serious oversight.

The Liverpool nomination provoked lengthy debate at the 2004 session of the World Heritage Committee, including focus on the physical and visual impact of the controversial design for a "Fourth Grace" adjacent to the Pier Head group (dubbed the "Three Graces"), an iconic "cloud-like" structure designed by the architect Will Alsop (Jencks, 2005), for which no clear function was envisioned. For the council leader, it was sufficient to say: "We want the Fourth Grace to be a statement of intent that Liverpool is a world-class city with world-class architecture" (as cited in Booth & Gates, 2002). Although Alsop's project was dropped following the inscription (Gates, 2004; Hurst et al., 2004), the city's determination to build at this location was the primary prompt for the 2006 UNESCO–ICOMOS mission.

3.3.1 Context in Time and Space

The 2006 and 2011 UNESCO–ICOMOS reactive monitoring missions, discussed below, additionally need to be interpreted in relation to the wider national and international policy context of the time.

3.3.2 Heritage Protection in England

Protective legislation for the United Kingdom historic environment is strategically weak and focused on fragmented parts. Whereas national registers include individual and groups of listed buildings, there is no overarching designation for historic cities, none for World Heritage Sites, and the concept of a buffer zone is not comprehended. Thus, urban sites such as Liverpool are propelled from an assemblage of policy fragments to the status of World Heritage in the absence of a nationally formulated protective framework that embraces them. Given that the United Kingdom planning system is both primordially negotiable and permissive in the interests of development, conflict with the international conservation community is all but inevitable.

Failings in the United Kingdom system are also acknowledged from within. At the 2008 English Heritage conference *On the Waterfront*, the

workshop question "Planning systems, do they fit the current needs of historic port cities?" elicited the unambiguous response that the United Kingdom planning system does not fit the needs of any historic cities, let alone port cities (as cited in Rodwell, 2011). National planning guidance in England provides two further opportunities for conflict between heritage and development in historic cities, both of which have impacted on the Liverpool World Heritage Site.

First, *Guidance on Tall Buildings* recommended "that local authorities should identify appropriate locations for tall buildings in their development plan documents" in the interests of encouraging innovative architecture in cities and as "beacons of regeneration" (CABE: The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment & English Heritage, 2007). The city's tall buildings study 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 (including dockland) (Liverpool City Council, 2006). The study assumes that the World Heritage Site comprises solely the 136-hectare extent of its six disparate components—where tall buildings would not be permitted—but that they may be considered appropriate in parts of the 750-hectare buffer zone, which includes Prince's Dock immediately to the north of the Pier Head Group as well as the site for Liverpool Waters.

Second, the English Heritage report *Seeing the History in the View* (2011) exacerbated the risks to the overarching urban landscape of cities by reinforcing a "picture postcard" methodology for protecting the views of selected monuments from predetermined vantage points. The abovementioned tall buildings study for Liverpool anticipated *Seeing the History in the View*. It ignored the overall panoramas that protect the context and setting for the World Heritage Site and instead focused on safeguarding the "viewing corridors" of specified landmarks from set viewpoints.

3.3.3 "Contemporary" Architectural Interventions

A further ingredient to the cocktail of opportunities for conflict is the word *contemporary* when applied to architectural interventions in the historic environment. The insistence in Article 21 of the 2005 UNESCO Vienna Memorandum that interventions in the historic environment "should avoid all forms of pseudo-historical design, as they constitute a denial of both the historical and the contemporary alike" (UNESCO, 2005) has, however unintentionally, fueled one of the major challenges that confront the management of historic cities today: namely aggressive "iconic" architectural interventions. A common thread in this debate is the lack of attention that is paid to the duality of meaning of the word *contemporary*: thus, "occurring at the present time" and "conforming to modern ideas in style and fashion" are two discrete concepts.

3.3.4 Historic Urban Landscape

This initiative, a main project of the UNESCO World Heritage Cities Programme, constituted an ambitious attempt to coordinate an integrated, dynamic approach to the management of historic cities (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). It led to the adoption of a new standard-setting instrument, the *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (UNESCO, 2011b). The 2012 decision to place Liverpool on the List of World Heritage in Danger was founded upon the "soft law" of this 2011 Recommendation, which—necessarily—was not available previously. Key to this 2011 Recommendation is its definition: "The historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of a 'historic centre' or 'ensemble' to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting".

3.4 UNESCO–ICOMOS MISSIONS

3.4.1 2006 UNESCO–ICOMOS Mission

The remit for this first mission was focused on the substitute projects for Will Alsop's Fourth Grace: the waterfront Museum of Liverpool (Kim Nielsen, architect); and the neighboring Mann Island development (Broadway Malyan, architects). It was also broadened to encompass the overall situation with regard to the state of conservation of the site in its widest urban context, its integrity, and authenticity. The resultant report raised a number of detailed visual integrity and management issues, including inadequate guidance in the design briefs for the two waterfront projects, but concluded that the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site was not threatened by them (UNESCO, 2006). Inhibited by the insistence upon *contemporary* in the 2005 UNESCO Vienna Memorandum, the report deferred to the endorsement by English Heritage of the "high-quality architectural design and materialization" of these developments. This contrasts with the view expressed by ICOMOS-UK concerning the Museum design: "To seek to erect on the Pierhead a fourth building of such architectural pretension shows a fundamental misreading of the precious nature of the existing group" (Willis, 2006). It also contrasts with the attribution of "Three Disgraces" to the Mann Island development. Both developments (not surprisingly in this author's view) have vied in successive *Building Design* competitions for the infamy of the Carbuncle Cup, an annual award for the ugliest new building in Britain.

A singular omission in the mission report was any reference to the location of these developments. The Museum of Liverpool's architect is on record as saying, "Our first reaction was that you shouldn't build here" (as cited in Wainwright, 2011); also, the funding for the museum depended in part on realizing the development value of the Mann Island site, thereby compounding the error (Rodwell, 2012). Further, the Mann Island development blocks

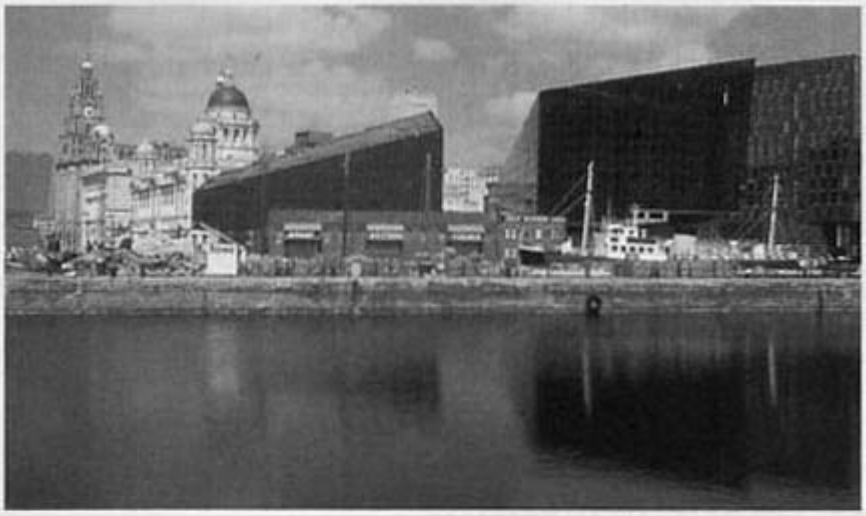

Figure 3.1 Liverpool: The Mann Island development blocks historic views of the Pier Head group. © Dennis Rodwell.

the historic view of the Pier Head group across Canning Dock, a view that did not feature in the selective analysis of views for the World Heritage Site, due to the fallacious premise that the Pier Head group was only intended to be seen two-dimensionally from the river (see Figure 3.1). It is this author's opinion, for reasons of elementary land use planning—not least the overconcentration of crowd-intensive activities in the highly confined spaces within and between Albert Dock and the Pier Head—that nothing should have been built at this location. "That is the tragedy of the 'Fourth Grace' saga. This is a site that did not need to be developed; it was and is a project that serves no real need or essential purpose" (Pollard, 2009, p. 20).

The mission report additionally concluded that the overall state of conservation of the inscribed site was good, and that redevelopment initiatives in the wider urban context were contributing to reestablishing the city's coherence following war damage and poorly planned interventions in the early post-war years. The report omitted to comment critically on the postinscription high-rise waterfront developments in the Prince's Dock area of the buffer zone, none of which featured in the documentation that was submitted to the 2004 meeting of the World Heritage Committee. Indeed, it described the urban morphology of the docks and harbors as remaining intact.

This is remarkable for a number of reasons. First, it failed to address the historic urban landscape holistically—which must be accounted for by the critical omission of any reference to "urban landscape" in the statement of outstanding universal value. Second, it ignored the explicit previous critique of one of most conflictual of the already completed developments—the

Figure 3.2 Liverpool: Panorama of the waterfront from the seaward approach to the city. © Dennis Rodwell.

27-storey Unity Residential Building (Gates, 2005). Third, it is inconsistent with the later condemnation of the Liverpool Waters project.

Overall, the conclusions and omissions of the 2006 mission report did not coincide with sentiments that were being expressed locally and in the wider media, to the effect that what had already been built and what was known to be in the pipeline had already challenged the authenticity and integrity of the World Heritage Site. The Pier Head group, the defining symbol of Liverpool, no longer "dominates the waterfront when approaching by ship" (see Figure 3.2). Tom Dyckhoff, formerly architecture critic of *The Times* newspaper, has described the new Liverpool waterfront as comprising "frivolous, flash-in-the-pan architecture that could have been built by anyone anywhere".[4]

3.4.2 2011 UNESCO–ICOMOS Mission and 2012 World Heritage Committee

The remit for this second mission was focused on Liverpool Waters, a purely speculative planning application for the development of a 60-hectare site that lies substantially within the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone, to the seaward side of the Pier Head group and north of Prince's Dock. It has been promoted as a £5.5 billion development that would provide a mixed-use development of up to 1.7 million square meters, including 9,000 residential units, 315,000 square meters of offices, 53,000 square meters of hotel and conference facilities, in addition to shops, restaurants and cafés, community and leisure uses, a cruise liner terminal, and more than 400,000 square meters of parking (Wilding, 2012). It has been reported as the United Kingdom's largest current development proposal and most probably the largest scheme being considered anywhere in the world affecting a World Heritage Site (ICOMOS-UK, 2011).

The project has been opposed within the United Kingdom by CABE on design grounds, and by English Heritage for its lack of correspondence

with the configuration and morphology of the former historic docklands. Numerous nongovernmental heritage organizations as well as individuals also oppose the scheme. The governmental objectors have concentrated on project details rather than the principle of the development. Others have questioned the threat it would pose to the functionality and ongoing investment in the historic city (Moore, 2012). Notwithstanding these objections, Liverpool Waters—which is also known as "Shanghai-Liverpool" in recognition of the twin city status since 1999—has achieved strong support from local politicians captivated by the architects' visual imagery, the sheer physical scale and financial magnitude of the project, promises of massive job creation, and by its association with the politically charged mantra of economic growth. Indicative of the negotiable and permissive nature of the United Kingdom planning system, Liverpool Waters contradicts the official population forecasts for the region and has not secured funding for its implementation. Notwithstanding, Liverpool City Council's granting of planning consent in 2012 was endorsed by the United Kingdom Government a year later.

3.4.3 2012 World Heritage Committee

Based on the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation, the 2011 UNESCO–ICOMOS mission concluded that Liverpool Waters would irreversibly threaten the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site (UNESCO, 2011a). Whereas, however, historic layering is a key driver of the UNESCO historic urban landscape approach, the decision at the June 2012 session of the World Heritage Committee to place the Liverpool site on the List of World Heritage in Danger was not related to any consideration of the need for a major new layer for the city or of its predictable impact on the future socioeconomic viability of the World Heritage Site. The 2012 UNESCO decision focused instead on issues related to urban morphology and views, notably the heights of the proposed 55-floor, 192-meter-high Shanghai Tower—the landmark feature in the Liverpool Waters imagery—together with a secondary cluster of tall buildings. As we have seen, similar considerations did not influence the 2006 UNESCO–ICOMOS mission report.

3.5 SPECIFIC CONFLICTS AND INDICATORS FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

3.5.1 Intractable Conflict between Heritage and Development Objectives, or Specific Failure?

Liverpool's inscription as a World Heritage Site was contested from the outset: "It's a sorry day for those of us that aspire for something more dynamic for Liverpool. Liverpool is a commercially-based city and many

people in power have forgotten that. The World Heritage status is not about commercial urban growth—it's a completely different emphasis on the city's growth potential" (as cited in Carpenter, 2004). Whereas this expressed an assumption that the two objectives are inherently in conflict, examples of cities throughout Europe that have successfully married heritage with development are so numerous and well known that the notion that heritage and development are irreconcilable opposites may be dismissed.

As we have seen, the renewed sense of confidence that coincided with the dawn of the new millennium was accompanied by a political determination to reassert Liverpool as a "world city". The cultural strand to this is evidenced by the successful bids for World Heritage Site status in 2004 and European Capital of Culture for 2008. Warnings, however, have been expressed for some time. In the World Heritage context, Liverpool has been cited as a European example of "heritage classifications being used as a status symbol for purposes of economic regeneration" (Askew, 2010, p. 34); and previously: "The award of the title of European City of Culture for 2008 is being used as an excuse by the Council to encourage rampant commercial development at the expense of the surviving historic fabric of the city. Some of these proposals are actually threatening the status of World Heritage Site granted by UNESCO" (Stamp, 2007, p. 113). World Heritage Site and European Capital of Culture are potent brands. On the positive side, they have served as a catalyst for positive heritage-led regeneration—in initiatives such as the Historic Environment of Liverpool Project, Rope Walks, and the restoration of St. George's Hall. At the same time, they provoked "regeneration hysteria" (Wainwright, 2011), a boom that led to "superheated inflation" in the construction industry in Liverpool (Olcayto & Hiscocks, 2008); and "a property bubble flooded with Irish capital" (Pollard, 2009, p. 20). Investment became confused with rampant speculation that failed to take account of the static baseline population of the city or to marry supply with demand in key commercial and residential sectors of the property market.

High levels of unemployment, resultant social problems, and civil unrest have characterized the city since the 1930s, and have not been addressed by successive high-value, high-profile development projects in the city center and waterfront. Indeed, Liverpool has consistently seen a higher proportion of its population claiming income support that any other city in the United Kingdom (BBC News, 2010), and the historic core and inner city areas display the highest levels of vacancy and dereliction (Experian, 2009; Hradsky, 2009). Liverpool Waters is anticipated to exacerbate this problem by siphoning investment funding away from the historic fabric in favor of what is in effect a new, competing city—one, furthermore, that currently exists simply as a speculative concept. That such a project should be entertained—let alone granted planning consent—testifies to major weaknesses in the United Kingdom planning system.

This author's view is that a cocktail of ingredients, focused on the romantic notion of recovering the status of "world city" to post-imperial, post-industrial, and post-modern Liverpool, has created a situation that is specific, has proved highly volatile, and suggests the need for a fundamental reassessment of objectives within the city.

3.5.2 UNESCO and the Discourse between Heritage Protection and Contemporary Architecture

As we have seen, the 2004 ICOMOS report highlighted the need for vigilance in monitoring the processes of change to the World Heritage Site and its surroundings, but reference to the urban landscape was not included in the statement of outstanding universal value for the inscribed site. In addition, UNESCO guidance stipulated that the boundaries of nominated sites be delineated two- rather than three-dimensionally, a simplification that avoided the need to limit the height of new developments in the management plan, notably within the buffer zone. These weaknesses, coupled with acquiescence in the design and siting of major new developments adjacent to the Pier Head group, rendered the 2006 mission complacent towards aggressive interventions in the historic urban landscape and failed to provide clarity of direction to the state party and city authorities. This lack of clarity is underscored by the contrary decision taken in 2012 to place the Liverpool site on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger in response to a purely speculative project proposed to the north of the already seriously compromised Prince's Dock.

This author's conclusion is that UNESCO has confused rather than illuminated the discourse between heritage protection and contemporary architecture in this Liverpool case; and that there is a quintessential need to learn from omissions and failings in guidance and processes, and serious inconsistency of messages.

3.5.3 Bridging the Gap?

In pursuit of the "world city" ambition, the focus to date has been on Liverpool city center and waterfront. The citywide communities have not been integrated into the processes or benefited from them, either in their built heritage or in addressing long-standing issues of joblessness and deprivation. At present, the dominant motivation in Liverpool is political, reinforced by a simplistic approach to economic growth: an approach that favors large-scale projects funded by outside investor–speculators regardless of their impact on the heritage of the city and its people. This is the sad reality that is driving the Liverpool Waters project.

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" (Liverpool City Council, 2003b). There is a strong sense in which this vision should be applied to the city as a whole.

Liverpool remains in search of an identity to replace that which it has lost. The stated aim, to once again become one of the leading cities of the world is, I suggest, both meaningless and unachievable. Between manifestations of iconic contemporary architecture and mirages of massive urban expansion, the city has lost its way. Top-down "visions"—that set out programs for what certain politicians, architects, and planners think that the city ought to have—are no substitute for a bottom-up agenda to which citizens can contribute and relate. Liverpool needs to construct its own identity for the 21st century, based on its unique characteristics of place and people rather parodying other cities that are at different phases in their evolution.

The overarching objective for Liverpool must be to reestablish citywide coherence by healing the multiple scars across the city; remedying disconnections between numerous surviving historic buildings now isolated through the loss of their communities (including libraries, educational institutes, and religious buildings of all faiths); and addressing the many commercial and industrial buildings that remain empty and derelict in the city center and waterfront (Hradsky, 2009, pp. 31–48). Additionally, such strategies must seek to integrate the diverse communities of the city into the processes of regeneration, providing them with the training and skills necessary to share responsibility and benefit from Liverpool's future.

This is articulated well in Miles Glendinning's *Architecture's Evil Empire? The Triumph and Tragedy of Global Modernism* (2010). In a racy polemic that provides a structured indictment of an architectural world obsessed with vanity projects and "starchitects", the author berates the loss of direction of an architectural world whose scope has shrunk from involvement in the built environment as a whole to a focus on image-making city center and waterfront developments. The author advocates urban cohesion, joined-up planning at both the macro and micro scales, and "ennoblement of the generic".

In many respects, UNESCO World Heritage status has been unhelpful to Liverpool, contributing to a focus on a small area of the city within a context where the main challenges are elsewhere, and supporting iconic waterfront architecture as a diversion from tackling the long-standing socioeconomic problems that have persisted for three and four generations in depressed neighborhoods such as Croxteth, Speke, and Toxteth. The 2011 UNESCO Recommendation should, theoretically at least, assist with this process. Predicated to apply to cities worldwide irrespective of their UNESCO status, it is unfortunate that in this early test case it has been interpreted solely in relation to one small part.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The example of Liverpool may be considered an object lesson in how not to manage a historic city—either as a cultural resource or for a sustainable future. The management of change at the scale of historic cities with the view to the protection and enhancement of core environmental, social,

economic, and cultural values is a complex field, but it is not rocket science. The current conflict in the city between heritage and development objectives is specific and is indicative of a particular confluence of circumstances that have been excited by a romantic ambition to reclaim a lost past. Successive city center and waterfront developments have failed to address long-standing challenges in the physical and social structure of the city, and failings in the United Kingdom planning system have been exacerbated by flawed processes and lack of direction from international partners.

Lessons need to be learned from the Liverpool saga to deter repetition. For the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation to have meaning as the basis for an integrated approach to historic cities, any consideration of the impact of major development proposals such as Liverpool Waters must embrace more than mere reaction to a limited and manifestly inconsistent interpretation of "outstanding universal value". The historic urban landscape approach has little relevance otherwise.

NOTES

1. Population statistics for Liverpool present the researcher with a minefield of conflicting data and sources. The figures summarized here were kindly supplied by Dr. Graeme Milne, School of History, University of Liverpool.
2. The relevant UNESCO criteria read: (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.
3. The plan of the Liverpool World Heritage Site and its buffer zone may be found at: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1150/multiple=1&unique_number=1331: 16 Jan 2014.
4. Speaking in "A Year in the Life", a television broadcast on BBC Two on 19 January 2009, which reported on Liverpool, European Capital of Culture 2008.

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